

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 6 June 2002

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

BAROSSA MUSIC FESTIVAL

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I move:

That this house supports the internationally acclaimed Barossa Music Festival, which has provided millions of dollars of economic benefit and spin-off for the Barossa and its surrounding regions, and calls on the government to reconsider its decision to cancel government funding without providing appropriate consultation and time for the festival board to refocus the festival or to find alternative long-term funding.

The announcement last month that the Barossa Music Festival was to lose state government funding of approximately \$200 000 after 12 years shocked, angered and saddened many members of the local community and, I might say, the whole community of South Australia. I myself was a little surprised at the way this decision was received. The popularity of the festival extended far beyond the local region and, indeed, this state. Indeed, I think that the government and the minister would also have been a little surprised at the reaction. Hopefully, in hindsight, they may regret their decision.

It seems ironic that the new government of a state recognised as the festival state would axe the funding so soon after taking office and at a time when the Barossa Music Festival board was looking to the future after a period of restructuring and refocusing the event. The decision was a major blow to the cultural image of South Australia, particularly the Barossa Valley.

This extremely short-sighted decision was a blow to two things that the state does really well—wine and music. The Barossa Music Festival board has been wound up as a result of this decision, because the board saw little point in continuing. I question whether the decision was made on the run: I believe that it was—it appears that that is the case. At last year's festival, during one of the events attended by the Premier at which he made a speech, he and I discussed the festival. Not all the events held during the festival could be said to be my cup of tea—nor the Premier's, incidentally—but I always appreciated the opportunity to attend the festival and hear world-class performances and to expand one's mind in relation to an appreciation of fine music. The arts minister has asked Country Arts SA to explore options for a new arts event in regional South Australia, with the priority that it be economically viable.

Seats for the Barossa Music Festival were apparently subsidised by the taxpayer to the tune of \$35.59, a point that was made by the Premier during the debate on this matter, and he called it, 'Pretty generous'. If this amount of money is generous, what does the Premier call the taxpayer subsidy for the State Theatre and the State Opera? The statistics provided by the State Theatre Company in the June 2001 Auditor-General's Report state that the taxpayer subsidy per seat sold was—and, would you believe it?—\$43 per seat. This is the difference in favour of the Barossa event—\$7.41—yet the Barossa Music Festival had to go. State government grants and other revenue per seat sold by the State Opera (according to the same report) was \$40.

Is the new government setting a precedent that any festival or arts event with taxpayer subsidies over \$35 per seat will

face the threat of having their funding cut? Will they face the axe? Such a precedent is very alarming, particularly as South Australia prides itself on being the festival state. Our image of being a festival state is one that encourages tourism, and there is certainly a place for all types of arts events to cater for the varying needs and tastes of the community, locally, nationally and certainly internationally.

While the Barossa Music Festival may be seen as a niche event, and some say elitist (although I would not say that), with chamber music performances held in churches and wineries throughout the Barossa and its regions, it certainly catered for music lovers. In relation to the high quality standard of the performances, the ticket prices were not overly expensive and many of these events were sold out.

An outstanding attribute of the festival was that it fostered and developed the talent of South Australian musicians and performers, providing them with national and international exposure. I cannot stress this point enough. One name that comes to mind—and some members seated here would know him—is Mark Waters, who is an old scholar of a school that I attended and the son of the Rev. Kyle Waters. He is a brilliant pianist.

Mark Waters started off his career as a star attraction at this festival and is now an international musician. It is the same with Jane Peters who, members would know, is an acclaimed violinist from South Australia. In her early days she performed at many Barossa festivals. They are popular performers when they are listed to perform at the festival. You would not call these people elitist or niche-market-type performers—they are South Australians who have the opportunity to get up on stage in front of audiences around Australia and the world and perform.

The exposure that they got at this festival is one of those things that I feel the Premier did not consider when he made this decision. This event provided enjoyment for patrons and generated income and economic growth for tourism operators, wineries and businesses in the region in the order of \$2.5 million to \$3 million annually. Regional events like this are very important for local tourism and the local community. The loss of a tried and proven event is a real kick in the pants to the Barossa, its regions and, I believe, South Australia.

The event was considered one of the best in the country. For every dollar that the taxpayer put into the festival, \$12 was returned to the community. One dollar spent, \$12 earned—not a bad turnaround. I would run a business on that. Certainly, I am most concerned with the Premier's decision because I do not think that he has considered all the details.

Winemakers in the Barossa region will certainly suffer, as the festival provided international exposure and helped the wineries promote their products. Companies like Peter Lehmann Wines, and the Lehmann family, have supported this festival and backed it to the hilt. I am sure it is part of the reason why the Lehmanns enjoy the success that they do today. Unfortunately, the withdrawal of state funding from the Barossa Music Festival means that the event has been cancelled this year. We can only hope that it will be resurrected in some way, shape or form in the near future. I have had discussions with the Premier in the corridors, and I am somewhat encouraged by what he has said—without breaking any confidentiality—but I hope the minister will also get that message and acknowledge that a mistake has been made. I will not play politics. If the Premier can turn this around, I will be as polite and as grateful as anybody else in this place and understand that perhaps it was a hasty decision and probably a mistake.

The founder of the Barossa Music Festival, Mr John Russell, has vowed to continue. The festival's former chairman, Mr Anthony Steel, whom we all know well and who is famous in this state and Australia-wide, has been given the task of coming up with a regional arts event to replace the Barossa Music Festival by 30 June, which is only a few weeks away. That event will receive up to \$150 000 in government funding from Arts SA. The state government is already providing up to \$80 000 to the festival to help it meet outstanding liabilities. One would think that combining these two amounts of money would be sufficient to maintain it in the first place. This is rather hard to understand or follow because that is a total of \$230 000, whereas the maximum before was only \$219 000. I therefore wonder about somebody's mathematics here.

Surely the arts minister will seriously consider the options that Anthony Steel will provide in three weeks' time, with a reconstituted music festival in the Barossa having to be a serious option. I hope that it continues with the same name, because I think that is most important.

The Premier now has the opportunity to right his previous wrongs. I believe that the Premier made a grave mistake in April with a far-reaching decision made in haste. We have sacrificed a very valuable and tangible asset and the goodwill that was the Barossa Music Festival. As I have said before in this house, the festival should be revamped, and that process was already under way. It is just like having a not-so-good house at the best address. You do not move away; you maintain the address and renovate the house. The same thing applies here, sir. The festival should have been renovated and changed, but it should be kept at its former location, in the former timeslot, and, most importantly, the name must be kept.

The cancellation of the event will certainly leave a big hole in the tourism and hospitality calendar of the Barossa Valley. What will this alternative regional festival be? I await what the Premier has to say on the matter. He has not actually given an idea yet, but if the festival goes anywhere else there will be an argument about where it should be, who should fund it, and when it should be held. Where will this—

Mr McEwen interjecting:

Mr VENNING: If it is a Barossa festival: it may just be a country arts festival, for all I know. But the discussions I have had with the Premier encourage me to think that it will be back pretty close to what it was. How much will it cost to set it up so that it has the same recognition that the Barossa Music Festival had? What was the value of that goodwill? You can ask Australia-wide and internationally, in the halls of performance in London: they all know about the Barossa Music Festival. So, what does it cost to generate that goodwill and that level of recognition that the Barossa festival had?

I cannot understand the officers who obviously advised the Premier on this. They must have had their heads in the sand. I can understand their demanding a rebuilding or refocus of the festival—I can understand that. But to chuck it out with the swipe of the hand, and only a few hours really after coming into government, I thought was unwise, to put the kindest connotation on it. So, I ask, how much will it cost to set up the new festival. We certainly need to consider that.

Finally sir, I state that it is not time for the final curtain-call for the Barossa Music Festival. I hope that the decision that is made in a couple of weeks' time will put a smile on all our faces, because I know that most—not all—members of this house have been to one or two functions at the Barossa

Music Festival over the 12 years. If they have not, they should have—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr VENNING: If they have overlooked it, let us hope they have the opportunity to do so in the future. If the Attorney-General takes umbrage at that, I would like to personally invite him, and, as he does not drive, I will come and get him, so that he can attend one of these festival performances. That is on the record and the costs can be mine. I am very proud of, and parochial about, my region, my electorate and of the things it does—and does well. I have become a bit emotional about this. I hope that in the end commonsense will prevail, and that we will see the Barossa Festival continue. I urge members today to support this motion, and I would appreciate it if it were debated out today, because we will not be sitting again for another month.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Light): I rise to support the member for Schubert in his motion regarding the Barossa Music Festival. This is a unique music festival because it is not a one-night affair: it is run in a series of areas, as the member for Schubert has indicated—in churches, in various wineries and in other places. Its uniqueness is that it is not run in an institute or a major hall, and that gives the festival quite a different feel to the tourist event that it is, over and above other tourist events within the Barossa Valley area.

I believe that the government has been very hasty in making this decision, because it is always better to sit down and look at the way that an event might be structured, study that, and then see whether it can be revamped, or whether it can be restructured at a lower cost or at a lower government subsidy. I recognise that the government wants to look at the dollars spent, but this is an occasion where one has to look beyond that.

People who come from interstate and overseas to this particular festival stay a number of nights in the Barossa; they eat meals; they drink wine; and, as the member for Schubert says, it is not only in the Barossa. Friends of mine are volunteers for the Barossa Music Festival, and they courier many of the artists, who stay in Gawler, to the Barossa each day for the various events and the various performances.

So, it goes far wider than just the subsidy on the ticket, because we are talking about the artists, the tourists and also the locals who are spending money in the area that otherwise would not have been spent. That is where one has to take a bigger view of this particular event, and certainly of events such as this, with regard to the multiplier effect and the value to the state, versus the amount of money that is put in by government.

Another factor is that once an event has been wound down and has ceased, it is much harder to restart it, because artists make other commitments to performances in other places around the world; venues may not be available—there are a range of factors—and, once the process has been stopped, it is hard to recommence.

It may well be that it starts in a different form with a lower government subsidy, but it is always worthwhile sitting down and talking about that before it is chopped off, before you say, 'Chop. That's the end of it. We're not doing this any more. We're not putting any government money towards it.'

While we are talking about subsidies, and while it may be a little controversial at the moment, I remind members that the government subsidy to public transport in this city is some \$124 million. If we are talking about subsidies, you do not stop at one particular musical event or a festival of arts:

you have to look at the benefits to the community in terms of this particular musical event being conducted within one of the best tourist areas in our state.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY: As the member for Schubert says, it is the best, but I guess he and I are a bit biased. It has developed a history over time and is respected around the world, respected by the artists who come to perform and certainly is loved dearly by the residents of the Barossa Valley. As I said in the beginning, this has been a very hasty decision. The Barossa Music Festival offers a unique event where you can combine music, food and wine as an alternative tourist event to the mainstream tourist events for people coming from either interstate, overseas or within South Australia. To merely cut its cord, with no thought whatsoever, is a very wrong decision. I commend all those people involved in the organisation of the Barossa Festival over the last period of years—they have done a wonderful job. A lot of volunteers have put many hours into this festival, into helping with it, into transporting performers and helping with the organisation of the festival. To them I say well done. I trust that in the very near future the government will see the folly of its decision and will look at a restructured event that can be supported in some form by the government.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise as opposition shadow minister for the arts to support my colleagues the members for Schubert and Light in their very compelling arguments against the government's decision to slice up and dispose of the Barossa Music Festival. I hope this does not signal a movement by the Minister for the Arts and Premier, Hon. Mike Rann, to set about carving up any further the regional arts, because the arts are for all South Australians, for people in the country as much as people in the city. The arts are not an Adelaide-centric presence—city and country arts are inseparable. The two go together. The Barossa Music Festival was a splendid example of that, with crowds attending from all over the state to be part of the event, and with the organisation and talent attracted to the event coming not only from the Barossa region but also from Adelaide and outside the state.

Some compelling challenges face the Premier and Minister for the Arts, in regard to supporting country arts. I commend the effort of all involved in organising the Barossa Music Festival. I will not go over all the details mentioned by my colleague the member for Schubert, who is passionate about this and, as in all matters concerning the Barossa, has taken on to fight hard for a replacement event to be established. Those details have been adequately covered by the members for Light and Schubert.

I underline the importance of country arts for the state and lay out a few challenges to the Premier. I highlight a few issues he needs to address urgently as part of his preparation for the budget. If slicing up the Barossa Music Festival is a sign of things to come, there will be a reaction not only from the opposition and me as shadow arts minister but also from the whole of the South Australian community that will shake the very foundations upon which the government is standing. We will not sit here and see country arts diminished. We will not sit here quietly and see the Premier demolish the good work of the past 10 years or so in rebuilding country arts.

Country Arts SA, which was a coming together of a range of independent bodies that existed previously, has championed the cause of the arts in regional South Australia. The year 2000-01 was one of Country Arts SA's most successful

years. Communities in the regions have benefited from access to the arts, both visual and performing, and this includes people of all ages, in varying economic situations, with varying physical abilities, and from all types of cultural background across the regions. They have all benefited from access to these fabulous events.

In total, approximately 283 000 people have attended performances in a Country Arts SA performing arts centre, an exhibition or art gallery either operated or funded by Country Arts SA, or participated in an arts or community cultural development project supported through the organisation's arts development funding programs. We might well ask why the Premier did not go to Country Arts SA and the Barossa Music Festival organisers and say, 'Can we sort this out? Can we save this event? Can we work together to make it a better event?' Instead, slash and burn, and the festival has been thrown on the charcoal pile.

In achieving its results for the year, Country Arts SA has recorded fabulous ticket sales and has continued to recognise the importance of the diverse funding base it has to ensure the sustainability of arts programs in South Australia. To this end, 46 per cent, or over \$3 million of total income, was derived from sources other than Arts SA, the state government agency responsible for country arts during the period.

Increased sales income has occurred to the tune of 35 per cent on the previous year, with theatres in each of the regions achieving increases in season ticket holders as follows (and I know that the member for Mount Gambier will support me in respect of the first one I mention): the Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre in Mount Gambier reported increased ticket sales of 10 per cent; the Keith Michell Theatre in Port Lincoln, a 34 per cent increase; the Middleback Theatre in Whyalla, a 29 per cent increase; and the Chaffey Theatre in Renmark, an increase of 25 per cent.

During 2000-01 a total of 368 artists received payment for their involvement in projects funded from Country Arts SA arts development funding programs, and the commonwealth government's regional arts fund. A total of approximately 65 000 people also participated in these projects and events. To ensure the continued patronage of our theatres, it was pleasing to see the allocation of an additional \$120 000 from Arts SA under the previous government to address urgent fire protection upgrading at the Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre at Mount Gambier and the establishment of a theatre redevelopment steering committee to oversee the development options for the upgrading of four regional theatres.

On behalf of the opposition, I thank Country Arts SA's chair and board of trustees for their hard work during the year and, in particular, I thank the Country Arts SA staff for their continued commitment to what was a very exciting and successful 12 months. The previous government promoted the country arts. One of the first acts of the new arts minister has been to slice up this valued and important local regional arts and tourism event in the Barossa.

I want to focus particularly on the challenge now facing the arts minister in regard to funding our regional theatres. Country Arts SA, on behalf of the government, operates these important four regional performing arts theatres. They need money, and the previous government identified a need for \$7.2 million to commence in the 2002-03 financial year to upgrade these four theatres. Will the new arts minister, the Premier, commit to that funding for those four regional theatres? The Chaffey Theatre needs \$1.123 million. The Middleback Theatre in Whyalla needs \$1.882 million. The Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre in Mount Gambier needs

\$1.273 million. The Northern Festival Centre in Port Pirie needs \$1.585 million. That is a total of \$5.863 million. Another \$1.071 million will need to be found for backhouse equipment to be provided to these theatres. Some of the other costs include \$190 000 for the establishment of a full-time cinema—so vital to the residents of Whyalla—and \$120 000 for upgrading ticketing systems. This leads to a total capital development proposal of \$7.244 million.

What is the view of the government with respect to this issue? What is the view of the member for the Whyalla region? What is the view of the incoming arts minister regarding this important need for capital funding to support regional arts? If the first act of the Minister for the Arts of slicing up the Barossa Music Festival is anything to go by, the opposition has serious concerns about the government's plans for regional arts.

I know that very few members opposite represent country districts. I know—and we know—that very few city members would give a dollar to the country ahead of a dollar to the city electorate. But let me remind the government that arts in the country cannot be separated from arts in the city. The Premier (and Minister for the Arts) has a challenge ahead. Will he commit to providing in excess of \$7 million to revamp and reinvest in Country Arts SA so that the citizens of South Australia who are not fortunate enough to reside in Adelaide can enjoy the sort of arts experience that the people of Adelaide enjoy?

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): I am happy to rise and support the motion of the member for Schubert, because what already has been highlighted in this house needs to be very strongly reinforced. Mr Speaker, I am sure that you would agree with this entirely, on the basis that rural and regional South Australia is an integral part of the South Australian economy. Whilst only about 500 000 of us live in rural and regional South Australia, when one looks at what we contribute to the rest of South Australia, one will see that it is significant. It is significant economically and it is significant when one looks at the issues around the management of the environment, the development of communities, and in any other way that one may wish to judge contributions by individuals, communities and regions in the state.

I am very concerned about an earlier, but clear, direction, I believe, from the government that it will leave the people in rural and regional South Australia short. That will be to their detriment, and it will also be to the detriment of all our cousins who live in the city. It is to the detriment of everyone and I hope that, as a result of this very important motion, the government quickly realises that.

One needs to realise, of course, the significance of the wine regions, such as the Barossa Valley—and McLaren Vale, in my own electorate, which I want to talk about. Scott Collett from Woodstock Winery has just returned after winning gold medals in Hong Kong and London for some of the best shiraz in the world. We should think about how we can capitalise on that. I congratulate that winemaker and his family for the hard and diligent work that they have done over a long period of time, the money that they invest in South Australia and the jobs that they create. But they know (and one only has to look at the Woodstock coterie as one example) that we could further value add opportunities within the wine industry. And what goes well with wine—food, art and festivals! That is what goes well with wine, and it is something which we have in this state which we must

cherish. It is a little like the issue with respect to the wine centre at the moment.

When you have a look at that issue and compare it to other investments that the previous government made, a few million dollars may need to be contributed for a short period of time on the basis of what happened with the Ansett collapse and the events of 11 September. As has been acknowledged, some tuning had to be done when it came to the base business case and strategic planning. But that guaranteed that we would be the headquarters for the wine industry in this country.

We export \$1 billion worth of wine from South Australia annually and, as was highlighted yesterday at the SAFF farmers/growers conference in my electorate, it is growing at a rapid rate. I believe that Orlando Wyndham will produce something like five million cases of Jacobs Creek wines this year, as an example, and you can look at the taxes, the jobs and the opportunities created by that. You also see those wine companies getting behind festivals.

I would encourage the government to look at how it could work better with the private sector when it comes to arts festivals, with sponsorships and the like, but I also say that it needs to have a look at the small amounts of money required, together with the volunteer commitments in rural and regional South Australia that not only provide economic opportunities to communities in South Australia but also help—when it comes to the new buzz words from the government—the 'social inclusion' of a community, and help those people, from the youngest right through, to develop.

I refer to the Almond Blossom Festival, which I have been going to for as long as I can remember. They could not get a dollar—not one dollar—from this government to help them with their Almond Blossom Festival this year, yet the sort of money that they were looking for was less than \$10 000 to run a festival which not only was going to help to culturally benefit our community but which also would allow people from Adelaide to have a taste of rural life within an hour of Adelaide.

I believe that the government is overlooking two things: the development and opportunities for those communities and also the great volunteer input by so many people throughout the year. Why should they then need to have food stalls at that festival just to pay for all the costs? These festivals, I might add, are having enough trouble surviving now because of the trouble with public liability insurance and, irrespective of what the Treasurer might want to say in this house with his rhetoric, we have seen the lagging through and through.

If you put the South Australian government against any other government in Australia at the moment with the effort that it is putting in to address this serious issue of public liability insurance, this government would be at the bottom of the list. It would not have passed, like the states of New South Wales and Queensland, as examples of governments that have got down and started to address the issue. This is a very important motion.

I know that the Premier has recognised the significance of the arts, of festivals and of cultural development, and I congratulate him for taking that on within his portfolio workload, but I appeal to the Premier to speak to the Treasurer and remind him that, whether it is the Barossa Valley, Willunga, McLaren Vale, the South-East, the West Coast with oyster festivals or the Murray Mallee where you, Mr Speaker, support initiatives for festivals and developments, all those areas need to have a few dollars put into them by the South Australian government.

The Liberal government did it when it was in office, and the budget is there for the present government to do it. The question is: where are the priorities of this Labor government? We will know on 11 July. In the meantime, it is our job as an opposition to appeal to their good sense to realise that they must support all parts of South Australia and not metropolitan Adelaide alone.

Ms CICCARELLO secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr BROKENSHERE (Mawson): I move:

That this house congratulates the South Australian community, business and the former Liberal government for their efforts over the past eight years to reposition South Australia to presently be one of the strongest economies in Australia.

This is an extremely important motion, because in recent history—and I am referring to less than two decades—we have seen a situation where, until the last few years, South Australia was, at least, on a rollercoaster ride but, sadly, for a considerable part of the last 20 years there have been more down times in South Australia than up times. But that was all turned around through a lot of hard work by many people. Since this session began I have heard a lot of interesting comments in the chamber and certain media reports about reinventing things. Reinventing is not always the way to go; recording history correctly is. That is why I want this motion to be debated in the parliament now. We can then move on to see whether, from this motion, we can grow further opportunities. Further opportunities do exist—and I must say that the government is fortunate to have been able to take over in the current situation.

First and foremost, I would like to put on the public record my thanks to the South Australian community for the eight years of support that we received when in office; not only for those eight years but for the support that they gave us during the election, because we all know that we received an absolute majority of the two-party preferred vote (51 per cent) and therefore should have been in government. I thank the South Australian community for its support, and I also thank the businesses that put up big mortgages, worked 100 hours a week in many cases, sacrificed family time, and had families working in those businesses on low wages because the South Australian economy was so tough. Those small businesses are the engine room of the South Australian economy. The small businesses in the south in the electorate of Mawson are primarily 'the business'. They are supported, thank goodness, by some big multinational companies but, by and large, it is those small businesses that are creating all the jobs. They are the people who have really supported the situation in South Australia over the last eight years.

I am also proud to put on the public record my thanks to my colleagues and all the members of the Liberal Party who supported the Liberal government for those eight years through some pretty torrid and difficult times. Let us talk about those times for a moment. I refer, first, to the core debt that we inherited, not the smoke and mirrors cost pressure type of black hole situation or the sort of nonsense and innuendo that you get every time the government changes hands but a genuine core debt of \$10 billion which included the largest single corporate loss in the history of Australia to the tune of well in excess of \$3 billion. I am referring to the unfunded public sector superannuation that would never have

given our children and their grandchildren a chance in this state because, as the public sector retired, most of the money would have gone not into infrastructure development but into trying to plug the hole that, effectively, left not one dollar for public sector superannuation.

I could go right through this list, which includes the loss of approximately \$1.4 billion in the Housing Trust and losses in smaller agencies such as the Country Fire Service. Its legacy when Labor left office was a \$13 million debt. With 17 400 volunteers protecting life and property, as volunteers with the support of their families, right across this state, what was the gift from Labor? It was \$13 million dollars of debt. During that time we never got it all right. I acknowledge that; I always have. But no government ever gets it all right, because at the end of the day a government is made up of representatives of the community, with diverse expertise, backgrounds, experiences and commitments to try to do better for a state. You will make some mistakes. But, I tell you what, for every mistake we made, there were 100 things that put South Australia in the position it is in today.

What disappoints me is that, if I was the Premier or the Treasurer in this new government, I would not be bothering to try to reinvent a phoney situation for the media involving basket case economies, and so on. I will comment on that further in a minute. Rather, I would be saying that we have inherited an economy in good shape and that is full of confidence. Not only is it full of confidence but also it has real job growth—a vast difference to what we saw when the Premier was the Minister for Employment in 1992 when unemployment got to 12 per cent under his portfolio. We brought that back to 6.6 per cent, and it is still going down.

People often talk about how good Queensland is. I want to commend the Hon. Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Premier Beattie should be eternally grateful to him, because it was the Bjelke-Petersen era that set up the opportunities for Queensland. When we came into office, SA's unemployment rate was 1.1 per cent higher than that for Queensland. On the latest figure, guess what has happened: we now have an unemployment rate 1 per cent lower than that of Queensland. Of course, it goes on from there.

On 19 April, the respected and independent South Australian Centre for Economic Studies released its regular briefing. That was just after we lost office. Of course, we all know that this government has done very little—if, indeed, anything at all—to strengthen the economy, create jobs or advance opportunities for this state. There is a lead-in time when you come into government. When you have a honeymoon like this government is getting and an economy like the one it has taken on, it will be at least one year before any influence will be apparent.

It took longer for us, because we had to turn all that debt around and get back from having 28 per cent of gross state product going on debt interest to a very comfortable figure. I cannot remember it exactly, but I think it is now under 10 per cent. Importantly, it is back, with a core debt now of only \$3.5 billion. That is still high, and I hope this government continues to reduce that core debt, because that interest could be going elsewhere. It is much more manageable than it ever was under Labor and what we inherited back in those early years.

The Centre for Economic Studies said that the South Australian economy was buoyant, that it had risks and that its prospects were rising. It concluded that the South Australian economy had grown surprisingly strongly since the middle of last year. In fact, it happened much earlier than

that. If you are active in your electorate—as I know you, Mr Acting Speaker, and all my colleagues in this house are—you would have seen a huge turnaround over at least an 18 month or two year period, I would suggest. There it is from the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies. On top of that, it highlighted booming exports; strong growth in building activity and consumer spending; and proposed growth in business capital investment. It also went on to say:

Retail sales reflected an ‘amazing’ 11 per cent growth on the previous year, and importantly—

and this is where it really assists this government—

... SA businesses were projecting a 37 per cent increase in capital investment next year.

Access Economics also described South Australia’s recent economic performance as an ‘untold success story’. That is very different from what we hear from government members. Yes, it is true that our economy is not perfect and it faces challenge, particularly with our low population growth and our ageing population, but with that there are opportunities. We were capitalising on those opportunities. We set a plan. After all the auditing was done to find out exactly what was wrong with this state after Labor left office, all members on our side of the house would remember (and I am sure that they still have the documents) that we published our plan, entitled ‘Charting the way forward’. We stuck to those books, which are publicly available in libraries right across this state, if anyone wants to look at them. We stuck to that plan, even though we were criticised at times. Where is the equivalent plan from the Labor government charting the way forward today? There is no plan.

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Venning): The Minister for Social Justice will come to order!

Mr BROKENSHERE: Instead, the government is having reviews, it is putting things on hold, it is getting consultants to look at things. I thought they were not going to have consultants, but they are, and I bet they spend \$73 million at least on consultants in the next financial year on top of everything else. It will also be interesting to see how much the salaries will be for CEO appointments, because I understood that the then opposition members used to say that they were fat cats who were overpaid. It will be interesting to see the quality of the people whom they buy to run the departments if they are not going to pay the same money we spent when, of course, in the private sector those very well qualified people for whom I have respect could have earned fourfold their salary. I refer to those dedicated chief executive officers of the Public Service who are working for the community of South Australia and who are so professional about the way they carry out their duties.

I conclude with a very interesting point about a story entitled ‘Rann enlists tycoon to fix economy’. It describes a couple of the gentlemen on the new Economic Development Board, and we agree with those appointments because both those gentlemen worked for us from time to time when we were in government. They are very credible people with a lot of skill, and they work for either government, I might add, because they are South Australians and they believe in our state, as do we in the Liberal Party. Mr Foley said in that article that his government had four years and ‘we are fair dinkum about it’.

On top of that, they go on about bipartisanship. I have found it interesting recently to talk to people about this bipartisanship. At first they believed the bipartisanship was

genuine, but they have said that the Premier went so far over the top when talking about bipartisanship five times in one speech that they do not know whether it is genuine bipartisanship.

Members interjecting:

Mr BROKENSHERE: We will give him the benefit of the doubt. What he is seeing from us is bipartisanship; not the negative, carping, whingeing and whining opposition that we saw for eight years—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BROKENSHERE: —but a proactive, professional opposition, and we will continue to be so—

Ms Rankine interjecting:

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

Mr BROKENSHERE: —because the new government lacks expertise and skills. It had to bring two members straight into the ministry because the Premier did not believe that he had enough expertise in those hardworking colleagues on the other side who have been here for four to eight years to give them a portfolio. That is how inexperienced this government is. We will support them and I know that the Leader of the Opposition, Rob Kerin, will be very happy to go wherever the Premier wants him to go to help support and continue the growth in the strong economy that the Liberal Party created over eight years with the help of the South Australian community.

In conclusion, let me say this to government members: do not try to reinvent history, do not say that you are going to fix the economy. Be truthful with the community and say that the Liberal government did a good job in fixing your mess last time, and say also that the Labor Party cannot afford to destroy this state again because we will not have another chance to do that good work.

We fixed it this time. We will work with you. The government has been given a paradise in terms of the budget. Tell the people that. Tell the people how good the economy is, how low unemployment is and how good infrastructure development is; and members opposite should thank the former Liberal government for giving it the easiest ride any government could ever have on coming into office. However, I tell the house now that, even with all that opportunity, it will still muck it up before March 2006.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I, too, support this very important motion and, in so doing, it is important to look at its wording, as follows:

That this house congratulates the South Australian community, business and former Liberal government for their efforts over the past eight years to reposition South Australia to presently be one of the strongest economies in Australia.

Whom do we put first in that motion? We put the South Australian community first, followed by the business community and the government. Members opposite tell us continually about the importance of bipartisanship, and I agree with that. I welcome that sort of approach. I hope that it is not just rhetoric because, if it is, eventually there will be a credibility gap between the rhetoric and what actually happens. What I would like to support and what this motion supports is community participation—working together to achieve what is best for the state and to position us for the future. There is a lot of talk about reviews, and every government, on achieving office, must review what has happened.

Ms Rankine interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Wright is out of order.

Mr SCALZI: I suggest to the present government that one review that should be undertaken is specifically this: what did we do right in partnership with the business community and the community in general? Business SA tells us that we are in a good position, and economic and political commentators tell us that we are in a good position, just as the Australian economy is in a good position—something that has not occurred in the past when we compare it with OECD countries and, indeed, with the United States.

However, the recent increase in interest rates tells us that our position is not fixed: it requires responsible intervention by responsible governments, in conjunction with the key players in the community, and I would say that the business community is one of those key players. We must work together to ensure that the health of the economy is maintained. If I were a general practitioner and I wanted to know the health of an individual, I would look at their blood pressure, body temperature, mobility and their general health status. Equally, to understand whether or not an economy is healthy we must look at the economic indicators—those things that tell us where the economy is positioned and where it is going.

If we look back at 1993 we can see that the South Australian economy was moving uphill with a great big load on its back, and that load was the state debt. No-one would question that, and I think that members opposite have acknowledged that. I was very pleased to hear the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, say, 'We have learnt from our mistakes.' That is important to hear because we all make mistakes and, if we do not learn from them, we are condemned to live with them. The debt was \$9 billion. It is now around \$3 billion. That is a significant improvement. It gives us mobility.

A person would expect general mobility to indicate that they are in a healthy state, and it is the same in respect of the economy. If the economy does not have debt on its back, it has mobility to move. As I have said, that is what the former government accomplished—in conjunction with the community—during its eight years in office.

Another important indicator to the health of the economy is the employment rate. In 1993, unemployment was around 12 per cent, and it is currently around 7 per cent, indicating that there has been significant improvement in this area. There is still a long way to go, because there will not be a bright future for employment if we do not deal with the problem of youth unemployment. So, that is where a responsible government comes in. What do we have to do to improve employment in the future and provide for young people?

A bill was passed by this house last night to raise the school leaving age to 16, to bring this state in line with the other states and countries. As indicated by many members, it is important to ensure that the right programs are put in place to ensure that the educational opportunities exist to broaden the education base and to provide flexibility for young people to move into industries, as this will give South Australia a better future.

Another indicator is exports: at the end of the day, it does not matter how much we produce in South Australia or, indeed, in Australia. If we produce only for the national market the economy will remain static: to grow an economy you must export. In other words, an export market involves

returns to the state, and that in turn increases our economic potential to grow and provides opportunities for employment. It also enables us to increase our capital works and our social infrastructure, and it provides improvements in health, education and law and order. All these initiatives have to be paid for, and they can only be paid for if there is economic growth.

We know that Australia now has one of the strongest growing economies in the world, but there is the danger of getting overheated, and that is why the Reserve Bank has put a little break on interest rates. Our exports have increased to \$9 billion, and that is a healthy state to be in. As I have said, exports are a really good indicator of our future. We must balance the current budget. When we look at the years before 1993, we see that the budget deficit was around \$300 million. We then produced balanced budgets. Members opposite talk about black holes, but they should not concentrate too much on black holes because they might fall into one in their exaggeration.

We need to address social problems, such as law and order and drugs, which are the curse of most industrialised countries. I welcome the government's move on the drug summit that will look into this important area, because there is a strong correlation between problems with drugs, unemployment and law and order. In relation to the issue of health, we need to look at the demands placed on the health system. Governments should have been aware 20 or 30 years ago that an ageing population would increase the demand on the health sector sooner or later.

The former government realised this during its eight years in office and balanced the books in order to release funds to cope with that increasing demand. There is still a lot to be done but, if we do not have a healthy economy, we will not have a healthy system. Similarly with education, we can talk about its importance as much as we want but, unless we have the funds to resource the programs and to increase expenditure, we are not going to realise the benefits. Equally with police resources, transport—all those areas have to be funded on a sound economic system, and we have provided that. We congratulate the government in being in a position to make sure that the healthy economy is maintained.

Time expired.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I am delighted to speak to this motion moved by the honourable member for Mawson, namely that this house congratulates the South Australian community, business and the former Liberal government for their efforts over the past eight years to reposition South Australia to presently be one of the strongest economies in Australia. It is a motion that I hope most members will take the opportunity to speak to because I think it clearly enunciates and summarises how South Australia has been transformed over the last eight years; and I am sure that all members opposite, in a truly bipartisan way, will support this motion as well because I am sure that they recognise that they have taken over one of the strongest, if not the strongest, economies in Australia. How lucky a government can it be to come in at this particular time.

We have recently seen statements put out through statistical surveys from various organisations—and I refer to the Bank SA release of 22 May which is headed: 'Consumer confidence hits record high.' The media release states:

South Australian consumer confidence has recorded its second consecutive increase to climb to its highest peak in five years, according to the latest Bank SA State monitor. A positive spending

climate as well as rising levels of consumer optimism in the wake of significantly low interest rates have contributed to an overall increase in confidence levels over the past three months.

There is also a quote from Mr Lou Morris, Bank SA Managing Director, which states:

South Australian consumers have continued to grow in confidence, buoyed by the hope of a bright future for the state of which they have become increasingly proud.

He goes on to say:

The spending climate is judged to be at its most favourable level in recent times with consumers encouraged by a stable state economy. . .

He continues:

As a result, consumers acknowledge that the broader economic prospect for the state is now more promising than ever with the benefits to them personally lifting confidence levels to the highest peak since the survey began in November 1997. According to the Bank SA State monitor—an ongoing survey of South Australian business and consumers—a record 51 per cent of consumers are confident of an improved spending outlook in the coming year. This is a 9 per cent increase on the previous survey result.

Isn't it ironic that it should happen to be 51 per cent of consumers that are confident, because it was the two-party preferred vote for the Liberal Party at the last state election held a few weeks prior to this survey being released—51 per cent of the vote. So it really is a clear vote of confidence in what the Liberal Party and the Liberal government have done over the previous eight years. Remembering, as we know only too well, that we took over a basket case, an economy that is absolutely on its knees, that had the worst debt in Australia—in fact one of the worst debts in most parts of the developed world.

It is not only Bank SA that is highlighting these positive factors. Business SA is also highlighting the positives, and in fact the *Advertiser* has been running a series of positive articles about South Australia, and has identified many great things. I was delighted that the *Advertiser* recently had a feature brochure entitled 'Nothing. Just one of the many things you can do on Yorke Peninsula. Discover the secrets of South Australia.' It highlights many of the positive tourism ventures on Yorke Peninsula. Can I say that Yorke Peninsula has been part and parcel of the economic turnaround—the economic miracle—in South Australia. In fact, the rural sector generally has been part and parcel of the great development, and I would like to refer to an article by Rex Jory in the *Advertiser* of 15 May this year, so the better part of three weeks ago. He states:

South Australia's export record in the past three years has been one of the success stories of the national economy. The state's exports grew by 30 per cent to \$8.9 billion in 2001. Across Australia, exports increased by—

What do you reckon they increased by? Was 25 per cent; was it 20; was it 40? Normally, of course, it would be more than South Australia, but no, it was 11 per cent. Across Australia the increase was 11 per cent and in South Australia it was a 30 per cent increase, and that was in 2001; in other words, right in the middle of the Liberal government term. The article continues:

Few relatively small regional economies in the world have outperformed South Australia.

So, Rex Jory himself is recognising that South Australia has one of the best economies in the world and, again, it is a great reflection on the then South Australian Liberal government that was in power during this time. Mr Jory goes on to state:

An economy which, for so long, has ridden on the success of grain and wool, has been transformed by the burgeoning export of

three products, historically designed for the domestic market—wine, motor vehicles and fish.

Of course, he identifies other products that are particularly important too, but let us have a look at those three:

In 1998-99, South Australia exported wine valued at just under \$660 million. By 1999-00, this had risen to \$861 million—

in other words \$200 million more—

and, in 2000-01, wine exports had topped \$1 billion.

This motion particularly identifies the Liberal government. Is that relevant? Let us just think back to the late 80's, when wine was also very important and when new vines were being grown. What happened when there was a bit of a crisis? We had the vine pull, and the member for Light would, I know, remember the vine pull. It was undertaken by the Labor state government and sought to rip out thousands of vines. Did they seek more markets for the wine? No, they said, 'We are producing too much. Pull them out,' and that is what happened. You can see the different approach by the Liberal government. They have encouraged the planting of vineyards, they have encouraged sales and we see the results: record sales; fantastic.

Members interjecting:

Mr MEIER: I hear some objections from those members opposite, but I will go on. If they do not want to agree with wine exports, let us look at motor vehicle exports. Motor vehicle exports have been equally impressive, as Rex Jory says:

In 1998-99, passenger vehicles worth \$582 million were sold overseas. By 2000-01, that had risen to \$1.2 billion.

So, what is happening to the vehicle industry? We have seen the unions have strike after strike.

Members interjecting:

Mr MEIER: We saw it with—

Dr McFetridge: Monroe Wylie.

Mr MEIER: —the Monroe Wylie strike, because they wanted more pay. So, General Motors shut down, but they got going again. The other week we saw it with the exhaust manufacturer—Walker was a subsidiary. The motor vehicle industry shut down again, and General Motors said that if this was going to continue they would have to take their supplies from overseas. What is happening right now? The unions are on strike again at BHP Billiton, and it looks as though the motor industry will be shut down for the third time this year. Are the unions completely nonsensical? Do they not realise that it will destroy South Australia's economic base if they keep this up? It is just too incredible to contemplate. They have the highest living standard we have seen ever in this state, yet they want to destroy it all. They really need to see a psychiatrist or get help from somewhere else. So, that is the second example. The third example is Roxby Downs, where exports are improving; in fact, as Rex Jory states:

In 1998-99, refined copper exports from South Australia were worth \$124 million, and this rose to \$587 million in 2000-01.

What does the Labor Party say about that? 'A mirage in the desert'.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): I move:

That this house congratulates Mitsubishi, Mitsubishi workers and all those involved in the successful outcome for Mitsubishi with respect to the building of new models in 2005.

I most sincerely congratulate Mitsubishi, and Mitsubishi workers in particular, on what has been a great outcome for all South Australians regarding the new models for Mitsubishi, involving the expansion and the research and development at the Laffer's Triangle, where I understand it will be located, in 2005.

It has been most unfortunate to see what has happened in the motor industry globally in recent years, no matter which manufacturer has been involved. Internationally, we have seen the difficulties that Mitsubishi has experienced but, of course, that was not necessarily the case in Australia; in fact, from memory, in two of the past three years, Mitsubishi in Australia has recorded a profit, which has been achieved because they have had a committed work force and very good leadership.

First and foremost, I congratulate a gentleman, whom I have not yet met but whom I would be pleased to meet in the future, namely, Mr Tom Phillips, the Managing Director of Mitsubishi Motors Australia. He has shown not only tenacity and capacity when it comes to business acumen but also an enormous empathy and commitment to the workers. I think he is a great example of a leader, particularly in the private sector, where strong empathy and support for the workers are so important.

You have only to see the television news or photographs in the newspaper to see how strong the bond is between Mitsubishi workers and their Managing Director and, of course, the other executive staff, one or two of whom are known to me (one of them, in particular, who is better known to me: there is not a person more committed to Mitsubishi and his community than Rex Keily, with whom I had the pleasure of working on school council for some time).

One of the school councillors in my electorate at present—and a very good school councillor he is at Woodcroft Primary School—works at Mitsubishi. That person's approach is probably very typical of the empathy and ethos that exist among employees at Mitsubishi and an indication of the reason why so many of their staff work in the community. They are also great silent salespeople for the Magna because often they ask me whether I am driving a Magna, whether I have a Mitsubishi in my family and so on. The Magna is a very good car and anyone who has had one, as I have, will find that the quality and workmanship is superb.

I am sure this is only the start of far greater things for Mitsubishi and, if it could stretch that vehicle—I believe it needs to be slightly longer and wider—it will be a formidable opponent to GMH and Ford. With the quality finish of Magna, the only suggestion I would make as a layperson for the new model in 2005 is to make it a little longer and wider and it will sell right throughout Australia, as it does at the moment, and its exports will continue to grow.

The export market for Mitsubishi Australia has been the strength of the company in recent years. That is good news not only for Mitsubishi and its workers but also for car component manufacturers and their staff because of the value adding effect it has. We have a lot of those value adding car component manufacturers in the south, particularly at Lonsdale. Toolmaking small businesses get contracts as do the delivery vehicles, and the list goes on. Instead of people who work for Mitsubishi in my electorate in the south being concerned about their future, they can now celebrate with their families and workmates and focus on a long-term future with Mitsubishi, which I am sure will continue to develop and build quality motor vehicles for all markets available to it

already along with those it will grow into right across the globe.

I also point out a few other things about Mitsubishi: in a bipartisan way the government of the day has always been prepared to do what it can in its capacity to assist all motor vehicle manufacturers. We have seen great expansion and a huge success story with GMH in South Australia: it cannot make enough vehicles, with huge waiting lists for its vehicles.

I congratulate the previous premier John Olsen on the car tariff debate and other efforts he put in. Many members opposite continually attacked premier John Olsen, yet he would have been one of the key people in this state who worked hard to ensure that we have today's vibrant economy. It was refreshing at last to hear the Premier say what a good job former premier John Olsen will do as the new Consul-General in Los Angeles. After attacking him day in and day out for his hard work in supporting economic growth, after driving the knife in pretty hard, they finally came out and spoke the truth about John Olsen, namely, that he worked diligently and has the capacity to do even more when it comes to growth in South Australia in his new position. When we lost government John Olsen and our leader Rob Kerin worked with the federal government and the new government in a bipartisan way to finish off the work that had already been done over many months to ensure support for the 2005 model.

I congratulate the previous government, which did a good job in finalising that support when it came to lobbying the federal government for funding for Mitsubishi. I congratulate it and reinforce that we were still in there working hard after we left office to ensure that this approval came through. Imagine the impact if this had not occurred: about 4 500 jobs directly in this state—and indirectly well over 10 000 jobs—could have been affected. I would not want to think about the consequences of that. Now, the consequences that we can think about are for more jobs growth. It has been announced already that, as a result of the new model, there will be more direct jobs growth with Mitsubishi, and as a result, I am sure there will be further value-added jobs.

In my area, the Mitsubishi plants—both at Tonsley Park, to which many of our community commute, as well as at Lonsdale—are very strongly anchored businesses that help to assist all the smaller businesses throughout the south. I refer in particular to the business areas of Lonsdale and Hackham. So, not only those businesses but also the seven day corner super deli and others in the south know that, for the foreseeable future, there will be good disposable income for families to spend in our area.

I referred earlier to the ethos and empathy, or the spirit, of the Mitsubishi workers. That flows right through our southern area. As I said earlier, you see many of these workers and their families involved in our schools' sporting activities. Having spoken to a few of them since this announcement was made, I know that they are absolutely delighted, not only because they have a guarantee of their own job which is paramount for the well-being of their families but also because Mitsubishi has a strong future in South Australia.

As I also said previously, the best sales people that Mitsubishi has—and this takes nothing away from the motor dealers and the work they do in selling the actual vehicles—are the silent sales people who are on the factory floor. Another initiative that Mitsubishi workers put forward in recent years with respect to the motor show was to actually

build a small car plant in the motor pavilion in the Wayville Showgrounds. That was a great initiative.

Most of us do not have the opportunity to see or understand the technology, the complexities or the integration between robots and the work force in a car manufacturing plant. I understand that, of all the exhibits at that exhibition, that was the one that attracted the most attention. People were able to see first-hand not only the finished product of a Mitsubishi Magna but also how it is built, and they were able to understand the effort that goes into producing that quality product.

The other thing with Mitsubishi is that there is a huge diversification of jobs, all of which are important, right from the young apprentice who has just started. It is similar to backbench members in the parliament: we are really an apprentice in the business of politics and of the parliament, whether in opposition or government. We can progress through the work force of the parliament and our own party, and it is the same at Mitsubishi: you have opportunities to study and advance, and the diversification is unbelievable—from welders, toolmakers, assembly processors, panel makers and spray painters, right through to engineers who design engine technology.

Safety is another really important issue, and I am particularly pleased with Mitsubishi's research and development program. I touched on that earlier. Not only is that good for Mitsubishi, but hopefully the safety research and development will further assist with the saving of lives. I know that much more work is still to be done, but I believe that the technology is available now to protect people from tailgating.

We heard the environment minister talk about a smart car that will run mainly on electricity and then switch over to petrol. It will not be too far into the next decade when you will be able to log into your car and set your path, and with future technology, laser beams and the like, we will see an enormous elimination of motor vehicle accidents, because it will almost be a semi-autopilot situation. If the people involved in R&D with respect to safety can work further on that, I can see two important things happening: first, the saving of lives and road trauma; and, secondly, perhaps South Australia getting back to where we were when we had a clever person who designed the photocopier. Of course, sadly, we let that slip: we could have been the photocopier capital of the world. We probably would not have needed a lot of other businesses if that had continued. It was designed here in South Australia, and we let that one slip. Let us hope that, through the research and development initiatives as a result of the Mitsubishi agreement, we can develop another smart technology business for South Australia to add to all those other businesses that are already doing well in our state.

I again say well done to the workers and the management of Mitsubishi, in particular, and also to the present government. But let us not forget the work that was done under the Liberal government and the continuing work that it has done through the Leader of the Opposition, Rob Kerin, and the previous premier, John Olsen, who continued, in a bipartisan way, to work with the Premier, the Treasurer and others to ensure that this deal was a success for every South Australian. I congratulate every person involved.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I rise to support this motion. Many of the workers at Mitsubishi live in my electorate, and I would like to pay tribute to their dedication and skill in making an excellent range of top quality vehicles. In particular, I pay tribute to the work of Tom Phillips. I trust

that the company will enjoy continuing success, even though we now face the challenge of a rising Australian dollar, which will make things more difficult not only for Mitsubishi but also for all of our exporters. I acknowledge, and I am very impressed with, the quality of work by the team at both plants, and I join with the member for Mawson in congratulating them on their outstanding efforts over recent years.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to support the motion. In so doing, I offer some views and perspectives as shadow minister for innovation and information economy on the way ahead strategically for Mitsubishi Motors. I think the outcome that has been struck where the federal and state governments have cooperated to guarantee the short to medium-term future of Mitsubishi is commendable. I note the points made earlier that this follows the work of the previous government under the leadership of Rob Kerin, and before him John Olsen and Dean Brown, in ensuring that Mitsubishi remains here as a valued asset. I also believe that the federal government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, John Howard, is to be commended—

An honourable member: What about the current Premier?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: —for the leadership that it has shown. In a spirit of bipartisanship, I also commend the Premier, Mike Rann, and the Labor government for continuing with the good work of the previous government. Of course, it would have been an act of total folly to do otherwise, but it signals that the present government is happy to continue with the good work of the previous government, and for that the employees of Mitsubishi are grateful.

I want to make some comments as the shadow minister for innovation and information economy, but I also ask the house to recognise that, as the member for Waite, which encompasses most of Mitcham, my electorate is very close to Mitsubishi and, indeed, many of the work force live in my electorate. I congratulate and commend them on their contribution to Mitsubishi's success.

There are some challenges ahead for the long term at Mitsubishi, and here in South Australia there are some interesting parallels between General Motors and Holden's and Mitsubishi and its global parent. To be really successful now in the automotive industry, given the massive restructuring that has occurred globally in the last six to eight years particularly but before that in the last 10 to 12 years, one needs to have the volume to ensure the economies of scale needed to be competitive. Nowadays, unless an automotive plant is producing units of the order of 150 000 to 200 000 per annum, it is extremely difficult to be globally competitive.

We live in a time of a globalised economy with car plants in countries that can access labour and costs of production less expensively than in a developed country like Australia, and where these sorts of plants can be established by global parents and, in effect, force smaller plants with higher factors of production to rely on tariffs and other financial barriers to guarantee their future. Of course, this is the struggle that is going on in the automotive industry not only in this country but also in Europe, in the US and in other highly industrialised countries as they struggle to compete with the more aggressive manufacturing in countries like Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia and elsewhere.

Indeed, India and China will no doubt emerge as highly competitive automotive producers in the decades ahead, so this problem will not go away. How does Mitsubishi

therefore retain global leadership and guarantee its long-term future? In this respect, I note with some satisfaction the initiative (as part of this package) to create an innovation centre of excellence here in South Australia for Mitsubishi. I think that this highly creative and highly competitive step from Tom Phillips and Mitsubishi's parent in Japan is a step in the right direction.

European manufacturers such as BMW, Mercedes Benz, Audi, Porsche and others have staked their basis for competition on quality, technology and innovation. This is how these European manufacturers have retained global leadership: through quality and innovation. To try to compete on the basis of cost of production or volume and economies of scale is a very risky strategy for an industrialised nation such as Australia. If you go to Michael Porter's *Theories of Global Competition and the Competitive Advantage of Nations* and look into the theory of how nations and industries compete, you find that they compete either on the basis of cost of production or by finding niche markets, or they compete on quality. There are factors of competition that need to be measured and taken into account, and we need to be realistic: an economy such as that of South Australia and Australia is better advised to compete on the basis of quality and innovation than on, say, the expectation that labour costs or other costs of production will be less than in a country like Thailand, Indonesia, India, China or elsewhere.

That is a very important message for Mitsubishi, and I note that this step in the direction of an innovation centre is a step in the right direction. Of course, having said that, you do not need activities or initiatives that hurt your ability to compete, and I am talking here now about industrial relations. I note with dismay that certain unions—although some unions have been extremely productive and cooperative in our automotive industry—have set out on a course that is making it very difficult for companies such as Mitsubishi to access parts.

In these days, when we do not have exhaustive warehouses where manufacturers of cars depend very much on the instant provision of parts and their immediate use, these sorts of industrial disputations are highly dangerous. I urge the state government, through its connections with the union movement, to do everything within its power to ensure that Mitsubishi and Holden's are not subject to industrial dispute which fatally damages their ability to compete in global markets. The example set so far by the Rann government has been pretty disappointing. Its reluctance and inability to get involved in resolving the recent dispute that affected Mitsubishi and Holden's was disappointing.

I think the government would be well advised to get involved, as did the previous Liberal government, in resolving these sorts of disputes early. Otherwise, as media reports today indicate, our car manufacturers will be forced to access parts from overseas and Australian workers will lose their jobs, Australian unions will lose their members, and Australian companies will simply be closed down as they are unable to compete and reliably provide parts. There is a message here: face up to the facts of life or you will be run over by a steamroller.

The next point, to which I referred earlier, involves quality, which I think is another challenge facing the car industry in this country, particularly in this state. There are still challenges ahead in terms of quality in both consistency and reaching the sorts of levels that we see from our competitors such as the European manufacturers and others that are producing cars of exquisite quality. I commend the efforts of

Mitsubishi and Holden's to make improvements in this regard.

In summary, I think this is an excellent motion, and I commend it to the house. The workers and management of Mitsubishi have done a wonderful job. I see encouraging signs of a new strategic direction involving innovation and quality, but I urge the Rann Labor government to do more to help Mitsubishi. I commend the government for continuing the good work of the previous state government and the federal government in helping Mitsubishi, but it can do more if it gets involved in helping with industrial issues—and I hope it does. There is a challenge ahead for the long haul to guarantee Mitsubishi's future, but I think that, if we follow the example that has been set and all work together, we can achieve incredible results.

Ms THOMPSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

ROWING, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I move:

That this house congratulates SA Sports Institute rowers Josephine Francou, Sally Causby, Amber Halliday and New South Wales scholarship holder Catriona Roach for their victory in the Women's Lightweight Quad Scull event at the 2001 World Rowing Championships in Switzerland.

I take the opportunity on behalf of the government and the South Australian community to reflect on a tremendous performance by some of our South Australian rowers. Rowing is a popular sport at secondary school level, and this state has produced a number of very successful state and national level rowers; in fact, in my own electorate I have a couple of schools with very good rowing teams.

A tremendous performance on the international rowing circuit has been that of three South Australian Sports Institute rowers—Josephine Francou, Sally Causby and Amber Halliday. Josephine, Sally and Amber were members of the Women's Lightweight Quad Scull team which won the world rowing title in Lucerne, Switzerland last year. This Adelaide based trio was also part of the scull which won the first world cup in Munich last year and managed to break the world record three times during their successful world championship campaign. It is great to see that Jo, Sally and Amber's efforts have been recognised locally at the recent *Advertiser/Channel 7* sports star ceremony. Along with reserve Miranda Bennett, the trio enjoyed a very successful awards night, winning the SASI team of the year. Collectively, they were also rated the female athlete of the year for 2001.

I acknowledge the role that SASI has played in developing and training the elite athletes in our state. The support that it provides through coaching facilities, services, training and competition opportunities is vital to our athletes reaching their highest potential. With the assistance of SASI and rowing coach Adrian David, who was named 2001 SASI coach of the year, it is not surprising that eight of the 10 women athletes in his squad have gained selection in Australian rowing teams. Therefore, I congratulate Josephine, Sally and Amber. You are outstanding performers in your chosen sport, and your success on the international sporting circuit has done South Australians and Australians proud.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to support this motion and give my and the opposition's hearty congratulations to these rowers. Rowing is a huge sport in South

Australia and around the world. Both young ladies and young men participate, and it is a good sport in which to be involved. My daughter did try out for rowing. Her arms were long enough, but apparently her legs were not. However, she is pretty tall, anyway. It is important to note that, although we have a world quality venue at West Lakes, the rowing there may be put on hold because of weed problems. The Barcoo Outlet has made the Patawalonga such a fantastic facility that they could switch rowing from West Lakes to the Patawalonga for a short while. The Barcoo Outlet is great. They have never shut the beach at the Barcoo Outlet, and the water quality is fantastic.

I do not want to detract from the prowess and achievements of the ladies we are discussing in this motion. My congratulations go to them. I quickly checked the background on women's rowing, and I saw that the Chairman of rowing in South Australia happens to be Michael Harbison. It is disappointing that, by a couple of hundred votes, Michael could not be here to move this motion himself. He won the majority of primary votes. However, that is life, and we move on. As I said, I do not want to detract from the fact that these ladies have attained a huge achievement. I rise to congratulate these ladies, and it is a great opportunity to be able to do so. I support the motion.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I also join in congratulating the members of the rowing team. I might digress a little, as the preceding speaker has. It is worth noting the full story of the Barcoo Outlet and its great achievements in terms of the South Australian coastline which, in the fullness of time, will be revealed to this parliament. I invite the member for Morphett, in his own interests, perhaps, to not constantly pin his colours to the Barcoo mast, because in the fullness of time that will not be helpful.

Motion carried.

NATIONAL ASIAN LANGUAGES PROGRAM

Mr CAICA (Colton): I move:

That this house condemns the federal government for discontinuing funding for the National Asian Languages and Studies in Australian Schools Program from the end of 2002.

I bring to members' attention the fact that commonwealth funding for a very valuable languages program in South Australian schools will cease at the end of the year, placing in jeopardy studies of Asian languages and culture. The commonwealth has decided not to continue funding for the National Asian Languages and Studies of Asia Strategy beyond 2002. That is in spite of the fact that the strategy has been recognised and evaluated to be a highly successful initiative achieving outstanding outcomes for Australian students and the community. It also goes against the initial intent of the strategy. The original report to the Council of Australian Governments states:

Projections suggest that, if implementation were to begin with year 3 in 1996, a program would not be finally implemented until 2006. Typically over the 10-year implementation period of the program, individual jurisdictions could move from year 3 to year 12 with progressively increasing numbers of students being involved as qualified teachers became available.

This decision also breaches the federal Liberal government's own agenda for multicultural Australia, which states that government will give high priority to the teaching of languages other than English.

I make the point here that several weeks ago, splattered all over Australia's newspapers, was a picture of the Prime

Minister, John Howard, under the heading, 'I was wrong.' I understand that a lot of people around Australia thought that could fit a whole host of things about which he and his government have been wrong over an extended period, but it seemed that the Prime Minister had woken up one morning and had a revelation that, after many years, Australia ought to orientate itself more towards full integration with Asia, and that our future welfare and wellbeing, not just from an economic point of view, lies in ensuring that those links with Asia are strengthened. This decision by the federal government with respect to Asian languages flies in the face of the revelation that it appears the Prime Minister had at that time.

Indeed, the federal coalition's response to a report in May 1999 by the National Multicultural Advisory Council, which recommended a continuation of the National Asian Languages and Studies of Asia Strategy, was one of support. Since the strategy was introduced in 1995, there has been a significant growth in the number of students learning an Asian language and engaging in Asian studies in South Australian schools. More than 54 000 South Australian students study Chinese, Indonesian or Japanese, and nearly half of all South Australian public schools offer at least one Asian language. I am pleased to say that my two sons have both studied Chinese, and my wife is a Japanese teacher.

The point I wish to make is that my sons, like many of the students who study Asian languages, will not necessarily become expert linguists in those languages, but some will, and that will be a good thing. However, just as importantly or perhaps more importantly than the language itself, those 54 000 South Australian schoolchildren are exposed to the culture that goes with that language. Here we are in a country with a federal government which says that it has decided that our future lies in Asia, after the revelation that the Prime Minister had one morning on waking up; yet the federal government is preventing these children from continuing to learn these languages.

The ridiculous aspect is that, by doing so, it not only prevents these children from learning languages and being exposed to other cultures, but it allows the federal government to promote fear and loathing—which it has used in the past—of those things that are different. Learning Japanese, Indonesian, Chinese, or any other language, teaches children about the culture and the people of that language they are studying—

Ms Thompson interjecting:

Mr CAICA: —and that is a good thing; and, as the member for Reynell says, it gives them a feeling of connection. It also prevents this government and future federal governments from being able to promote a race card that says, 'These people are different.' When children learn these languages and learn about the culture they realise that those people, like themselves, are just one of many peoples who make up this planet. There has also been significant growth in the studies of Asian programs, with 460 Access Asia Schools currently in the government school system in South Australia.

The teaching and learning of languages and cultures has been on the local and national agenda for many years. The National Asia Language and Studies of Asia Strategy was put in place based on a recommendation by a working group of the Council of Australian Governments designed to improve Australia's capacity and preparedness to interact internationally and, in particular, with key Asian countries, about which I was speaking previously. Well, it would seem that that is

out the window now as a result of a lack of commitment by the federal government.

The National Asia Language and Studies of Asia Strategy supports both government and non-government schools and was implemented to improve participation and proficiency levels in four targeted languages—Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese and Korean—and to introduce and maintain the Asian studies content in all areas of the curriculum. A national report in 1999 on the first quadrennium of the strategy noted that Australia's geographic and strategic position in the world makes it obligatory that our people develop knowledge and understanding of Asia and its languages and to be able to engage and communicate with neighbours in our region. It just seems so obvious.

A further report in 2001, commissioned by the commonwealth to evaluate the strategy's success, indicated that the program would wither and die within a very short time if commonwealth funding were not continued; and it would appear that that is what the commonwealth actually wants by stopping this funding. South Australia receives \$1.6 million a year for funding for this strategy. The reality for South Australia is that the premature cessation of this funding will limit the long-term development of languages and cultural programs in our public, Catholic and independent schools. The ongoing program of Asian languages and cultural studies was a program based on the 10 years of commonwealth funding.

It jeopardises the continuation of improved learning outcomes for students in South Australian schools and will restrict the state's capacity to deliver quality Asian language programs and Asian studies to young people. The continued delivery of language and cultural studies programs to all South Australian students is essential to support our curriculum framework and our focus on equity, social justice, social harmony, tolerance, multiculturalism, cultural and linguistic diversity, reconciliation and countering racism at schools. These programs enhance our educational advantage locally, nationally and globally, as clearly described in Labor's platform for education.

The South Australian government has written to the federal government with its concerns about the decision to end this funding. These concerns are shared by the independent and Catholic school sectors, which will also be affected by the funding cessation. It is important that growth in this particularly important area continues; without it the ability for our teachers and young people to build cultural and linguistic diversity and understanding of our Asian neighbours will be severely restricted. This is yet another example of the federal Liberal government's abrogating its national responsibilities for the funding of education and, in particular, Asian language and cultural education programs in South Australia.

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I certainly support this motion moved by the member for Colton. I have spoken many times in this place about the importance of studying languages, because, as the member rightly points out, knowing languages also gives people access to other cultures, as much of the time the information which should be available to us to learn about different cultures and customs is only available in the original language. Without adding too much to the debate, because the member for Colton has adequately highlighted the issues, I refer to an article in this week's *City Messenger* by Tracie McPherson. The article, which refers to our Lord Mayor Alfred Huang being very upset about Asian fund cuts, states:

Back from a trip to China as part of Education Adelaide, Lord Mayor Alfred Huang is shocked by the federal government's decision to cut funding to Asian studies in secondary schools.

'This move will be viewed negatively by our neighbours—it will disadvantage our selling points,' Mr Huang said.

The commonwealth has cut the \$30 million National Asian Languages and Studies in Australia Schools program. Federal Education Minister Brendan Nelson announced the cuts last month, saying the funding was only a start-up program, to be sustained by state and territory governments.

It means no more funding for professional development in Asian studies, no direct grants to schools for learning resources and no teacher scholarships for Asian languages.

Some schools may be forced to downgrade their Asian studies programs some may drop them completely.

'We need South Australians who are versed in the languages and the cultures of the countries we have relationships with. . . More and more we will be reliant on exports for our economic market. Asia is a growing market at the door of our country. We are trying to promote Adelaide and work towards its globalisation—the government should have a far sighted vision.'

Adelaide University's Centre for Asian Studies associate professor John Makeham labelled the funding cut 'very silly'. 'It was halfway through a 10 year program, he said. 'Opportunities to globalise Adelaide are ever-increasing.'

Mr Makeham anticipated the demand for Asian studies at a tertiary level would plateau as a result of this [very silly] cut.

'There may be isolated incidents where schools will not continue Asian studies at all.' . . . Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs Kevin Rudd said 276 South Australian government schools offered at least one Asian language.

'The teaching of Asian languages is complementing our export industry and enhancing future employment prospects for many young Australians. This has been particularly relevant in areas of tourism, financial services, accounting services, the internet, legal services and more.'

We have heard for many years from both this government and the former Keating government that we are part of the Asian region and, if we want to prosper, we certainly have to increase our links.

Even the former state Liberal government indicated that it was important to strengthen our ties. The federal government certainly seems to have taken a very short-sighted approach, because, in the greater scheme of things, \$30 million is really not a lot of money. However, if it had continued to put it into the education system, it certainly would have produced much greater economic benefits. Being a teacher and also from another cultural background, the member for Hartley would realise the importance that the study of languages and the teaching of languages is to our community.

It is not just for economic benefits either, because, as we know, migration patterns have changed in Australia. No longer do we have migrants coming from the southern and eastern European countries where the community languages they spoke were very important. Unfortunately, for those communities the lost language opportunities in this area have been great, particularly in relation to the aged care area. It is too late for the people from those communities who needed language support in order to access appropriate services, but we should be looking to the future.

As we now have many people from Asian countries coming to this state, we need to look at providing young people with the ability to speak these languages so that, in future years, we can ensure that we provide linguistically appropriate services for those people. So, it is a broader vision than just the economic benefits: it is about the social benefits and inclusion of all people in this state and also in Australia.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I have been concerned for quite a while that we do not take the teaching of languages, other than English, in our schools as seriously as we should. We have not been fair dinkum in teaching those languages, teaching them early enough and teaching them in a coordinated way. At the moment it is very much hit and miss as to whether or not someone is exposed to another language. I know that at one school a language that is taught is taught only because there happened to be a teacher who was surplus who could teach that particular language. There is nothing wrong with the language in question but it is not, in my view, the best way to decide whether or not you teach a particular language.

In regard to the question of Asian languages, there has been talk for over 20 years that Australians need to be more familiar not only with the language but also with the culture, because if you learn the language you tend to have a greater appreciation of the culture as well. But that idea seems to have faded in recent times. It reflects, to some extent, an arrogance on our part that everyone has to know English if they want to deal with us but we do not have to make an effort to understand their language or, indeed, their culture. As the member for Norwood pointed out, in some European countries, such as Denmark, the people speak a number of languages, and in countries such as Vietnam many learn English. It is interesting that they are taught grammar as part of that process so that they can understand why they say certain things the way they do in English, whereas, sadly, in our society we do not teach grammar so people have no rules to fall back on when it comes to understanding why they speak incorrectly.

But that is a little bit of a digression. The critical issue is that the teaching of Asian languages and other languages will happen only if there is a genuine commitment particularly by the federal government of the day. Over the last 10 or 20 years there has been a noticeable decline in the commitment to teaching languages in schools. We have seen the demise in regard to languages in the traditional area—Latin, and so on—and I think that we are all the poorer for omitting not only Latin but also modern languages from the offerings in our school system.

The other related issue is that we do not have enough qualified people to teach many of the languages so it will happen only if we train people to teach these languages—because not many people are native speakers—and that requires a commitment by the university and TAFE systems to contribute. So, I think that there needs to be a greater commitment in this country not only by governments but also by the population as a whole to really get serious about learning other languages and understanding the cultures that go with those languages. I have been appalled when observing some behaviour by people who have little understanding of other cultures: if they had learned the language of those other societies, they would be less likely to make some of those appalling errors in protocol and interaction that I have witnessed.

Therefore, this motion, I think, is important to highlight what is an unfortunate decision by the federal government. I hope it will reconsider its position or use the money maybe by way of a different mechanism to at least maintain a commitment to the teaching of Asian languages and other languages. I do not believe that one language is inherently superior to another but, given that we are located in this part of the world, it makes sense for us to have a sizeable

percentage of our population familiar with some of the more common languages in the Asian region.

I do not think we should ignore or neglect an understanding and teaching of European languages either, but, clearly, if schools have to make a choice in regard to what languages to teach, Asian languages should form part of that consideration. I also point out that, sadly, we have lost most of the Aboriginal language components. Very few have survived in any significant way, and I think that is another aspect of language maintenance that is disappointing. If we are not careful, many of those remaining Aboriginal languages will disappear as well.

I commend the member for Colton for raising this issue, and I trust that the federal government will reconsider its attitude and work with the state governments to ensure that Australians in the years ahead are more familiar with not only Asian languages but also European languages; that we do not overlook some of the classical languages; and that we also give due regard to the fast disappearing Aboriginal languages.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I, too, want to make a brief contribution on this debate. I will talk, briefly, about the issues relating to the teachers of Asian languages in our schools and the barrier that we are placing before them in being able to teach effectively. In the recent debate on educational matters, a number of members on both sides of the house talked about the importance of having teachers who inspire young people, particularly in the area of learning to live comfortably with our neighbours. It is really important that we have teachers who inspire young people to feel comfortable and interested in Asia; and to look towards Asia as a source of future employment, relationships and friendships, and, as in my family's case, marriages.

It will be very difficult for the teachers in our schools to get the skills necessary to teach Asian languages and to inspire our young people in this way if they are not given the opportunity to have in-depth and intensive professional development in these areas. Most people who are now teaching in our schools attended school at a time when Asian languages were not part of the curriculum. They have to put themselves through considerable effort and retraining to develop the skills to teach. They will be much more confident and inspiring if they have the opportunities that have been provided by the Asian Languages Program: to have intensive study experiences and to have supported visits to Asia so they can come back and talk with their students about the things that they have seen and learnt, and we all know, from our own experiences, the many little things that one learns by being in a completely different environment.

It is the things that you learn about the way in which other people live, and it is the things that you learn about yourself as you see your reaction to the way other people live—different ways of doing business and different approaches to meals and even booking into a hotel. All those things become important and open our minds. We want to have our children taught by teachers who have had these opportunities.

Already there is a problem staffing language programs, particularly in outer metropolitan and country areas. The Primary Principals Association has drawn attention to this and is concerned that this cutback in support for the teaching of Asian language will make this problem so difficult that many schools will withdraw from teaching in this area. I have seen the inspiration that can occur through an exchange visit with a principal from another school. Morphett Vale West

Primary School, a few years ago now, was happy to host the visit of an important Korean education official.

The whole school community became focused on learning about Korea, learning about how to make this gentleman welcome, and learning about the way he was teaching in his schools. When I met with him and hosted him to dinner here in parliament house, he in turn had been really impressed by the way in which our young children at Morphett Vale West were so active and eager to learn and were able to undertake so many research projects for themselves, the way they asked questions and the way they worked happily together in groups. This was a different style of teaching from what he was experiencing in Korea.

This was a great opportunity to learn from each other, build connections with our neighbours and develop the many assets of our young people. We need teachers who have had that special professional development to allow this learning experience to proceed. This move of the commonwealth government to withdraw funding from such a successful and useful program is quite incomprehensible. I commend the motion to the house.

Dr McFETRIDGE secured the adjournment of the debate.

SOUTHERN YOUTH WEEK FESTIVAL

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I move:

That this House congratulates the City of Onkaparinga and the Southern Youth Exchange on showcasing the talents of the youth of the south through another highly successful Southern Youth Week Festival.

I am very pleased to be able to talk today about another highly successful achievement of our young people in the south and to showcase again the way in which people in the City of Onkaparinga work together to deliver outcomes that are of benefit to our whole community and are particularly conscious of the need to support and develop our young people.

The 2002 Southern Youth Week Festival was held between 5 and 14 April. It saw the City of Onkaparinga abuzz with youth activities, workshops, events, exhibitions, forums, sports, recreation, music, dance and artistic projects. The festival included over 20 venues and schools around the area which took part by hosting projects or events, and well over 100 coordinators and volunteers facilitated these special activities. Three launches were held over the broad area of the City of Onkaparinga to maximise the opportunities for the young people and other members of the community being involved.

There was the central launch at Beach Road, and even that had two parts to it. I was pleased to participate in one part of it, and I know that the member for Kaurna, the Minister for the Southern Suburbs, was also delighted to participate in the second part of that central launch at Beach Road, where we were celebrating the opening of a shop at which young people from the area could sell their handicrafts. I recall that the member for Mawson was also able to visit that launch briefly.

There was a southern launch at Sellicks Beach and a northern launch at Aberfoyle Park, both of which were driven and assisted by young people who gained event management skills by participating in Eventcore, an accredited training module for youth in organising events. This training program is run by the Reynella Enterprise and Youth Centre. It shows ways of engaging young people in learning skills which they

find attractive and interesting and which will be useful in our increasingly complex world.

Twenty years ago, the thought that we might have something such as an apprenticeship in event management would have been well outside everyone's expectations, but today the Reynella Enterprise and Youth Centre runs a successful program in event management. Indeed, the local TAFE campus is looking to expand this by also running a program in event management to increase the opportunities for interesting employment for our young people.

In the time building up to the event, a number of young people participated in competitions and workshops so that they were able to showcase their work at the Southern Youth Week Festival. Several wearable art workshops and an iron woman sculpture were held in various venues around the southern area for people to create works out of water bladders, fabric, wetsuit and recycled materials. A team worked weekly to design and create a sand sculpture which was produced on a site near the art centre at Port Noarlunga.

Auditions were held in February and a group was formed to produce Rawstylin, a hip hop, funk dance troupe, which performed in Ramsay Place and again at the grand finale event. A Japanese fan dance and Highland dancers also rehearsed on a regular basis at the Christie Downs Community Centre for performances at these venues as well as at the National Youth Week launch in Adelaide. In Ramsay Place, just behind the Colonnades Shopping Centre, was the O2 Zone cafe where young people and the general public were able to enjoy music, dance and live performances. It was great to see the number of older members of our community who, while passing by, lingered to watch the talents and skills of young people performing there.

Many talented young artists had the opportunity to perform in this amphitheatre as well as at various other venues, including the Aldinga Youth Art and Dance Performance in the Youth Cafe, the grand finale and Battle of the Bands at the South Adelaide Football Club. There was also an under-age rage for 11 to 17 year olds, a dance party supervised by police, which reminds me that Blue Light discos were first introduced by the Christies Beach police. They continue to develop this concept of providing safe and innovative entertainment for young people by holding bowling parties and Blue Light ice parties, etc. The many volunteers from the Christies Beach police who contribute their time and money to enable these young people to enjoy these events are to be highly commended, and I congratulate and thank them. They brought their efforts together as part of the O2 festival. It is just another sign of the cooperation that occurs in the City of Onkaparinga to make the most of our limited resources.

The Noarlunga College Theatre hosted a junior jazz competition where young composers had the opportunity to hear their works performed by leading jazz musicians. Surrounding the foyer of this venue was the Southern Youth Art Exhibition, which was based on images of the southern area. A photography workshop and exhibition of these works was held at Coromandel Valley Community Centre. The Arts Centre at Port Noarlunga also hosted a visual arts exhibition as well as a series of short performances by the Southern Youth Theatre Ensemble (SYTE). As part of Youth Week, SYTE showcased their works in progress, 'Incubator', 'Funk' and 'Fresh Directions'.

This workshop performance was to a full house, and really challenged people to think about some of the events that concern young people in their lives. It also gave us an

opportunity through one of the performances—'Funk'—to just see young people having healthy fun. Over 500 people attended the O2 BMX Dirt Jumping at the Seaford Skate Park, enjoying the junior competitions and open jam sessions. Wirreanda High School hosted the O2 Sport and Recreation Day, where over 500 students from local schools participated in trying some of the 15 sporting activities.

Artist Jimmy C coordinated the design and creation of murals with students at Hackham East Primary School and Aberfoyle Park High School. Police forums and youth band Nannas Cane were invited to present presentations and perform in various local high schools during Youth Week. Another interesting and innovative event was the quiz night held at the Hackham West Community Centre where many young people enjoyed the challenge of a quiz night and enjoyed doing battle, so to speak, with some of the older active volunteers at the Hackham West Community Centre. Both groups were amazed by what the other group knew—the young people were really surprised about how much some of the older people knew about their culture, and the older people were surprised by how much the young people knew about everything. So that was a really good and innovative opportunity for young people to have some fun doing something which has been traditionally associated with older people, and to engage with some of their more senior members of their community.

Another event was a sleepover at the Adelaide Gaol where 25 young people were involved in a pyjama party, and there was another team of young people who created three-dimensional artworks out of cane and transparent materials for presentation at the grand finale. On the last day of the festival, audiences were invited to the grand finale to see the culmination of the week's events and activities at the South Adelaide Football Club. The afternoon line-up included Neporendi (a local aboriginal performance group), Multicultural and Rawstylin dancers, SYTE, Inside Out and Sol Capoeira performances, Strange Relations, Okta, Project X and Manakin, The John Reynolds Raiders, the Onkaparinga City Concert Band and Kensington/Norwood Brass Bands. I think that members can tell from the mixture of those titles that we understood, and those we didn't, that the grand finale was indeed an exciting and varied event.

The City of Onkaparinga initiative hosted the largest Youth Week program statewide throughout the National Youth Week Festival. It gave our youth an opportunity to be creative and express themselves, gain new skills and develop confidence in their own abilities. A special thank you must go to all the venue and project coordinators, the sponsors, workshop participants, volunteers, carers, supporters and all the talented people who make this festival successful. Overall, there was something for everybody to either become involved in or sit back and enjoy, and appreciate the talented young artists from our community who were performing, exhibiting or showcasing their skills or works, or just having fun.

There were far too many people involved in this program to name. I would have started the list when I started speaking and I would still be naming them. However, there are two people who do need to be mentioned, and they are Leeza Peters (the festival coordinator from council) and Ksenija Bould (one of the youth workers from council), who were really key to putting this exciting program together. It is worth pausing to consider what is regarded through the comprehensive evaluation process as the main achievements

of the festival, because these are indeed worthwhile achievements in our community.

Debate adjourned.

[Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2 p.m.]

BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

In reply to **Mrs PENFOLD** (29 May).

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am advised by officers of my department that the Recyclers of South Australia Association, is being kept fully briefed on the scope of additional beverages and types of containers to be introduced under the new arrangements.

I am also advised that a process is in place to assist the beverage industry to work through the changes required to comply with the new arrangements. This industry consultation and awareness-raising process will also provide beverage manufacturers and distributors with the opportunity to ask questions regarding the new regulations.

There has already been media coverage of the regulatory changes since they were first introduced in September 2000. Further, the local *Messenger* newspaper group published articles on the impending changes following a mail-out from the EPA to beverage manufacturers, importers and fillers.

Proposals for public and retail awareness campaigns are in hand but are unlikely to proceed until the EPA is confident that the beverage and recycling industry is fully prepared for the changes. It is envisaged the community awareness campaign will be launched closer to the introduction date, and it is planned to involve the collection depots and others in its funding and development. If launched too early we are likely to experience public bringing in empty containers for which there is no deposit or hoarding of non-deposit containers in an attempt to gain 5¢ for each container come 1 January 2003 for which a deposit has not been paid.

MEMBERS' TRAVEL

The SPEAKER: Between now and the resumption of parliament in July, a number of members will seek to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues of public importance by accessing their entitlement to parliamentary travel rules. As a tenet of good business practice, and indeed of any quality assurance program, people should undertake to plan the work and work the plan, or say what they will do and then do what they say.

All members should be aware that members of the public have a right to be absolutely assured that they are getting value for the taxpayer dollars invested in such study trips. As members are also aware, it is both the duty and the responsibility of the Speaker to ensure that all applications for travel are appropriate, and the chair has taken some pains over the past three months to try to ensure this.

As part of that strategy, I have been asking members for detailed plans of their itineraries before giving my approval. That has occurred regardless of the affiliation in political terms. It has been pointed out to me that some members consider such a level of detail to be inappropriate in cases where there may be sensitivity involving naming beforehand those people whom the member wishes to see, or interview, in the course of the study trip. I understand that and I have given that concern my very deep and extensive consideration.

In future, members who do not wish to provide such detail ahead of a trip will need to keep in mind the acquittal process that follows. I advise the house that from today forward a member's official report, which must be lodged with the Parliamentary Library at the completion of a study trip, will now also be published on the parliamentary internet site so that all members of the public can access all details of the report, to make a judgment for themselves on whether they, as constituents, indeed whether they as any South Australians

see themselves, are receiving real value for money from these study tours.

I also draw attention to the other recently tested mechanism for members to help our state and our constituents. There will be opportunities for members to participate in interparliamentary delegations to other nations and provincial parliaments. There will be a number of such delegations each year, led by the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees and accompanied in each case by at least one cabinet minister.

There has been unanimous and enthusiastic approval of this concept of interparliamentary delegations from ambassadors, high commissioners and other diplomatic corps representatives with whom I have discussed this matter since becoming Speaker.

POLICE INVESTIGATION

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Government Enterprises): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I apologise to the house that I do not have the statement for circulation: it will be given to the house as soon as possible. Yesterday, in the Legislative Council, the Hon. Rob Lucas raised a number of issues regarding my conduct in relation to a current police investigation. I repeat that I did not request the Commissioner of Police to remove any police officer from any investigation. I would like to read a minute from the commissioner on the matter. Addressed to the Hon. the Minister for Police and dated today, it states:

I refer to your request for advice on the comments made by the Hon. Rob Lucas MP in the Legislative Council on 5 March 2002 and your minute this date in respect of those comments. In early February 2002, a number of matters were referred to the South Australia Police Anti-Corruption Branch involving the Hon. Peter Lewis MP. To minimise the risk of South Australia Police being drawn into political issues, especially those of a party political nature, the standard procedure is for a preliminary assessment to be conducted to determine whether an investigation is warranted. This process occurred on this occasion.

On Friday 1 March 2002, I received a telephone call from the Solicitor-General, Brad Selway. Mr Selway expressed concern that South Australia Police may be drawn into a political/constitutional situation through allegations involving Mr Peter Lewis. I advised him of our process and that we would follow normal procedures. I reflected on Mr Selway's call and later spoke to the investigating officer, Inspector Rick Perry, and the Officer in Charge, Anti-Corruption Branch, Superintendent Mick Symons. I was concerned that Superintendent Symons had been associated with the Liberal Party and that his involvement in the case may raise perceptions of bias.

Consequently, I told him that I would arrange for Commander Phil Cornish to oversight the case from a quality assurance perspective, so that not only would it be impartial it would be seen to be impartial. I made that arrangement with Commander Cornish. I further considered the matter over the weekend and decided that it would be better to remove Superintendent Symons entirely from the case. On Monday 4 March I made that arrangement.

I point out that date: two days before the Labor government was sworn in.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: What? I'm an influential shadow minister, Rob? The minute continues:

The case remained in the Anti-Corruption Branch but overall responsibility was passed to Commander Cornish. On Thursday 14 March 2002, I attended a meeting with you at your office. I confirm you informed me of concern that had been raised with you about the independence of the police handling of the Lewis case with Superintendent Symons being involved—

the same point that the Solicitor-General made—

Mr Hanna: When they were in government.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: When they were in government. I continue:

I advised you that I had taken steps to overcome this problem and undertook to provide you with a briefing note on the way these matters are handled. A copy is attached—

I will not be referring to that: it would not be appropriate—

I advised both Superintendent Symons and Commander Cornish of the issue you had raised to confirm with them the action I had taken was appropriate and had been reinforced by subsequent events. I am somewhat unsure whether you raised any concerns on this matter prior to 14 March.

I certainly did not do it prior to 4 March, because I was not the minister. The minute continues:

I have no specific recollection of this occurring and no notes on this subject apart from the matters referred to above, of which I made notes. In any event, I made the decision to remove Superintendent Symons from the case prior to and quite independent of any concerns you raised with me. In respect of the specific issues raised in your minute to me today I advise:

- On two occasions that I recall when raising matters with me you prefaced your comments with words to the effect that you did not want to discuss anything which was not proper for you to do so. I do not recall whether this occurred on 14 March in the context of our discussion on the Lewis case, though it is quite likely you did so as it was one of our earlier meetings.
- I confirm my policy is to maintain strict operational independence and would not discuss matters with you where it was not proper to do so unless I was directed under the Police Act.
- You neither sought to direct me on the Lewis case nor sought the removal of any officer. You did concur that the action that I had taken was appropriate.
- I confirm that the decision to remove Superintendent Symons from the case was solely mine and not as a consequence of any request or direction from you.

Sir, I will table that as well as the minute that I sent to the police.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain that my answers in this place were designed to protect the reputation of a police officer. I now believe it is in the best interests of the police, the investigation and community confidence to explain why there have been concerns about the participation of Superintendent Mick Symons in this investigation. I did not wish to do that, but I will do it now. Superintendent Symons is a former adviser to the Hon. John Olsen. He has been the subject of political controversy in this house before. I believe the Commissioner of Police made a sound and correct decision in removing Superintendent Symons from this investigation. The Commissioner's minute makes it plain that every conversation I have had with the Commissioner on this matter has been absolutely proper, and that the decision to remove Inspector Symons predated the formation of a Labor government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Rob Lucas and the Liberal Party owe an apology to me and to the Commissioner.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General has the call.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: As the house is aware, the state government has entered into a compact for good government with the Hon. I.P. Lewis. The aim of the compact

is to provide for stable, open and accountable government which works productively for the people of South Australia. As part of the compact (I refer to clause 20) the government undertook within six months of the commencement of the 50th Parliament:

To facilitate constitutional and parliamentary reform by establishing a South Australian Constitutional Convention to conduct a review of the Constitution and Parliament and to report to Parliament by 30 June 2003.

An annexure to the compact stated that sufficient funds as deemed necessary by the Speaker would be required to meet the costs associated with the work related to the Constitutional Convention. The Hon. I.P. Lewis has since been elected Speaker and, at the Premier's request, has discussed these matters with me.

I wish to advise the house that cabinet has approved a budget for \$570 000 for 2002-03 for the Constitutional Convention process. The Chief Executive of the Attorney-General's Department will be responsible for the keeping of financial records associated with the Constitutional Convention process. Accordingly, the amount will be held in a special deposit account as an administered item within the Attorney-General's Department. The convention will have four staff members dedicated to the project who will be funded out of that \$570 000.

The process of the convention has not yet been formalised. At this stage, it is certain that there will be a series of meetings throughout South Australia, many of them in rural and remote areas. The Speaker will address these meetings, as will I, and we hope someone on behalf of the opposition. Members of the public will be encouraged to attend to discuss their ideas for constitutional reform and to learn from others. These rural community meetings should raise awareness of the Constitutional Convention process. An informal group of constitutional experts from a wide range of backgrounds and with varying opinions is being gathered to write papers of aspects of the state constitution and to propose models of constitutional change. I report to the house that there is also another conference on constitutional matters that is being hosted by the University of Adelaide in August this year. I am sure the Speaker welcomes the debate that will be encouraged through this convention, and \$15 000 has been provided for that convention through the Attorney-General's Department.

SCHOOLS, TANUNDA PRIMARY

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I seek leave to make a brief ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: In response to a question yesterday from the member for Schubert on the sale of the former Tanunda Primary School site—

An honourable member: The trick question?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: No, that was another one. I made brief reference yesterday to a piece of correspondence that I had recently sighted. I said in reference to the correspondence that I would have to get the details and the dates because I did not have them with me. I then went on to describe the correspondence from the council as being written to the Education Department, signalling its intention to turn part of the site into housing. My memory is not quite as it used to be and the letter was not to the Education Department. The letter from the Barossa council was to Crown Lands SA, so I

correct that detail. The letter was signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Barossa council, Judith Jones, and it was written on 25 July 2001. It was titled 'Former Tanunda Primary School site' and the relevant portion of the letter states:

I advise that part of the land will be for residential use, part for open space and the two buildings will have commercial use.

MINISTER'S REMARKS

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order. Yesterday I took a point of order with respect to the Minister for Transport's allegation that a person from another place had robbed the piggy bank. You, sir, did not hear and you therefore ruled hypothetically that, were that to have happened, you would have thought it improper and asked the member to withdraw. As it is recorded in *Hansard* that the minister said twice that the minister for transport at the time robbed the piggy bank, will you now ask the minister to withdraw his improper imputation on the former minister?

The SPEAKER: Order! In consideration of the point of order, I advise that the usual situation is that the point is taken at the time, and I acknowledge that the member for Unley took a point of order at the time. I do not regard it as being in any sense unparliamentary, although it may have been unwise of the minister to have said it. Accordingly, if the minister cares to apologise, I invite him to do so, but I will not order him to do so.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I am happy to apologise. If the member for Unley is upset by it, I am sorry that I have upset him. I am very happy to apologise.

The SPEAKER: I thank the minister for his courtesy and good conduct.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Let us not spill the inkwell across the copybook again.

QUESTION TIME

POLICE INVESTIGATION

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I direct my question to the Minister for Police. Who were the people, including those in the Labor Party, who raised concerns with the minister about the involvement of a certain officer in the investigation before the minister raised the issue with the Police Commissioner? On the ABC this morning the minister said, 'People raised concerns with me and I stress not simply the Labor Party.'

The SPEAKER: The minister. I am not sure that the minister is accountable to the house and to those people, and, in no small measure, that goes pretty close to the bone on parliamentary privilege. The minister.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Police): I am happy to take the question. I will say this, though, sir: I really think that if members opposite had an ounce of decency they would be embarrassed to ask any further questions on this matter. Their former treasurer—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I want to know who has standards in this place. I invite them to join with the Hon. Rob Lucas in the other place if they want to attack me on this, because let me make two things absolutely plain—and I will come to the deputy leader's question in a moment. I make two things plain: first, the disgraceful allegations made

yesterday by the former treasurer under parliamentary privilege have been shown to be absolutely baseless and false.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Did you sack Symons, did you?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: They have not been shown to be that—

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Did you sack Symons?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON:—by my word: they have been shown to be that by the Police Commissioner, who was appointed twice—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I rise on a point of order, sir.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The leader has a point of order.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: The Premier has just made an accusation across the house that I sacked Mick Symons, and I ask him to withdraw.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: I said, 'Did you?'

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: No, you didn't.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: You did not.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Did the Premier make an accusation that the Leader of the Opposition sacked Mick Symons?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Sir, I asked the question because, quite clearly, what the record shows is that the Police Commissioner has revealed that Mr Symons was taken off the case while the leader was Premier.

The SPEAKER: Let's cool it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister for Government Enterprises.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Thank you, sir. I continue. I stress that if members opposite had any decency—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will not comment on the former treasurer.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier, Deputy Premier and Leader of the Opposition will stop quarrelling across the chamber. I am trying to hear the Minister for Government Enterprises.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will not comment on what I think of the former treasurer, the Hon. Rob Lucas, because I can guarantee that it would be unparliamentary. What I will say about the Hon. Rob Lucas is that he got that 'honourable' in the same way as Mark Antony attributed it in Julius Caesar, a work by Shakespeare, but I will leave members opposite to puzzle that one out. Let me say this: Rob Lucas besmirched my character yesterday and he besmirched the character of the commissioner. He was shown to be absolutely wrong every point of the way, and he was shown to be wrong not just by me but by the commissioner whom they appointed twice.

They appointed him and reappointed him to a five-year term, and they did it because he is a man of standards and ethics; and I tell members that the Hon. Rob Lucas in the other place will not understand that because he is a stranger to ethical behaviour. To answer the specific question—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: And I will answer questions on this all day because I will tell members what I did yesterday.

The Hon. Dean Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will not excite interjections from the opposition.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will take questions on this all day long because I will tell you, Mr Speaker, what I did yesterday. When scurrilous, disgraceful allegations were made against me and, by implication, the Police Commissioner of this state under parliamentary privilege, I did not come in here and seek the protection of that same privilege: I went straight outside and faced the media, faced the music and told the truth, which is something I tell this chamber I will continue to do while I am a member of this place. I will do it in here and I will do it outside.

I went out and faced the media and answered awkward questions. I knew that I had my character wrongly traversed and I knew that a matter of time would show that. However, I was prepared not to wait: I was prepared to go out and answer the questions. I ask members opposite: will they have their former treasurer, the Hon. Rob Lucas, now go out and do the same thing? Do what I did yesterday, that is all I ask of him: go outside and answers questions.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I remind you, Mr Speaker, that I asked a very specific question, and I am seeking a very specific answer.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order, in that the question canvasses a matter that has been the subject of a statement to the house this day, as well as statements that have been made publicly by members of both chambers, and the minister in responding obviously feels the necessity to ensure that the answer does not lead to the imputation that anything he may have done or left undone was improper in any degree. I invite the minister to wind up his remarks so that we can get on with the rest of question time.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will do that because I think I have made the point. I am not going to tell the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and everyone who raises concerns with me, because I do not think they would like the answer on all occasions. I do not like the fact that I have had to drag out the name of the police officer in this place through the member's persistent questioning and then the attack in the upper house. But I will tell you that there are a number of people who raised questions with me and, to the best of my memory, some of them were with the media.

POLICE OPERATIONS

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): Does the Minister for Police consider it appropriate to talk to the Police Commissioner about operational matters?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Police): One of the fundamental misapprehensions raised by the Hon. Rob Lucas in another place was that I should not have been talking to the Police Commissioner about operational matters. While it is absolutely clear that on sensitive matters I have to be very careful how I do that—and I refer to the earlier minute from the Police Commissioner concerning which, out of an abundance of caution, I stressed that on sensitive matters we should not talk about anything improper. Were I not to talk to the Police Commissioner about operational matters (as is believed), I could save an awful lot of time because, instead of meeting the commissioner weekly, I could meet him every six months.

Here is the fundamental problem with the misconceptions of Rob Lucas in another place. When the member for Stuart a couple of weeks ago asked me what the police would do about stock stealing in his electorate, he was asking about the

operations of the police. I cannot get that information for him unless I talk to the police about operational matters. I am sure, Mr Speaker, that you would like me to attempt to honour my obligations in this place to provide information to proper questions. So, I want to add that point to the list of fundamental misconceptions of Rob Lucas in another place. It is entirely proper for me to talk to the Police Commissioner about operational matters, and I point out that it has been shown that when a matter is sensitive I do that with extreme caution.

INSURANCE, INDEMNITY

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Has the Attorney-General seen the certificate of owner's consent issued by his own department under the government's building indemnity exemption scheme and does he acknowledge that this is an unworkable document and inconsistent with the Attorney's ministerial statement to the house on this issue? Mr Speaker, with your concurrence and that of the house—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: —I will try to explain my question, if I may.

The SPEAKER: You may, and you will have my protection.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Thank you. The opposition has been informed by members of the building industry that the government's proposals are unworkable and the majority of builders who attempt to make application for ministerial exemption will be thwarted at the first hurdle. Under the government's proposed exemption scheme, the first requirement for the builder is to have their client sign a certificate of owner's consent, and I quote from that certificate put out by the Attorney's own department, as follows:

By signing this certificate in the presence of an independent witness, you are acknowledging that you understand that if the builder is granted an exemption you will not be able to claim on a policy of building indemnity insurance the cost of completing the building work or fixing of the building should the builder become insolvent, dies or disappears.

Throughout this process, the Attorney has indicated that consumer protection is the uttermost consideration of the government. However, the first requirement under the government's scheme is for the consumer to sign away that right to that protection, even though under this same scheme outlined in the ministerial statement the minister's department would be holding a bank guarantee for \$80 000; hence, you can see the enormous inconsistency with the department.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): There seems to be some logical flaw in the question. Of course we will require builders seeking exemption from building indemnity insurance to inform the consumer—the owner of the house—that upon its completion they will not have the benefit of building indemnity insurance. It is one of the first principles of consumer protection that you tell the consumer what is the true situation. So, there are various ways of getting exemptions from building indemnity insurance.

The opposition and the Master Builders Association were crying out for these exemptions. Now we have brought them in, but we will bring them in on a logical and consistent basis. It is of the very essence of consumer protection that consumers should be aware so that, if a builder has an exemption from building indemnity insurance, the consumer must know

and be told that a policy of building indemnity insurance no longer stands behind the builder should that builder die or go out of business. The consumer needs to know that there is not a policy of building indemnity insurance to cover non-completion and the statutory warranties for the next five years.

I cannot see the nub of the deputy leader's question. We are behaving sensibly, have consulted widely and are doing our best in the circumstances. The deputy leader keeps suggesting that this scheme of exemptions is not working. He suggests that there are hundreds of builders out there who cannot get insurance, but we have had only 20 applications in the first few days and I am about to approve three of them already. The scheme is working well; it is a difficult situation. This is an example of an opposition lacking questions to ask and relying on a minority disgruntled element in one association that has already agreed to the scheme.

PUBLIC SERVICE CONTRACTS

Mr CAICA (Colton): Will the Minister for Government Enterprises advise the house whether there are any Public Service contracts entered into by the previous government with which he has concerns?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Government Enterprises): I thank the member for Colton for his question. Yes, there are Public Service contracts entered into by the former government with which I had concerns and continue to have serious concerns, having made some inquiry into them. As background, soon after becoming Minister for Police I discovered a few things that I thought were somewhat unusual. In the former Minister for Police's office in about December last year, about three public servants under the Public Service Act were put on three month contracts in the minister's office. The timing did seem to me rather peculiar given that, if you were to put a temporary public servant on a three month contract, the Christmas shutdown period was probably not the ideal time to do it.

A further piece of information that I discovered made me even more suspicious about these contracts and to desire further inquiry. I found out that the former chief of staff of the Minister for Police, Rob Young, sought informal advice from Crown Law as to what public servants and others could do in terms of political activity.

The Hon. K.O. Foley: Political activity?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Yes, political activity. That advice, Mr Speaker, and I will be happy to hand it to you a little later, indicated that, while there were some grey areas relating to ministerial and electorate office staff, and it explored that at some length and talked about how difficult an area it is to define, it was absolutely clear about Public Service Act employees. That advice dated 4 December said:

There is a clear convention that public servants and employees of public sector agencies must not be required to undertake work of a political nature. That is the case even though they may be assigned to work in a ministerial office.

End of story. There is no equivocation, no grey areas—public servants should not be doing political work. In light of this information, on 27 May I wrote to the current Chief Executive Officer of the Attorney-General's Department, within which the police ministry is contained. I asked her about these contracts, and I will read selections of the response, and I will hand it to you, sir, later for your view on how the table should be dealt with. I will provide to you the earlier letter, if you so request. The letter is addressed to me and states:

Re public service contracts—

I will say that, in going through this letter, one of the contracts did prove to be unremarkable. I will not refer to the person who held that contract, because I do not believe it would be appropriate. I will refer to the others, however. The letter goes on:

I refer to your letter of 27 May 2002 regarding the above.

The contracts

The Director, Human Resource Management, has conducted a preliminary investigation regarding employment of the following three staff in December 2001 in the former Minister of Police's office:

Nathan Robinson

Nathan was employed from 12 December 2001 to 8 March 2002 at the third increment of ASO-1, \$21 429 per annum. His position title was 'Staff Assistant to the Minister'. Whilst the contract refers to a duty statement, it was not attached and it would appear it did not exist.

Emily Slaytor

Emily was employed from 10 December 2001 to 8 March 2001 at the first increment of ASO-3, \$37 086 per annum. Her position title was 'Research Officer and again, whilst the contract refers to a duty statement, it was not attached and it would appear that it did not exist.

I will skip—

The SPEAKER: Does the member for Unley have a point of order?

Mr BRINDAL: No, Mr Speaker, but I just ask: I do not deny the minister's right to answer the question but I just question whether, if he is talking about inappropriate action on this side of the house, people who may not themselves have been culpable should have their name read into the record. That is the only point I am making.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The minister.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I understand the sensitivity, but I can guarantee that what I am doing today does not compare with what your former treasurer did yesterday in the abuse of privilege. I will skip part of the letter, because it does refer to someone I do not want to deal with, because it appears absolutely clear that the contract was beyond reproach. The letter continues:

I have had a discussion with—

I will not name the officer—

regarding the above appointments which she says, occurred prior to her commencing in minister Brokenshire's office and were organised by Robert Young. . .

In relation to Nathan Robinson and Emily Slaytor [the officer] is unable to advise what they were doing for the department during their appointments. She says that Nathan may have been taking notes whilst the former minister interviewed constituents in his electorate office and she is not sure what Emily did, but she was employed as a result of the addition of gambling to the former minister's portfolio.

She says that Emily and Nathan 'were hardly ever in the Office' and when they returned to the office they were sunburnt and they said they were 'out campaigning'.

The minute then states:

[The officer] believes they were campaigning with Liz Moncrieff, Bev Brown and Rob Young, in particular, she believes they were letter-boxing. She advised that she has also had a conversation about the employment of these people with Kyam Maher, who has asked similar questions.

I am not surprised by that. In my letter I asked the former chief executive of the Attorney-General's Department whether she had any personal knowledge of what these people were doing. She replied:

You have asked whether I had any personal contact or conversation with any of these people that might indicate what duties they were required to perform. Whilst I believe I may have met all of the three contract staff, my only recollection is of a conversation with

Nathan Robinson, who inquired with me as to whether he would be required once his contract finished on the Friday. When I asked him what he did he said he had been letter-boxing and helping Mr Brokenshire.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! This is a very serious matter and the Premier and the Deputy Premier will conduct themselves in an orderly manner.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: At least someone knew what was right and what was wrong, because the chief executive goes on to say:

I immediately asked human resources to ensure that he was no longer in the office. I believe he finished, with pay, a day early, however, I could not swear to this.

What is raised here is a matter of the most serious nature. We are not precious or coy in this business and, as the advice of Crown Law indicates, there are grey areas for ministerial staff; there are grey areas for electorate staff; there are no grey areas for public servants. To employ a public servant—if that is what has occurred—for a gain for a political party, for a member of a political party, is to take public money and misuse it. I make that absolutely plain: to employ a public servant for your personal benefit, the benefit of a party or the benefit of a particular member, is to take public money and misuse it. It is my view that this matter cannot rest where it is. In the first instance I will be forwarding the correspondence for further inquiry to the Commissioner for Public Employment, as that is the first place it should go. But let me say—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I was wondering when someone would chirrup up—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Do you want to defend public servants doing letter-boxing?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It would appear that the real offence here is that not only were public servants apparently used improperly, but they first checked to see what they could do; then, knowing it was wrong, they did it. It would appear that we have the actus reus and the mens rea. That is, we have the act and we have the necessary mental state.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: The guilty mind.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: As the Attorney says, we have the actual act and we have the guilty mind. Just to make it plain that it was abundantly clear, I also refer to a minute to the chief executive's officers which states:

Generally, public servants must not be seen to be supporting particular issues or parties during the election campaign.

It goes on, but do I need to explain to the house that no government, no minister, no executive, no chief of staff can take public money and misuse it for the benefit of their political party or for the local member? As I say, Mr Speaker, it is a matter of great seriousness and we will be requiring a full and proper investigation.

MURRAY RIVER FISHERY

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Premier tell the house why river fishers have been denied the opportunity to have—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Just listen for a moment.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Well, have a listen. Why have the river fishers been denied the opportunity to have legal representation at the meeting with the minister, his advisers and senior fisheries officers tomorrow, and will the Premier intervene to allow that legal representation to occur? River fishers are to meet with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries tomorrow to receive more detail on the ban that was announced more than three months ago. The opposition has been informed that a request from the fishers to have their legal representative attend this very important meeting, as they feel is their right, has been declined by the minister's office.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): When the Leader of the Opposition stood up I thought it was going to be to apologise, at least, to the Police Commissioner whom his government appointed on two occasions and whom (by implication) the opposition accused yesterday of breaching his act and solemn oath. I should have hoped that the Leader of the Opposition would go out of the parliament and apologise to the people of this state because, quite honestly, when I look at the record of this government and the ministers and all the resignations that occurred that were without shame—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: On a point of order, sir, the Premier has the call to answer a question. He is debating a previous question. He has not yet touched on the subject of the question asked.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Premier will come back to the matter raised in the inquiry put by the leader.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I can understand the member for Newland's sensitivity, given that she was the person who was asked to do the dirty work yesterday. I have answered these questions about the fishers on so many occasions. However, I will raise the leader's concerns with the minister, who is meeting with the fishers, as I understand it, tomorrow.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I have a supplementary question, given the importance of this meeting to the fishermen. The Premier obviously did not listen to the question. The question was that they have been denied legal representation, which is their right: will he please intervene?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I will get a report from the minister and I will also arrange for the leader to have a briefing from the minister in due season, as I have told him. And can I just give some advice to the Leader of the Opposition: whoever is writing your questions is setting you up, and the rest of your opposition team are laughing at you.

POLICE INVESTIGATION

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Police admit that statements he made yesterday are inconsistent with what has been said today? Yesterday the minister said:

He had, well, I understand the time frame, I mean feel free to speak with the Commissioner. The time frame had been the previous Friday and over the, he had made the decision on the previous Friday, he had thought further about that and then spoke to me on Monday and then.

Further, today the minister has said that the meeting with the Police Commissioner was on 14 March. However, 14 March turns out to be a Thursday, not a Monday.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Police): I apologise if I was not absolutely clear on which day it was I spoke to the commissioner, but let us put some unassailable

dates on the table. The decision to remove the officer in question was taken two days before a Labor government was sworn in. I say to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that, if he continues to disbelieve me on this matter, he is not merely disbelieving me: he is disbelieving the commissioner whom his government appointed for two terms. That is why I have tried to explain to him that he not only traduced my good name yesterday but he traduced the good name of the commissioner, and it is disgraceful. If the deputy leader was concerned about getting statements accurate, he would not be in here continuing to insult and bother me. He would be scurrying off to the other place to have the other bloke tell the truth.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): Will the Premier assure the house that no public money will be spent on producing publications or advertisements promoting the first 100 days of the Labor government? Listen to the mirth opposite! For the last four years the then leader of the opposition and the Labor Party were severely critical of any instance where they suspected that government money was involved in promoting the continuation of a government. Prior to the election and during the election campaign this government promised to significantly curb advertising expenditure. Therefore, I ask: will the Premier fulfil his electoral promises to the people of South Australia and not spend government money on advertising?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): The honourable minister yesterday, in a display more of flamboyance than learning, came in here with a book he was reading about Adolf Hitler.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: No, this is very relevant.

The SPEAKER: Order! Does the member for Unley have a point of order, or is he merely engaging in rhetorical point scoring?

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I should be addressed by my title. I am no longer the honourable minister. I point that out to the Premier.

The SPEAKER: Order! Whatever our fortunes in that respect, I accept them.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I believe in the American system where you keep your title for life, because you will never get it back in reality, let us face facts. The honourable member was in here yesterday reading a book on Hitler. I thought that that showed a bit of contempt for the process of the parliament and for the school children in the gallery. I wondered whether he was reading the chapter about Joseph Goebbels. I have asked the Treasurer to detail when we come back from the break the millions of dollars that the honourable member's government spent not only on consultants and the \$115 million you apparently spent on selling ETSA, paid to consultants who debauched the process. No, we will go further than that: we will itemise it so that the people of this state can see the massive amount of money you spent on billboards, on lift-outs, on newspapers—

An honourable member: Numberplates!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: On numberplates—'Going all the way'! We all remember 'Going all the way'. It was the moment of genius of a former premier—now Deputy Leader of the Opposition—before they sacked him. I got a lot of phone calls up to the point where the former premier was dismissed and one hell of a lot afterwards, and all sorts of

stories can be told. However, let me tell members this: the real story of the massive amount of money that members opposite have spent on consultants and public relations will be itemised in this chamber by the Treasurer to your absolute embarrassment. Yes, we will be celebrating the achievements of this government—real achievements, not selling off the state as you did; not wanting complicity to turn the state into a nuclear waste dump; not what you did in running down the education system and the health service. When we spend money on publicising achievements, it will involve nowhere near the amount of money that you people spent publicising yourselves.

INSURANCE, INDEMNITY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): What recent action has the Minister for Small Business taken to help small businesses in the tourism industry cope with the increasing costs of indemnity insurance? Information leaked to the opposition reveals that the government has been subsidising increases in public liability insurance premiums being incurred by tourism operators. Will this scheme continue?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Small Business): The member for Waite highlights an issue that is always a problem when there is a change of government. The ship of government is rather like a vessel at sea that moves slowly and, when new governments take over, there is always a transition period when it is difficult to steer the ship. In our case there was no-one at the helm for several months before, and the issue of small business in tourism was in the member for Waite's jurisdiction. There are several dates that are significant in this matter.

The point I am trying to make is that, when a new government takes over, they are left with several policies and strategies from the previous government. We were surprised to find that in February this year, when the member for Waite was the minister for tourism—the fifth minister for tourism and the last minister for tourism of the former government—his commission made a decision that they would subsidise the public liability insurance policies of small business. His government made that decision. You might say that, if you subsidise small business in tourism, you should subsidise doctors, nurses, builders and railway lines. In fact, you could give various sums of money to pay everyone's public liability insurance.

I remind members that in February when the decision was made the minister was the member for Waite. At that point a decision was made to put out a call to tourism operators throughout the state asking if they would like the state government to subsidise their public liability insurance. The date that was particularly interesting in this issue was 6 March. Whilst the tourism portfolio was almost without a driver, the hands were off the wheel from the period of October through to March, when the election was delayed until February and when the previous minister for tourism, the member for Waite, was in charge of tourism policy; he was the minister that allowed this decision to be made and, in fact, the letters went out on 6 March.

That date is inscribed indelibly on my memory, as it might be in the member for Waite's, because that was the date on which our government was sworn in. The decision to subsidise insurance was made by the member for Waite in February; the letters went out on 6 March; and I found out about the decision a couple of weeks later, at which point I said that this is an untenable policy. This is a policy that

cannot be subscribed to because we will be paying small business in tourism; we will be paying for railway lines; we will be paying for builders; and, we will be paying for doctors and nurses. The role of state government is not to pay every business operator's public liability insurance, and that is not the role of this government. That policy has been stopped.

However, I would put to members that it is very difficult to turn the ship of state when a previous minister has subscribed to a policy and sent out 2 000 letters on the very day he lost office. It has taken some weeks to wind back the policy. I will be able to report through the Speaker to the member for Waite to say how much money has been spent and to how many operators, but that policy has stopped.

STATE BUDGET

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Has the Treasurer been provided with advice by Treasury that, contrary to the Treasurer's claims, most of the hundreds of millions of dollars in cost pressures claimed to constitute the fictional black hole were not advised to the former treasurer prior to completion of the mid-year budget review?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I will restate what I have said in this house on numerous occasions since coming to office. The opposition was provided with advice on the true state of the budget and the very serious cost pressures that the former government failed to include in its mid-year budget review. That information was provided to the house on numerous occasions. With respect to the advice about which the honourable member refers, I will take it on notice and get back to him.

CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): My question is directed to the Treasurer. How much is in the current year's capital works program that he anticipates will not be spent by the end of June?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I would be happy to get that information and provide it to the honourable member.

LAND ACQUISITION

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): My question is to the Minister for Science and Information Economy. Is it correct that the government has failed to act promptly to secure the 4.8 hectare site central to the expansion of the Thebarton Biosciences precinct and that, as a consequence, an option to purchase the land has now been taken up by a speculator and developer, an event that may now result in the land being lost to the state government, or the taxpayer being forced to purchase the site at a multi-million dollar premium?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Science and Information Economy): I reject any implication that the government has failed to act properly.

BUDGET FORWARD ESTIMATES

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Given the Treasurer's claims that the \$451 million of unallocated funding in the budget forward estimates cannot be spent on wage and cost pressures, such as the DETE and MFS enterprise bargaining, any overspending in government departments or any capital works projects, such as new buses, will the

Treasurer give examples to the house of what the \$451 million might be able to be spent on?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): As I have said previously, the advice I have given to the house is the advice provided to the government by the Under Treasurer and what has been released publicly, namely, the available head room and capital contingency. In his advice to me, the Under Treasurer states:

These provisions should not be regarded as available to off-set the deficits identified. These are relatively small provisions in the context of the budget and will be required to meet emerging and unfunded issues both in 2001-02 and across the forward estimates as future budgets are developed.

And we will tell all members in the budget on 11 July.

EMERGENCY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION UNIT

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Will the Premier stand by the Labor Party election commitment to scrap the Emergency Services Administration Unit?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services): As the member for Davenport is well aware, I spoke about this at some length to the Economic and Finance Committee. He must obviously have been focused on something else, so I will make it plain. We certainly were concerned and it was our intention to scrap the Emergency Services Administration Unit. Since coming to office, we have seen some information that, perhaps, it was the minister's fault and not the fault of the Emergency Services Administration Unit, and I refer to a document to which I have referred in this place previously.

What we will do is be fair about it. As I said yesterday, we will not make any pre-emptive decisions, but we will be having a thorough review of the management of emergency services. I must say that I cannot blame the honourable member. When the member for Davenport was the minister I do not think that the unit went off the rails to the extent that it did when the member for Mawson took over. But it is absolutely plain that the emergency services could have been managed better by the keystone cops than they were by the former minister. There are enormous structural problems.

We have asked the Auditor-General to look at the activities over the last three years which allowed an enormous structural deficit to grow in the Country Fire Service. I will be making an announcement very soon on the nature of a review of the management of emergency services. For the honourable member's information, we are going to bed down this budget and then we will get on with business.

MURRAY RIVER FISHERY

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): Can the Treasurer tell the house whether the Department of Primary Industries has sought compensation for the loss of revenue previously gained from the issuing of fishing licences to river fishers? The opposition has been told that the Department of Primary Industries currently receives over \$100 000 in revenue from the issuing of licences to river fishers. We have been told that, once this revenue is removed in line with the government's compact, the department will seek compensation for this loss.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): It might be a surprise to many members, but I do not bring the entire budget into question time to answer in specific details. I will

be happy to get a detailed answer for the member. However, the hapless Leader of the Opposition asked earlier whether the Premier would intervene to allow the fishers who are negotiating with the minister for primary industries to bring their lawyer to a meeting. I advise the house that the minister's office has been contacted by a lawyer claiming to be a representative of the fishers and he was told by the minister's office that he can attend if he can prove that he acts for the fishers. So the minister's office has already told the lawyer that—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Well, that is what I am advised by the minister for primary industries. All I can say is that the Leader of the Opposition needs to do a little more homework and prove up his questions before he becomes the laughing stock of this parliament.

TOURISM, ECONOMIC VALUE

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Can the Minister for Tourism give her most recent estimate in respect of the tourism industry's total value to the South Australian economy, and indicate what contribution events overseen by Australian Major Events make to this figure?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism): That is a very precise question that will require a precise answer. I shall take it on notice.

HOUSING TRUST ACCOMMODATION

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Can the Premier tell the house whether the government's anti-privatisation policy extends to preventing Housing Trust tenants from purchasing their long-term rental accommodation from the Housing Trust?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): That was a policy introduced by Labor years ago. Come on! You have been in the house almost a century—I am sorry, I must not mislead: more than 30 years. If you did not know that, what have you been doing up there in Port Augusta? Really! You have known that for years. It was a policy introduced by Labor.

TOURISM, ECONOMIC VALUE

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Does the Minister for Tourism know, and can she explain to the house in economic terms, what is South Australia's premium tourist attraction or destination?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Government Enterprises will allow the Minister for Tourism to reply.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism): Mr Speaker, I wonder how long I have for this dissertation on the assets of South Australia. I am loath to start a lecture which could take an hour, Mr Speaker. Would you like me to limit it to two or three minutes, perhaps?

The SPEAKER: I am sure the minister knows that members of the opposition, particularly the member for Waite, are fairly fully informed on particular features. I am not sure what else the minister can provide to the member for Waite, but I will leave it to her imagination.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I think that I might give some personal reflections on the assets of South

Australia as, obviously, although he was a minister, the member for Waite failed to pick his favourite locations and which ones impact on the economy. South Australia has particular resources in the area of environmental tourism and ecotourism. I think one of our greatest assets is our state and, whilst I have advocated for many years the charms and particular design features of the city, it would be fair to note that, although we have an exquisite and well shaped Victorian city with a particularly unusual grid pattern and design, it is unusual because it was designed in an early Victorian garden manner which was predicated very early on the need to have gardens and recreational areas as a way of advocating for the health of people who were otherwise of low socioeconomic status.

Whilst the city is particularly important, I am of the view that regional and rural South Australia are our major asset. We are one of the few states that can offer a genuine wilderness experience with a particular Australian feel, and we are one of the few places that has as accessible rural areas as ours. Within an hour one can reach premier regional wine areas. We have assets such as Burra that are of particular significance and, in addition, we have the advantages of a 90-mile beach, which is perhaps unique in that it has been the feature in a major film, set in the Coorong area. We also have one of the few world heritage sites in Australia. The world heritage site I am particularly speaking of—

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. My question was quite specific. I am trying to find out whether the minister understands and can explain to the house what is in economic terms the most important tourist attraction to South Australia. The minister is not answering the question. The minister must understand her portfolio, and I am trying to draw that out.

The SPEAKER: I think the answer about matches the relevance of the question. Has the minister finished?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I could go on forever, Mr Speaker.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I direct my question to the Attorney-General. Who is to determine the terms of reference for the Constitutional Convention? Will the Attorney-General ensure that the Opposition and other political parties represented in the parliament are consulted on the terms of reference and also on the process to be followed by the convention? When will the terms of reference be made available? Earlier today the Attorney-General made a ministerial statement concerning the Constitutional Convention, and this afternoon we are to debate a motion to which I cannot refer. However, that ministerial statement does not contain the terms of reference nor the process by which the Constitutional Convention will be carried out.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I would hope that some legal academics and constitutional experts would help give the convention form and structure by proposing, as I said in the ministerial statement, constitutional changes and models for constitutional reform. I am happy to consult the opposition and minor parties and Independents in the parliament to determine what the aims and objectives of the Constitutional Convention would be. I hope to carry the opposition with us on a program of constitutional reform, and I hope the opposition will play a constructive role.

OLD LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): Mr Speaker, I direct my question either to you or to the relevant minister responsible for the fabric of these precincts. On whose authority and for what reason was an act of vandalism allowed in this place? As all members would know, the Old Legislative Council building was constructed in 1855 and is heritage listed. I believe that the doors and door frames are constructed of Australian cedar, which is an increasingly rare and valuable timber. For some reason a decision was made to secure the doors between the President's retiring room and the Old Legislative Council chamber and, rather than rehanging the doors on the hinges and instructing a locksmith to prepare a new lock, three tex screws were drilled through the cedar between the door frame and the door and the door has been irreparably and irretrievably damaged.

The SPEAKER: I will examine the problem.

STATE SWIMMING CENTRE

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): My question is directed to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. Will the government be proceeding with plans to build a state swimming centre adjacent to the Westfield Marion Shopping Centre and, if not, why not? The former Liberal government announced that a state swimming centre would be built on land owned by the City of Marion, which is responsible for meeting the interest costs on moneys borrowed to fund the land's purchase. I am advised that, if an urgent decision is not made by the government, council may be forced to sell the land.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing): What the former government did on the eve of a state election was to go into a project for the possibility of a PPP for a state swimming centre at Marion, as identified by the member. The former government committed \$1 million for a PPP, but no funding was provided for anything beyond the proposal for the examination of a PPP. It should be noted that the former government not only wasted eight years in relation to a state swimming centre but also did nothing about the North Adelaide swimming centre. So, we now have two problems rather than one.

I note the former minister's interjection about being careful, because he would be extremely sensitive to this, having been the minister at the time. Not only did he fail the swimming population regarding what could or should have been done in relation to the potential for a new state swimming centre but the former government also neglected what could and should have been done about the swimming centre at North Adelaide. I think I have had a question from the new shadow minister for recreation and sport in regard to what this government is doing about the difficulties facing the coalition of users currently using the North Adelaide swimming centre. We are faced with two problems now because of the neglect of the former government.

The incoming government has been working through the very proposal that the former government initiated in relation to whether a PPP will work at Marion. We are prepared to look at that to see whether or not the PPP will work. The embarrassment of the former minister is well noted. While he was running around using taxpayers' money for a variety of projects in the Hills area, for Heathfield High School and Blackwood High School—84 per cent of over \$4 million—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Davenport will come to order!

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I point out that 84 per cent of over \$4 million of a program that was identified by the former minister went to two high schools—Blackwood and Heathfield—in the Hills zone. He talks about my high school! Do you know what my high school got? While Blackwood and Heathfield got over a million dollars each, Seaton High School got \$160 000. So, the former minister has no shame. While he was abusing taxpayers' money, while he was running around wasting taxpayers' money on funding projects that had no criteria, he was not looking at what could have, and should have, been done with regard to water sports.

So, we have now got two problems. We have the problem down at Marion which has not been funded by the former government. All it was prepared to do was allocate \$1 million for the potential for a PPP. What were they prepared to do in their forward funding—their forward estimates—with regard to the PPP? The answer is very simple: they were prepared to do nothing whatsoever. Nor were they prepared to do anything about the North Adelaide Aquatic Centre, because what they did there was to cancel the indenture agreement that existed with the Adelaide City Council, and now, of course, we have that coalition of water sports that is in the predicament in which it currently finds itself, because the previous government neglected the issue for eight years.

No wonder they hang their heads in shame. The former minister, instead of abusing taxpayers' money, instead of pork-barrelling with what he did with a variety of funds, running around, spending millions of dollars in hills zone schools, such as Blackwood and Heathfield, has shown up and highlighted the pork-barrelling exercise of the former government.

GAS SUPPLY

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Government Enterprises): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The house will be pleased to know that I wish to update them on the gas situation. I want to announce the lifting of temporary gas restrictions. Today at 1 p.m. I revoked the temporary gas rationing notices, issued under section 37 of the Gas Act—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: —it is only one page this time—1997 that had been in force since 5 p.m. on 4 June 2002. I have been advised by the technical regulator that it has just concluded an industry meeting of all parties involved in the supply of gas to the South Australian market. It was agreed that the temporary restrictions were no longer needed. This industry group has been intensively monitoring and evaluating the need for the gas restrictions in the period leading up to, and during the rationing period. The conditions at the Moomba gas processing plant and the operational status of the Moomba to Adelaide pipeline are such that normal supply can recommence without risk of further disruption to industry in South Australia.

KNIVES, CARRYING

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: During the election campaign the government promised that it would introduce legislation within the first 12 months of its term of office to ban carrying knives at night in or near pubs, clubs, discos and nightspots, and that no excuses would be allowed. We said:

Labor will introduce legislation in the first year of government for a total ban on the carrying of knives at night, both into and within 100 metres of licensed premises. The knife ban will cover all licensed premises at night—pubs, clubs, discos and night spots—with tough penalties for breaking the law.

There will be an important difference from the current laws covering the carrying of knives. Our legislation will stipulate that no excuses will be accepted from patrons carrying their knives into or near licensed premises at night.

The volatile mix of alcohol and knives has resulted in many stabbings, causing severe injuries and even deaths. Just last weekend, a nightclub security person was stabbed outside licensed premises. Parents are justifiably worried about their teenage children being the victims of knife assaults in clubs.

Labor believes there can be no excuse whatsoever for a patron to be carrying a knife into or near licensed premises at night. There will be tough penalties and no excuses for anyone who breaks our new law. Labor will not let people get away with lame excuses for carrying knives at night.

The government has been working on developing the detail for the bill needed to implement this policy. It expects to introduce a bill later in the current session. The bill will create some new criminal offences. It is proposed that the new offences would be in addition to existing offences, such as the offence of carrying an offensive weapon without lawful excuse and possessing a prohibited weapon. The details of the new offences must be precise enough for people to know whether or not they are committing an offence.

The bill will have the potential to affect many people. It must be fair to everyone and it must be workable. The government and the parliament must strive to achieve the best possible balance between the rights of the individual and the expectations of the people of this state. There are a number of possible choices for achieving the government's policy. Therefore, the government has decided that it should give members of the public an opportunity to comment on what is proposed and to provide information before the bill is drafted.

I have had a discussion paper prepared to assist and encourage members of the public to contribute. Some tentative proposals for the structure and detail of the offences are set out in that discussion paper. I will make the discussion paper widely available in hard copy and it will be on the government web site. Of course, ideas of members of the house or the other place in relation to the bill would be welcomed.

WORKCOVER

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I rise today to advise the house of a matter of significance to all South Australians: practices in relation to the WorkCover funding level and the present level of WorkCover's funding. I begin this statement by referring to the contribution of the then minister for government enterprises at the estimates hearing on Wednes-

day 27 June 2001. The former minister for government enterprises, Michael Armitage, stated in answer to questions posed by me that the scheme was finely balanced. He referred to the final decision of the board, and said that the board's decisions were taken bearing in mind actuarial concerns, predictions for the future, financial advice, past experience, and so on. The discourse continued, and I commend it to members as being worthy of examination.

The previous government has put in place a series of policy settings within which the board and the CEO have operated, that leave the fund, in the words of the former minister, finely balanced. Clearly, where such a scheme is finely balanced, the reliability of the processes used to determine the position of the scheme, as reflected in financial reports and therefore in determining policy for financial planning for the scheme, is of utmost importance. As far as is practicable, the processes used must be based on hard figures, on hard evidence.

I make no judgment about current practices. However, all interested parties would want to be assured that the practices that have been employed are sound. However, following discussions with the Office for Government Enterprises, I have commissioned a report that will examine financial reporting, corporate governance and other practices critical to the financial management of WorkCover. It is essential that the government and the South Australian community have rock solid confidence in the integrity of WorkCover's financial reporting and planning processes.

It is crucial, where there are differences of opinion on financial assessments, that those differences are resolved in a transparent and objectively justifiable manner. I am certain that WorkCover will welcome the commissioning of this report and embrace the report within its commitment to continuous improvement. I will be requesting WorkCover to provide all practicable assistance to the Office for Government Enterprises as it compiles the report.

I also wish to place on the record the present financial position of WorkCover in terms of its funding ratio and the point at which the previous government was made aware of the funding ratio. The WorkCover board has maintained targets for the funding ratio of 90 to 110 per cent. The funding ratio refers, broadly speaking, to the scheme's projected position in terms of income streams and assets as against projected expenses and liabilities at a point in time. The WorkCover September quarter report sets out the funding position of WorkCover as at the close of the September quarter. This report was sent to the then minister in late December 2001. The report identified that the funding ratio was then 89.57 per cent.

The WorkCover December quarter report states that the funding position as at the close of the December quarter was 92.56 per cent. Unaudited advice received from WorkCover on 29 May 2002 indicates that as at 30 April 2002 the funding position was 89.2 per cent. WorkCover has advised me that there has been a short-term deterioration in scheme funding due to a combination of economic factors outside WorkCover's control but which influence aspects of the business, including return to work and investment outcomes. WorkCover has further advised that the board is closely monitoring these issues and remains confident that longer-term settings are correct, and that the current deterioration is manageable.

In short, in the September quarter last year the funding ratio dipped below the broadly accepted range of funding levels. In the December quarter the funding ratio was within the target range. It appears now that the funding ratio has

again dipped below the target range. Whilst a balance is appropriate, we must ensure that the practices employed by WorkCover provide surety for South Australians that their system of workers' compensation has a sound foundation. The ability of 'unforeseen circumstances' to affect communities around the world is far more prominent in all our minds than it perhaps was not so long ago.

It is in the interest of all South Australians to ensure that WorkCover maintains a balance that remains within the broadly accepted range of accepted funding levels. South Australia needs a workers' compensation system that is effective and affordable. The Office for Government Enterprises expects to report in the next few months. This report, together with the broader review of workers' compensation that I have previously announced, will ensure that the South Australian workers' compensation system has a sound foundation.

PROPRIETARY BUSINESS LICENSING ACT

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing): I seek leave to make another ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I rise to advise the house of the review of the Proprietary Business Licensing Act 2000. The Proprietary Business Licensing Act 2000 came into operation on 18 January 2001 and is committed to me as Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. The act provides for a system of licensing and supervision of licensees of proprietary racing businesses, being businesses which the law would allow to conduct thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing and other prescribed events on a commercial basis.

The act provides for the licensing and regulation of racing events when conducted by bodies other than traditional racing clubs or controlling authorities. Traditional racing clubs conduct events on a not-for-profit basis whereby all net revenues from club activities are returned for reinvestment within the industry, for example, stake money, on-course patron facilities etc. Intended proprietary racing operations are established for the purpose of returning profits from racing activities to owners of the business, investors or shareholders.

The licensing model set out in the act is conceptually similar to the model for a casino under the Casino Act 1997 and for a 'TAB' under the Betting Operations Act 2000. The key features of the licensing process are:

- The applicant must be able to satisfy the Independent Gambling Authority that it and all of its close associates are suitable persons to be involved in a proprietary racing business; and
- The applicant must have entered into an Approved Licensing Agreement with the minister, the operation of which is subject to the approval of the authority. Typically, an Approved Licensing Agreement deals with the commercial conditions of the licence, licence fees, term of the licence, etc, and regulatory issues and conditions relating to ongoing monitoring.

When in opposition, Labor raised a number of concerns with the Proprietary Racing Bill. Some examples of these concerns were:

- there were no details of the licence fee payable by a 'for profit' company conducting proprietary racing events;

- there was no reference to payment of a licence fee if an existing controlling body were to conduct the racing events;
- there was insufficient detail of prudential supervision or regulatory oversight;
- there was potential for negative financial and integrity impacts on the traditional racing industry;
- the legislation created an extension of gambling opportunities associated with new racing ventures;
- it was not a bill that was or is currently contemplated or supported by any other jurisdiction in Australia;
- it was not a proposal supported by the Australian racing industry; and, indeed,
- it was not a bill that was even necessary to enable proprietary racing to proceed.

The legislation was introduced by the former government for reasons that were not related to any perceived or demonstrated need to provide a system for the regulation and licensing of proprietary racing licensees. Monitoring and compliance activities, which the authority and the commissioner consider necessary for proprietary racing operations, are likely to be substantial. Unlike club racing, there is no established stipendiary steward process for proprietary racing and, in at least some cases, the operators will be new entrants to the racing/wagering industry in this state. It is critical, therefore, to ensure the highest standards of probity surrounding these events.

The office of the Independent Gambling Authority has had contact from a number of parties with respect to a possible licence application, of which the significant identified entities were:

1. Teletrak Australia Pty Ltd
2. Sports Vision Entertainment
3. Australian Racing Quarter Horse Association.

In its 2000-01 annual report, the authority advised that it had received one, incomplete, application and was aware of interest shown by other possible licensees. I have been advised that there has been no change to this in the meantime—over 16 months since the act came into operation.

The business plan for any proposed proprietary racing venture would need to have particular regard to the financial and operational framework of the nominated betting services provider. While the proprietary racing legislation provides, subject to extensive probity and integrity investigations, the opportunity for licences to be granted to approved proprietary racing operators, financial returns to these operators from, say, SA TAB Pty Ltd has the potential to be affected by the terms of the racing distribution agreement between the SA TAB and the South Australian racing industry.

The requirement of the SA TAB to make these payments to the racing codes will certainly impact on its ultimate decision as to whether an appropriate business case proposition exists to provide a betting service on a proprietary racing event. Interstate or overseas investments on proprietary racing events through the SA TAB would not be subject to the terms of the racing distribution agreement—that is, no payments would be required to be made to the South Australian racing codes. Clearly, accurate assessments of turnover, and its source, is required to be undertaken by proprietary racing proponents. As stated earlier, 16 months after the Proprietary Business Licensing Act came into operation, no complete or formal licence application has been lodged by any person or entity wishing to commence a ‘for profit’ racing activity. While one partial or incomplete application and one or two inquiries regarding proprietary racing licences have been

made to the Independent Gambling Authority, it is very clear that the ability of applicants to secure financial support for the substantial resources required to establish the necessary racing infrastructure, and the essential probity and integrity systems, is extremely limited.

There is also considerable doubt about the ability of proprietary racing applicants to secure an appropriate betting service provider within Australia. The alternative, involving the selection of an overseas betting operator that would source its turnover from Australian punters, principally via the internet, is not an option that I care to consider. There are three broad legislative options available to the government:

1. Retention of the Proprietary Business Licensing Act 2000;
2. Amendments to relevant sections of the Proprietary Business Licensing Act 2000 to satisfy a number of outstanding concerns, such as determination of an appropriate licence fee framework; or
3. Repeal the Proprietary Business Licensing Act 2000.

The review will be made available next week for interested stakeholders to make comment for a month before the government makes a final decision.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

MINISTERIAL STAFF

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Earlier in question time, the Minister for Police raised some issues regarding why I had additional people employed in my office around the time of December. Of course, there were two issues. First, I had recently been given an extra portfolio—a new gaming portfolio—to set up; and, secondly, I had just been put into cabinet, which required additional staff. I was involved in the employment of only four staff, and that involved contracts with the Premier. The rest of the staff were engaged by a delegation from the justice chief executive officer in conjunction with my chief of staff. During the election campaign, I obviously spent considerable time as minister in my electorate office, and I still had to do all my ministerial work.

I had immediate ministerial staff coming to my office on a regular basis, and those people worked within their job description. They probably spent 60 to 80 hours a week directly or indirectly with me during the course of the election campaign. I also know that those people spent at least their required 38 hours a week—and probably considerably more—doing all the ministerial work. Of course, the rest of the time they volunteered to me. There is no problem in people volunteering to assist anyone with some work.

It is no different from when the members for Lee and Hart were working for then premier Arnold. Of course, at that stage the member for Lee was a candidate running against me for the seat of Mawson. I saw the member for Lee out and about in the electorate for almost two years, day in, day out. I also know that the member for Lee—and I am sure the member for Hart, too—worked for the taxpayer under contract for then Premier Arnold.

I never questioned that, because I knew that the members for Lee and Hart would have been doing their work. Let us look at the allegations involving staff appointments. Yesterday I was interested to pick up something from the media on a web site, entitled ‘Pat Conlon’s staffing policies in South Australia’. It says that initially the Labor Party was critical of the Libs as being secretive and engaging in cronyism. It then goes on to talk about how they said they were not going

to have party hacks or shoulders of mates, and they talked about honest, open and accountable government. It then says:

You'll find that barely any ministerial staff in the new government—especially those at senior levels—were chosen as a result of a full-page advertisement put in the *Advertiser*.

It states that there were approximately 600 applications for those positions, and many staffers were appointed before the closing date for applications. It then goes on to say:

One office where you can confirm this practice is that of left wing minister Pat Conlon.

It further states:

A little research could uncover much. I have it on good authority that Messrs Conlon and Foley pulled the strings on the entire exercise and the advertisements were more about public relations than process.

This is about cronyism and appointing mates. It says here that they were interested to see that the sister of Nick Bolkus was appointed as a press secretary to the new Premier, Mike Rann, and that Kate Hannon is the new spin doctor who carries years of Labor baggage after working for Laurie Brereton a few years back. It then goes on to talk about the fact that the job situation was a complete farce. It says:

Others were hit by the train. Capable and diligent party faction members are hurting and have proven quite difficult for the party factions to control. . . The process was a duck diving exercise between the right Foley, the left Conlon and the Premier's office, with 150 promises and only 50 opportunities.

The article then talks about some of the appointments that have been made: Wendy Georganas, wife of the twice failed Hindmarsh candidate Steve Georganas; Sam Crafter, the son of the former ALP member; Kathy King; Melissa Bailey; and the wife of the Minister for Urban Planning, Jay Weatherill, who has been employed in a ministerial office. It also mentions F. Lange. Is there a connection between David Lange from New Zealand and the Premier? Finally, it talks about the appointment of young ex-Labor hacks George Carzis and Brer Adams, who appear in the offices of ministers Atkinson and Hill. If they want to talk about particular appointments they ought to look at their own.

Time expired.

SAMOA-NEW ZEALAND RECONCILIATION

Mr CAICA (Colton): I will try to make my presentation far more relevant than the previous contribution. I am not under anywhere near as much stress as it seems the member for Mawson is. I rise today to refer to the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, and her input into the reconciliation process that has been undertaken between the New Zealand government and the people of Samoa. Helen Clark is a woman of great stature and she is proving to be a statesperson of a stature that we are far from achieving with any of our federal politicians in Australia.

The Hon. I.F. Evans: Don't have a go at Simon Crean like that. Simon Crean is a federal MP.

Mr CAICA: Some people have tickets on themselves, and it seems that it is not peculiar only to those in federal parliament, as people may observe from the interjection from the member for Davenport. At the 40th anniversary of the independence of Samoa, the New Zealand Prime Minister made a contribution to the civic luncheon that was held to celebrate the anniversary. Ms Clark was in Samoa specifically for that reason and she spoke about many important issues that relate to and underpin the positive relationship that exists

at all levels between New Zealand and Samoa. Those important issues have allowed their respective governments to work together on critical issues affecting both countries.

More than anything else, I would like to acknowledge the comments of the New Zealand Prime Minister, who commenced her speech by saying that she had been troubled by some unfinished business. She went on to describe that those events relate to the inept and incompetent early administration of Samoa by New Zealand. She said:

In recent weeks, as we have been preparing to come to Samoa, there has been a focus on those historic events, and the news has been a revelation to many New Zealanders. That focus has come about because my government believes that reconciliation is important in building strong relationships. It is important to us to acknowledge tragic events which caused great pain and sorrow in Samoa.

In particular, she acknowledged with regret the decision taken by the New Zealand authorities in 1918 to allow the ship *Talune*, carrying passengers with influenza, to dock in Apia and, as the flu spread, some 22 per cent of the Samoan population died. It was judged to be one of the worst epidemics in the world, and it was preventable.

The New Zealand Prime Minister then went on to talk about a host of matters that have shamed the New Zealand government over a period of time with respect to the way it treated the Samoan people. Importantly, in concluding her remarks, she stated:

On behalf of the New Zealand government, I wish to offer today a formal apology to the people of Samoa for the injustices arising from New Zealand's administration of Samoa in its earlier years, and to express sorrow and regret for those injustices. It is our hope that this apology will enable us to build an even stronger relationship and friendship for the future on the basis of a firmer foundation.

Earlier this week, the Premier reminded the house of the tenth anniversary of the Mabo decision. In a very good grievance speech, the outstanding member for Florey quoted Labor's Aboriginal affairs spokesperson, Carmen Lawrence, who had said that it was unreasonable to expect that native title would be the panacea for all indigenous problems, and she attacked the Howard government for winding back indigenous rights in the 1998 Wik amendments.

My point is that an apology could be seen in the same context; that is, that it will not be the answer to all the ills but it will go some way. Indeed, it will go a long way to doing exactly what it is that Helen Clark, as the Prime Minister of New Zealand, did with the Samoan people earlier this week. She apologised for the injustices of the past and for the shameful acts imposed on the Samoan people by that government in previous times. It is now time—in fact, it is beyond time—for our federal government to do exactly the same thing. I acknowledge that there was bipartisan support for the South Australian parliament to issue an apology to indigenous Australians, and I urge the federal government to do the same.

MINISTER FOR HEALTH

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I want to talk about the record of the Minister for Health in the first almost 100 days of this government, because it is quite an incredible record, and I also want to touch on some of the key issues that have come up over that time. The Minister for Health was full of promises during the election campaign, and one of the first things she tried to do was amalgamate the Repatriation Hospital with the Flinders Medical Centre. She set out to deny it, even though she got

caught red-handed. Despite statements to the contrary, finally she had to acknowledge the fact that she had given approval for those amalgamation talks to go ahead. I understand that the chair of the Repatriation Hospital insists today that there should be ongoing talks, despite the fact that the minister was forced by the Premier to give an absolute refusal for there to be any amalgamation of the two hospitals involved.

By way of a question that I put to the minister, it was squeezed out of her that she had cancelled the after-hours GP services at both the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Women's and Children's Hospital. No statement was issued to the people who might be using the service—no, she had to be drawn out and exposed publicly on the fact that she had cancelled both those services. Those services were greatly appreciated by the people who used them. I understand that about 120 people a week used the combined services, and they represent a lot of people who cannot access an after-hours GP because their local clinic closes down after 7 or 8 o'clock at night or who cannot access a GP service on Saturday afternoon or Sunday because it is closed. Their condition does not really warrant going to a hospital, so they could go to the after-hours GP services at the Women's and Children's Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and it was greatly appreciated. The previous government did a survey which showed that something like 93 to 95 per cent of the people who used the service regarded it highly and therefore it had a high level of satisfaction amongst the consumers.

The third thing that happened was also drawn out in this house (there was no public announcement), that is, the cancellation of the HomeStart loans for aged care bed facilities in country hospitals throughout South Australia. I calculate that about 20 to 30 hospitals in country areas—almost half the country hospitals in South Australia—were hoping to be able to access these HomeStart loans. Most incredible is that, the day before this was revealed, there was the Minister for Health arguing publicly that 700 bed licences in South Australia were not being used because the facilities had not been built. The previous Liberal government had introduced the HomeStart scheme and the hospitals had applied to build aged care facilities with it.

Kangaroo Island had all the approvals in place. It had signed the loan agreement and paid the \$1 000 fee and, several weeks after that, along comes this new Minister for Health—the person who wants these aged care beds built—and cancels the loan. The same occurred at Naracoorte, where I understand they had started to pour the foundations. The same situation occurred in a number of other locations. We then had the delay in the purchase of the MRI machines at both the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Lyell McEwin Hospital. Here was the minister saying that she was going to secure these machines as a matter of urgency. In fact, I find now that the purchase of those two MRI machines, signed and sealed by the previous government, has been delayed by this government, and I could go on about numerous other areas.

Yesterday the minister released the draft food regulations. They were ready before the election. I did not release them because of caretaker mode and convention, but they were ready. It has taken almost 100 days to get draft food regulations, which were prepared and ready, out to the public. There are many other areas in which I could highlight the failure of the minister.

Time expired.

WORLD CUP

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): As the 2002 World Cup is under way in Korea and Japan, I thought that it might be a good time to reflect on the sheer size and impact of the World Cup as a tournament and soccer as a sport. Whilst we enjoy our indigenous form of football in Australia—and everyone knows how passionate I am about the Redlegs—there is no denying the worldwide popularity of the round ball variety. In less than a week we have seen parties in the streets of Senegal after the national team stunned France, the defending world champions. We have also seen the entire nation of South Korea celebrate its first ever win in the World Cup finals.

We even saw the Minister for Police last night celebrating when Ireland got an equaliser in the last few seconds; and all of England is relieved that David Beckham, or for the non-aficionados, Posh Spice's husband, is winning his battle for fitness. Of course, Italy has made an excellent start with a comfortable 2-0 win over Ecuador. Not only are the Italians one of the most talented teams in the competition but they are clearly the best looking. That is not only my opinion but it has been documented on the front pages of the Japanese and Korean newspapers.

The 32 competing countries have a combined population of nearly three billion people—close to half the world's population. In 1998, the World Cup had an average of 522 million viewers watching each game. That is a cumulative television audience of over 33 billion. When the final is played in Yokohama on 30 June, members can expect that in excess of 2 billion people will be watching. Only the summer Olympics' collection of sports can compete with those numbers. This is the first World Cup to be held in Asia; indeed, it is the first not to be held in either Europe or the Americas. The Far East friendly time zone has allowed Australian soccer fans the real luxury of being able to watch matches in the late afternoon and early evening rather than having to get up at 4 a.m., or some other ungodly hour to indulge in our passion. Whilst this is pleasing and a good opportunity for the non-believers to get a taste of soccer during prime time, it makes it doubly disappointing that Australia failed to qualify. Perhaps Australia versus Italy at 9 p.m. on a week night was just too good to be true. The 1990, 1994 and 1998 World Cups were shown in their entirety by SBS. Until now, the commercial stations have been slow to see soccer's potential. But, suddenly Channel 9 thought there might be some value in showing a few games. So, Channel 9 muscled in on the rights and, rather than commit itself to all 64 games, it picked out 16 that suited it, presumably those which 'rate' and will not bump off *Friends* or *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*. Fortunately, SBS has picked up the other 48 games. However, it seems that someone at Channel 9 needs to learn a thing or two about market research. I was disappointed to read yesterday that Channel 9 Adelaide will delay the screening of three matches by half an hour. Why? Apparently the ratings are, to quote the article, 'lacklustre'.

The first of these delayed games will be between two countries that have large communities in Adelaide: Italy and Croatia. Their match, to which thousands of South Australians are looking forward, is scheduled to start at 6.30 p.m. but will instead be shown by Channel 9 from 7 p.m. This is so that we will not be denied the thrilling sight of a few dozen people making fools of themselves on *Australia's*

Funniest Home Video Show. I can just imagine expatriate Italians and Croatians in Adelaide receiving excited telephone calls from Rome, Naples, Split or Zagreb 20 minutes from full-time of the telecast of the Italy/Croatia game asking whether we had seen that fantastic goal! We will say, 'Not yet, but we did see a little kid fall off a swing and into a bowl of his dog's food.'

Today I spoke to the program director of Channel 9, informing her that I had received dozens of telephone calls protesting about the delayed telecast. She did agree that many of the Italian community had protested. In fact, many of the radio stations have been criticising Channel 9. The most disturbing aspect of our discussions, however, was not the fact that not only will these games be delayed but Channel 9 would not guarantee that any future games—not even the final—will be shown direct.

I was told that the station would continue to assess the situation as the competition progresses to see whether interest increases. Channel 9 did not need to treat soccer fans with such contempt. The network should have known what kind of ratings to expect, and if those ratings were not good enough it should have left the World Cup to SBS, a station dedicated to bringing the world game to Australian viewers. Who knows, perhaps soccer fans shied away from Channel 9 for fear that Eddie McGuire might head the broadcast. I think that we should strongly protest to Channel 9 on behalf of the soccer-loving community to ensure that Channel 9 takes up its responsibility and shows the world game at the appropriate time.

TREASURER'S PERFORMANCE

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Mr Deputy Speaker, you would be aware that today is the last day of sitting prior to budget week. It seems obvious to everyone that the Treasurer has gone to ground. He simply will not provide answers, or certainly not answers during question time, in relation to the most simple and basic matters of finance for the state. Today was a good example where the opposition asked two relatively simple questions for any Treasurer. We are three weeks before the end of the year and we asked the very simple question: how much of the capital works budget, in the Treasurer's estimate, will not be spent by the end of the year?

If anyone thinks that the Treasurer has not received a briefing on the capital works budget (given the size of the capital works budget for the state), and if anyone thinks that the Treasurer has not received a briefing from the time he took over the portfolio until now about the likely position at the end of 30 June, they are kidding themselves. It is unfortunate that the Treasurer is not across his portfolio enough to give us even a ballpark range during question time. He could then say, 'I will provide an exact answer.' He could not even put it within \$10 million, \$100 million or \$200 million; or, more to the point, he declined to do so.

We then asked another really simple question. We asked a question about something called 'head room'. There has been a lot of debate about head room. I know that the Treasurer has fumbled and stumbled on questions about head room—what is in, what is out and what it can and cannot be used for. He continues to wave around Treasury advice, saying that it cannot be used for this and it cannot be used for that. The logical question is: if it cannot be used for various things raised in questions, such as the DETE and MFS enterprise bargaining, the overspending in government

departments or capital works projects, such as new buses—if the head room cannot be used for those, Treasurer, what can it be used for?

I would have thought that the Treasurer would ask the Treasury officers who were giving him the advice, 'If I cannot use it for all these things, for what can I actually use my \$451 million head room?' I am sure that the \$451 million of head room would be of some interest to all cabinet members, but particularly to the Treasurer. But, no, not this Treasurer. This Treasurer is a month away from the budget and he has closed down shop. Something like five or six of the last questions asked of the Treasurer in the house have simply been taken on notice.

The Treasurer is clearly under pressure, having made some early mistakes in relation to facts and figures that he has used either in radio interviews or, indeed, in the house. It is unfortunate for the chamber that he is not prepared to answer questions asked in question time. We come then to the issue, of course, of this mythical black hole. I had to smile at the Treasurer's answers because the \$300 million, or whatever the latest figure the government has made up in relation to the black hole—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Of course, you have the \$10 million now available from the failed federal bid under the Minister for Tourism's portfolio—the ICT bid; you know that the Commonwealth Grants Commission has written to say that there is an extra \$100 million available in three years; and if you read the Treasurer's answer from about a day or two ago—an answer he took on notice—you will see that he confirms that there is now another \$30 million that Treasury has put into a contingency fund in relation to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. That helps make up the \$300 million black hole, even though there is no written advice from the CGC in relation to making that provision.

The Treasurer, slowly but surely, is positioning himself to undermine his cabinet colleagues. Whether his cabinet colleagues realise that is a matter for their judgment, but I suggest that during the next month they start asking the Treasurer some pretty hard and serious questions about the state of the budget, because these are the ministers who will have to go out and sell to the community very unpopular cuts because the Treasurer and, in particular, Treasury officials wish to create a black hole to give them some surplus to play around with in the out years. The ministers will have to sell a whole range of cuts to the community.

It will not be the Treasurer who is on the front line (he will do the big budget speak and be very bolshie in its delivery), but it will be the Minister for Tourism, the Minister for Transport, the Minister for Environment and Conservation and other ministers who will have to go out and sell the bad news and the cuts. The staff within the ministerial offices know it, and the ministers know it, and it is all about this government creating a fictional black hole of \$300 million or thereabouts because it wants some flexibility, I guess you could call it, for spending in future years. So, I say to cabinet: over the next month leading up to the state budget, certainly the Treasurer is not answering our questions during question time and I can only hope that he answers your questions during cabinet meetings.

NURSES

Ms BREUER (Giles): Today I take this opportunity to congratulate some people in my electorate who have made

some outstanding achievements in the last few weeks, particularly some nurses in my electorate who have won awards. I was very pleased the other day to see that two of our local midwives, Verity Timms and Julia McMahon, were awarded the Australian College of Midwives Midwifery Excellence Award. This is a state-wide award hosted by the Australian College of Midwives Incorporated. They were given this award at a presentation in Adelaide. There were a lot of people at that presentation but, unfortunately, I believe that these women did not attend because they did not expect to win and, of course, it is difficult to get here from the country.

However, in Whyalla we were very pleased and are proud that they won these awards, and both women are very well known in our community. They won their awards for their commitment to supporting birthing women and their families, and that has included working with women from the refugee camp in Woomera: those women come to Whyalla to have their babies and have been helped by these nurses. They have provided informed consent to women about antenatal care, care in labour and post-delivery; they address the social and medical issues of these women—and of course women coming from that camp have many issues. Of course, there are communication barriers when working with such women.

Verity and Julia became their advocates and support, and got the community involved in helping with donations of fabric, clothes and toys. They were also helped in winning their award because of a grief workshop that they held earlier this year specifically aimed at people who have lost babies at any stage in their pregnancies. For many years they have been well known, as I said, in the community for their work in the delivery section of the hospital. Many women who have had babies in Whyalla have welcomed having them at the births. I extend my hearty congratulations to them. I am very pleased that they have been recognised, and that they have been recognised as country nurses.

Also, one of our enrolled nurses, Lisa Brown Campbell, was awarded the Nurse of the Year award in the enrolled nurse category. She is also well known in our community, particularly for her community work but also for the work that she has done in various surgeries and at the hospital. So I extend my sincere congratulations to Lisa Brown Campbell as well.

I am very proud of these women and the fact that they have won these awards. I think it is indicative of the excellent staff that we have at the Whyalla Hospital. In recent weeks I have had quite a bit of involvement with the Whyalla Hospital because a friend, who has been very sick, has been in the hospital, and I have been impressed with the care and the work that they put in under difficult circumstances and against all odds, as we all know that, because of the previous government, our hospitals are under-staffed. I certainly congratulate the people in those hospitals on their work.

Also, in my electorate, at Woomera, somebody else won an award, about which I was also very happy. Anne Glover, from the Woomera Hospital, also won an excellence award. Something like 230 nurses were nominated for this. She won in the category of nursing clinical practice for rural and remote care. Anne, who has been a nurse for 21 years, has a special interest in infection control management and the hospital accreditation process; and she has lived in Woomera since 1998. She also, of course, has worked with refugee men and women in the camp at Woomera.

After she won the award, Anne said that working in a community such as Woomera has its rewards because she

gets to know the people whom she looks after. She said that in a big hospital everybody is anonymous, but in a smaller hospital you see people in the street and they accept you as part of their community. So I extend my sincere congratulations to Anne as well.

Another person who won a special award is a carer from Whyalla, Janice Baird, who is very well known in Whyalla. She received the 2001 Peter Edwards Memorial Award from the Intellectual Disability Services Council of South Australia for the great work that she has done for many years in Whyalla working with people—including children and older people—with intellectual disabilities particularly. She has helped run the Special Olympics, and she has worked with many of the young athletes who go to various competitions in Australia and who have come back with many gold medals. I have seen the work and the achievements of these people and the pride that they feel in being able to win these medals. I was very pleased that Janice won this award, because she is one of the unsung heroes in our community. She has worked very hard for many years, and I extend my congratulations to her.

Mr MEIER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

A quorum having been formed:

NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY (PROHIBITION)(REFERENDUM) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 30 May. Page 441.)

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I would remind members that when I started to address this issue last time, I canvassed a number of points. Briefly, they were that this parliament is elected to representative government, not to populist government and, like my colleague the shadow minister, I am therefore firmly of the belief that a referendum on many issues is neither necessary nor desirable, because it is the right of this parliament to apply itself in such a manner that on behalf of the people it might be better informed, and the reason people elect us to their service is that we might be better informed and make responsible decisions on their behalf. I remember distinctly, and I think I struck a chord with at least some members opposite, pointing out that a majority of this state would vote for a lot of measures that the majority of this parliament would not vote for. They consist of issues such as capital punishment. So, if we go down a populist road, such as citizen initiated referenda, for example, the caveat on citizen initiated or this type of referenda should be a fully informed public. Have the public of South Australia the time or inclination to fully inform themselves on this issue? I sincerely doubt that they will. Many people have many things on their mind and many pressures on their lives, and they do not always—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: So they rely on you.

Mr BRINDAL: The Attorney says, 'So they rely on you.' In fact, yes; that is why we have a representative form of democracy. It is why we do not all turn out in the agora or in our case all crowd into Victoria Square and try to make decisions where every free person can vote.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: That's because the left would keep the meeting going until 4 a.m.

Mr BRINDAL: The Attorney interjects that that was because the left would keep the meeting going until 4 a.m. I have to tell the Attorney that I thoroughly agree with him, because at the recent meeting of Young Labor held at the Daniel O'Connor that is exactly what happened. Some people had to leave early because they could not put up with the interminable fights the left were giving the Attorney-General's people, so I know he is correct in that assumption.

Another point that I wish to recapitulate is that, as Australian citizens, we have a paramount right to see that all low level nuclear waste is stored in the safest possible place. My colleague pointed out very eloquently in his contribution that the safest possible place in Australia, assessed by independent scientific people over a decade, is the area around Woomera and Roxby Downs in South Australia. Why should we as Australians have New South Welsh people, Victorians, Northern Territorians and Western Australians all putting their waste in the safest possible place and every one of those safest possible places being less safe than the place we have. It makes no sense.

Finally, I note the government's fervour about this, to stop, using its powers over transportation, the importation of such material. If the commonwealth decrees that it can go on commonwealth property, and if we cannot stop them, then we will put up the barricades at the border. I point out to members of this house we have no authority at all over the airways over this state. If a choice has to be made, I would rather see anything safely transported by road than a risk being taken with something that could be dangerous in certain instances coming across our airways where the possibility of a disaster, were it to occur, may be more horrendous than the containment that could be effected if the same thing occurred on our roads. For that reason I do not know that it is advisable to say that we have this power and can stop this, whereas the consequences of stopping a particular method might result in a worse method.

Finally, because I know that some of my Labor colleagues opposite will speak on this matter, I again say to them—almost make a plea to them—on behalf of some of the workers in this state and especially the firefighters. At present we do not even know where some of the low level waste is stored. It is stored in our universities and I believe in lift wells in hospitals. It is stored in places where a civil disaster is possible, whether that be earthquake, fire or flood. In each of those emergency events, the existence of that waste at any level will cause an additional problem for those people on whom our whole community relies, and I mean our CFS and MFS people, our firefighters and emergency services people, some of whom are volunteers. It is simply not fair to leave them in danger from the system while Labor toys at the edges and, as my colleague says, will probably come up with Woomera as the alternative anyhow.

Time expired.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I rise to make a few comments about this proposal. In doing so, I will start off by addressing what is really not in contention. It appears that some of the matters that are being raised are not really live issues. The first is that there is not any real discussion about high level nuclear waste in this country, so all of us are agreed on that proposal.

The Hon. I.F. Evans: You know you have amendments suggesting high level waste, don't you?

Mr RAU: As I understand the position, nobody is suggesting that presently there is high level nuclear waste floating around the place. The second thing is that the focus of the debate thus far appears to be an argument about whether the state will seek to regulate only low level nuclear waste or low and medium level nuclear waste and whether the state is to become a store for waste from other parts of the country. Before moving on to the points made by the members for Davenport and Unley, I want to touch very briefly on a few of the constitutional realities. The commonwealth can do anything it likes. Everybody here knows that; there is no question the commonwealth can use commonwealth land to do anything it proposes, whether or not the state parliament thinks it is a good idea. So, to a certain extent, any legislation from this parliament, including the legislation that was put up by the former government, is a stunt. I know the member for Davenport spent some time labelling this proposal a stunt but, to the extent that that is a fair comment about this proposal, it is equally fair about the proposal by the former government to the effect that medium level waste would not be permitted to come into the South Australia.

The commonwealth can ignore that as much as it can ignore anything else, so that piece of legislation was also a stunt. We come down to the question of whether this stunt is more or less attractive than that stunt. In addressing that matter, it is important to address a few facts as far as the public of South Australia are concerned. First, most people are not particularly keen on the idea of having South Australia receive nuclear waste from elsewhere, particularly the medium level waste that was dealt with by the earlier legislation, but indeed any of it. This bill seeks to give them the opportunity of saying so at a referendum. The point was made by the member for Davenport, quite reasonably I believe, that this referendum will have no impact as a matter of law. Of course, that is true; it will not; it will not make any difference at all.

However, it does give people in this state an opportunity to be heard on a matter that is of some significance to them. We think that that is an important point to make. If I understand the opposition's position correctly, it is something like this: we have a very responsible national view about low level waste, and that is that low level waste from all over the country should be deposited in Australia's safest place, as the member for Davenport describes it. Luckily for us, Australia's safest place happens to be at Woomera. We, in a spirit of consideration of the other states, are prepared to make that part of our state available for them to use for low level waste. The commonwealth will spend money to build the facility, which will ultimately receive all this waste from around the country. As I understand it, that is basically the proposition. The member for Unley, in particular, emphasised the altruistic nature of this view and indicated that it is a very right-minded and principled position to take—and that may be so.

Of course, the practical aspect of it is that, once the commonwealth has built the facility and it is available for low level nuclear waste, as surely as night follows day, what will be deposited there, in addition to low level nuclear waste, is medium level nuclear waste. The member for Davenport shakes his head as if to say, 'Well, no, that is not going to be the case.' But, of course, the only thing that will stop medium—

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I rise on a point of order, Madam Acting Speaker. The member is making assumptions about

why one might be shaking one's head. I was actually reading the upper house *Hansard* and I might have been shaking my head about some comments made by the Hon. Sandra Kanck in another place.

Mr RAU: I unreservedly withdraw my suggestion; I am sure there was good reason for the head shaking.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: If the member had read the same comments made by the Hon. Sandra Kanck, he would have been shaking his head as well.

Mr RAU: I am sure that is true. I will return to the topic.

Mrs GERAGHTY: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I suggest that the member was reflecting inappropriately upon a member of another place.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Thompson): Does the member for Davenport wish to comment?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, I do not, Madam Acting Speaker.

Mr RAU: Anyway, before I misinterpreted some head movements, I was saying that the situation is really that, if the opposition had its way, we would approve a facility for the storage of low level nuclear waste, which would come from all around the country, and we would be acting in a very positive way in terms of our making a contribution to the problem that the whole of Australia has with this type of material. The point I am trying to make is that once that facility is built there is no reason why the facility should not be sought out as a facility which might receive medium level nuclear waste, whether it be in the form of used rods from Lucas Heights or any other reactor that is built subsequently. Of course, once the facility has been built it will be used. The question one has to ask is: what stands between that facility that would be built, if the opposition had its way, on the basis that it would receive only low level nuclear waste, and medium level nuclear waste being deposited there as well? The answer to that question is: the provision in the act that the previous parliament put into place, whereby no medium level waste will be accepted in South Australia.

The problem, of course, is that we all know that that provision is absolutely irrelevant as far as the federal government is concerned. They can completely ignore it, just as they can ignore anything else if they can find a constitutional power to enable them to do so. I would not be surprised if the choice of Woomera as Australia's safest place did not have something to do with the fact that it is on commonwealth land, it has a very large airstrip which was built for military purposes some years ago, and the commonwealth can move whatever it likes in and out of Woomera at any time it likes, and whatever South Australia thinks about that is completely irrelevant.

We then get to this point: if the opposition were to be in charge of this debate and have its way, we would see a low level facility established by the commonwealth at Woomera. That low level facility would receive low level material from around the country. I understand that there is a difference of opinion between both sides of the house as to whether any facility should be simply for the South Australian material or whether it should be for material from elsewhere. The opposition would have a low level waste facility, established by the commonwealth for national purposes, at Woomera. My point is that, once it is there, there is absolutely no doubt that it would become a repository for medium level waste or, if we ever got to the point of having high-level waste here, it would also become a repository for high-level waste (as the member for Davenport said many times in his second reading speech, it is Australia's safest place, according to people who

seem to know about these things), and we would have allowed the thing in on one basis, namely, that it will only receive low level waste, pretending to ourselves that the prohibition in our act of parliament about anything more substantial than low level waste will make a difference. Once the facility is there it will be used for what it was intended to be used for, that is, all waste.

Transparently, if we to try to do anything about nuclear waste in South Australia, we need to stop two things. First, we need to stop the development of the commonwealth facility in South Australia, and that commonwealth facility, whether or not it is described initially as being a repository for waste from around the country of a low level nature, will ultimately be a universal waste dump.

Of course, the very important difference between what the act passed by the previous parliament and this provision seek to do is that the act seeks to regulate the construction of a federal facility and this legislation seeks to prevent its construction. There is a very important difference: if the federal facility is not constructed at all there will be no opportunity for medium level waste to come here because there will be nowhere to put it. I think it is important that we get back to this question about what is a stunt and what is not. As I have said, the referendum will have no impact on the federal legal position at all, as our act of parliament presently prohibits certain types of waste being brought to South Australia equally has no legal effect as against the commonwealth.

This is an attempt to make some sort of political message very plain to the commonwealth by giving the people of South Australia an opportunity to say something at a referendum. It is nothing more or nothing less than that. I share some of the concerns raised by members opposite about nuclear waste, albeit low level waste, being stored in different places around Adelaide. I think it is reasonable to say that, sooner or later, someone has to look at where this stuff is, work out whether it is properly stored, whether there is an inventory of it, and so on. That does not mean that it all has to be collected and taken off to Woomera, but it does mean, as a matter of prudent housekeeping, that it should be looked at. However, that is a long way from creating this facility, which will be, in my opinion, used and abused by the commonwealth for other purposes.

The other point made by the member for Davenport related to how much money this thing would cost. As I understood the member's argument, it went something like this: \$10 million—which was his figure—or a lesser amount, if you take into account the views expressed by the Electoral Commission, would be wasted on what amounted to a stunt. That is public money effectively being directed to political purposes; I think I understood that to be the point of the question.

The only thing I can say about that is that until recently, when I was elected to this place, the only communications I had with the government of South Australia was by means of my letter-box, and I recall over the last few years, receiving glossy things telling me that as soon as ETSA was sold my power bill would crash to almost nothing and that the state debt would be gone, and they showed the smiling faces of Mr Olsen and various other happy people standing in front of construction sites with helmets on, and all those sorts of things.

I understand that all those were paid for by the taxpayer as well. If we start getting into the argument about what is legitimate there is plenty of material we can work away on,

and I do not think that is very productive. So, I think on that point there is not really much to be said. At its worst, it is no worse than anything that was done by a previous administration and, at its best, it is probably considerably cheaper and at least gives the public an opportunity to express a view.

The question about its being the safest place in Australia was developed for some time by the member for Davenport, and I understand, as he does, that some sort of study was undertaken on that. I really question what the parameters of that study were. Obviously, the capacity of the commonwealth to control wherever it was that the waste was going to be put was an important element. You do not have to be a Rhodes scholar to work out that the commonwealth controls a vast amount of pretty well desolate country around Woomera. It has an airstrip there. It is a logical place to put it, but that does not necessarily mean that it is geologically the only place that it can go. I would not be surprised, if this referendum proposal is carried, to see the commonwealth review the matter and consider some other place where it has perhaps greater constitutional authority, such as the Northern Territory, or some of the other parts of Australia where it might have facilities or land, and consider that they might equally be a very safe—

The Hon. I.F. Evans: Maybe you could ask Clare Martin whether she will take it.

Mr RAU: I would say to the member for Davenport that Clare Martin would be in exactly the same position.

The Hon. I.F. Evans: She would say 'not in my backyard', too.

Mr RAU: She might well say that. She would have the same capacity to say no as we do, which is zero. We are put in this position; we have no legal right to do anything about this. All we can do is make a gesture—a stunt as it was described, perhaps unkindly, on the other side of the house. I think it is entirely appropriate that we do pursue that course of action.

The member for Unley described this thing as being a question of leadership, and that is an interesting way to look at it. It is a fairly high moral ground position he has taken on that. All I can say about that is that, if you start to bundle this particular proposal in with things such as capital punishment, you are introducing a vast number of other issues. I am not sure that that particular argument was very well thought through.

I return to the original point. We have no legal authority whatsoever to deal with this. Secondly, once the thing is built it will be built and used for whatever facility the commonwealth intends it to be used for, irrespective of the views of the South Australian public. Thirdly, the only time that anything we have to say about the matter will be of any impact at all is at the critical point when the decision to go ahead and build is made, or not. The only way that will be influenced is by bringing some political pressure to bear on the commonwealth at that relevant time.

It seems to me that the only sensible way for this to proceed is the way that is envisaged here. I finish on one point that goes back to the member for Davenport's foreshadowing of amendments. He indicated that they would be making some amendments to this legislation and foreshadowed two of those amendments. The first was to say that:

...you do not want to take waste from other states and store it in South Australia. But, if you are going to spend \$6 million, although I think it would be closer to \$10 million, on a referendum, then there is an argument to say that we should ask the South Australian public what they want to do with the waste that is already here.

Then he goes on to propose that there be two additional questions, the first of which asks:

Do you want the low level radioactive waste currently stored in Mount Barker and Bedford Park taken away and stored at Australia's safest facility, licensed and operated by the commonwealth in Australia's safest place.

The second question is as follows:

Do the people living in the suburbs of Adelaide that have medium level waste stored there want to take it out of their area and moved to the storage facility, wherever that might be, because the medium level storage facility has yet to come about?

Coming from a perspective, as I understand he was, that this whole thing was a stunt, he seems to be saying, 'Well, if you can't beat them, join them.' We move from a criticism of the proposition on the basis that it is a stunt to an embracing of the whole stunt process by adding two extra questions. That really does tend to undermine the whole proposition that the process has no validity. Either it is valid or it is not. For those reasons, I urge support for the bill.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): The subject of nuclear waste has been drenched with misinformation and politicised to the point of absurdity. The Labor Party, at both state and federal level, has been actively involved with the search for a national nuclear waste repository since at least 1986. The 1991 Labor state government of which Premier Mike Rann was a cabinet member was actively involved with the then Labor federal government in seeking a national nuclear waste repository. I quote from a letter written by Dr Don Hopgood, then state Deputy Premier, to Simon Crean, then federal Minister for Primary Industries and Energy. Dr Hopgood stated:

South Australian government officials have participated from the outset in the collaborative development of proposals for national radioactive waste facilities through the Commonwealth-State Consultative Committee, and they took part in the desk study completed in 1986 to identify broad areas of Australia that are likely to contain sites satisfying the International Atomic Energy Agency's criteria for siting a low level radioactive waste repository.

Labor's public opposition to a nuclear waste facility is simply grandstanding, using misinformation to generate fear in the community. Why were they willing to acknowledge acceptable selected sites in 1986 under a federal Labor government but in 2002, under a federal Liberal government, those same potential sites are suddenly taboo? Let us examine the fear that surrounds anything nuclear. Where does the fear come from?

When the nuclear industry was in its infancy in the 1930s it was hailed with positive excitement as a boon to humankind, principally due to the invention of X-rays for medical use. The Second World War was followed by the Cold War of the 1950s in which western free thinking was opposed by communist ideology. The threat of a nuclear war was used to gain public support for the development and maintenance of the defence industry and personnel. Propaganda played on fear, fear of another world war and of the destruction that such a war would bring. But fear is a powerful motivator, especially when it is allied with ignorance.

Leadership—that is, genuine positive leadership—means giving the public all the facts, not just those that suit a particular facet of an argument. The Labor government is not showing sound leadership in its handling of the nuclear waste debate. We are all subject to radioactivity all the time: it is part of the environment. Chernobyl was one of the earliest nuclear power generators. Technology has advanced since that time, as would be expected. It is rather like comparing

the first vehicles with the cars being manufactured today. Even such a small thing as tyres changing from solid rubber to pneumatic can be overlooked in such a comparison.

The fear of radiation health effects, particularly from severe accidents and radioactive waste, is central to public concerns about the nuclear industry but, as mentioned before, radiation is a fact of everyday life. Radiation is a natural component of the air we breathe, of the earth we walk on, of the homes we live in, of the food we eat and of human tissue and bones. It will be a major step forward when we consider the nuclear industry in the same way as we look upon coal, gas, oil or chemicals. It is an industry where potential negatives must be ascertained and adequate safeguards put in place, as is done in other industries.

I doubt that anyone would propose that the chemical industry be abandoned, yet this has the potential to cause massive ill health, deaths and environmental disasters. The 1984 accident at a chemical plant at Bhopal in India caused some 3 000 early deaths and severely affected the health of several hundred thousand. The fossil fuel industry has likewise had some catastrophic accidents. A pipeline gas leak explosion in the Urals involved 500 fatalities, while the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker accident in Alaska led to severe environmental damage.

The disposal of empty chemical drums and waste oil is a concern. However, the concern is met with commonsense so that acceptable, practical solutions are worked out. Let us treat the nuclear industry the same way. Let us look at the environment for a few moments. We are all—or should be—concerned about global warming. That is brought about largely by the use of fossil fuels. Power generation is a considerable component of that use. If we are serious about reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the pollutant effects of the fossil fuels industry, then we would be examining nuclear power generation as an alternative option, along with wind and solar power generation. Forward thinking countries are already doing this. I quote from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) figures from 1997, as follows:

Globally, the nuclear share of electricity is more than 20 per cent in 19 countries. Regionally in 1996, western Europe, with a 33 per cent share, had the highest percentage of nuclear electricity—the nuclear share in France, Belgium and Sweden being 77, 57 and 52 per cent respectively. Two large plants in Lithuania supplied almost 85 per cent of the country's electricity requirements.

With a continuation of the current trend, the next century [which is the one we are now in] will see global electricity demand grow faster than overall energy demand as electricity provides the greatest flexibility in use at the point of consumption. Already, Turkey, an example of a rapidly industrialising developing country, has seen its electricity capacity increase tenfold in 25 years.

It is plain commonsense to produce electricity using technology that has the least effect on the environment. That means a move away from the use of fossil fuels, a move that the oil industry will doubtless oppose strongly. It means an increasing use of nuclear generators, and that means, of course, that waste repositories will be needed. And they must be safe ones.

When this whole nuclear waste debate gained momentum a couple or so years ago, a then 17 year old supported the establishment of a waste repository in South Australia to take all grades of nuclear waste. His comment was that South Australia could charge for material deposited in such a facility, thus generating revenue for the state—revenue that could be used for health, education, roads, scientific research or any of the many other areas where the government never has enough funds to meet perceived needs. The suggestion

is one that I support and one that I have heard regularly since from all age groups.

Port Lincoln resident and South Australian advocate for a nuclear waste dump, Terry Krieg, calls for public debate and education on nuclear waste disposal. He believes that there is massive community ignorance despite nuclear materials, including waste, having been handled safely since the late 1960s. He suggests that a waste repository could become a new and valuable industry for the state. He stated:

I didn't create the problem but I'm prepared to help find a solution. We can help isolate the waste from the environment forever and it will be good for the earth and for the South Australian economy.

However, the issues would need to be debated rationally and factually, rather than like the debates that now take place in a sea of misinformation, fear and hysteria. Much of the current debate gives the impression that nuclear waste is somehow to be avoided at all costs. Yet what we are talking about is waste—whether low, intermediate or high level—from the everyday use of nuclear technology. Some examples of short-lived intermediate level waste are exit signs, industrial smoke detectors and radium painted watch or instrument dials (the type that glows in the dark).

Smoke detectors are probably one of the most common everyday uses of nuclear technology. Many detectors contain a tiny amount of radioactive material, which makes the detector sensitive to smoke. These smoke detectors save lives. The eventual waste product has to go somewhere. I repeat: nuclear waste products have to go somewhere. The alternative is to reject any nuclear technology. Try to imagine a world without X-rays, radiology, soil testing, radiotherapy, scans, and the ability to track hidden courses as diverse as underground water or blood circulation in the body.

My own husband Geoff was so irradiated to kill cancer cells when our children were young that I was advised that our children should go to live with their grandparents, and so should I if I wanted any more children. Geoff recently turned 60 and is in good health, despite very high radiation, in fact, because of it.

I commend Port Lincoln Mayor Peter Davis on his stand supporting the establishment of a low level radioactive waste repository in South Australia and regret that it was not supported by the Port Lincoln city council. Mayor Davis observed:

If we don't support a low level radioactive waste repository, then we shouldn't have smoke detectors, no glow in the dark watches, no cancer treatments, no microwaves, no road surveying technology. It's about time we debated this issue rationally because we need to know what to do with all this stuff instead of storing it unsafely in cupboards in Adelaide.

Mayor Davis, addressing the Local Government Association in Adelaide earlier this year, stated:

Nuclear technology is not going to stop tomorrow so we need to find a sensible place to store the waste instead of it being stored in hospital cupboards. In fact, if the geologists and nuclear physicists say it would be in my backyard, then that's where it will be.

I support a nuclear waste facility in whatever location is deemed safest and best. If that is South Australia, so be it. Also, let us look at charging other states if they want to make use of it. Of course, if the state Labor government misses the opportunity to set up a financial stream for the state and the facility is set up by the commonwealth, we will still have the facility with no ancillary financial benefit to the state. We will probably have to pay them.

Premier Mike Rann is very keen to fritter away the state's funds on a referendum. It has been estimated that such a referendum would cost about \$6.4 million for the Electoral Commission alone, without the educating process that is essential to enable people to make a choice. A good leader accepts responsibility, along with the power that accompanies leadership. It seems that Mr Rann wants the power without the responsibility. Being able to blame someone or something else—

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker. From early in the member for Flinders' forthright contribution, she continues to refer to the Premier by his Christian name and surname, particularly by his surname. I ask you, Mr Acting Speaker, to draw to her attention the requirement to refer to the Premier by his office or his electorate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Snelling): The Attorney-General is always on the alert. I missed the references, and I ask the member for Flinders to refer to their members by their titles.

Mrs PENFOLD: My apologies, Mr Acting Speaker. Mr Barry Wakelin, federal member for Grey, the federal electorate where a facility may be sited, recently stated in the local paper:

This nuclear waste is as a result of extremely useful purposes in many cases about saving human life.

He asked a number of questions of the Premier, including:

1. Where he will store his South Australian waste safely? Or will he continue to leave it in many places all over the state, as is currently the situation?
2. What does Simon Crean, the federal Labor leader, say after initiating the policy for a national repository in 1991 and then dumping waste in Woomera in 1994-95?
3. Will Mr Rann abolish the use of nuclear products—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No, not again.

Mrs PENFOLD: No, this is a quote. I am allowed to do so in a quote, am I not?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Okay, go ahead.

Mrs PENFOLD: Thank you. He asked:

3. Will Mr Rann abolish the use of nuclear products which save lives?

Let us bring sanity back into the nuclear debate. We have a nuclear industry; it is a part of our 21st century life. The industry will generate waste. Let us store that waste in the most appropriate geographical and politically safe location. If that is the north of South Australia, then let us support the decision with commonsense.

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

That the time for moving the adjournment of the house be extended beyond 5 p.m.

Motion carried.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): I, too, rise to speak to this bill. In so doing, I focus on the fact that it is likely to be a very long committee stage indeed if the contributions I have heard to date are any guide. We have heard many members refer to the reason why this legislation is before the house. Indeed, a number of members during debate have referred to this bill as a political stunt—a \$6.4 million political stunt if one is to put a figure on the likely cost of any referendum should that occur. Others have put the point of view that it is not a political stunt necessarily but more a continuation of the manipulation of the truth about

the nuclear industry and its participants which we have seen occur for so long within this chamber, championed by a Labor government.

Others may indeed look at it as being a pay-back bill, a bill that is effectively playing to the grandstand occupied by those feral left wing groups who gave their preferences to the Labor Party at the last state election. I use the word 'feral', because it has been used by the Premier before when referring to a group of protesters outside the Woomera Detention Centre. It may well be that some of the ferals to whom the Premier has referred are the same ferals who are part of the groups that gave their preferences to the Labor Party at the last state election.

Indeed, could it be that the purpose of this bill is for a more unique reason, one perhaps of conservatism in relation to a Labor government—although I somewhat doubt that? Could it be that it is part of the game that is often played between states and territories in this nation of ours—states and territories that have had their borders drawn up in part to settle conflict between free settler and penal colonies as we endeavoured to bring an infant nation into some sort of system of government?

Whatever the reason for the debate, whatever the reason for the bill being before this chamber, one thing is certain: this bill is certainly not Australian and responsible in its spirit. It is certainly not thinking of the common good of all Australians outside those old boundaries that were drawn up between the free settler and penal colonies to form the states and territories which presently govern in this nation.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister interjects that I will be barracking for Victoria. I am sure he, like I, has looked very carefully at the way the boundaries were drawn up. I am sure the Attorney-General would not want to go out and defend the basis of the system of government in Australia today. He knows full well—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: You're a federalist?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I am interested to hear the Attorney's interjection, and I look forward to continuing this debate outside the chamber on another occasion. This bill toys with the South Australian public. It takes members of the South Australian public to be idiots, and it endeavours to continue with the deception that has been practised by the Labor Party in relation to the nuclear industry.

Much has been said about the nature of the waste that would be stored at a low level waste repository in South Australia. It is important to focus on exactly what type of material would be stored at such a repository. The parliament has a responsibility to ensure that it has the knowledge of the uses of radioactivity around Australia and the waste products from that activity.

In the area of medicine, I would hope that most Australians recognise the use of radioactive materials by doctors and hospitals to diagnose and treat illnesses as an important benefit of radioactivity. In fact, every year more than 320 000 Australians undergo medical procedures which draw on the radioactive materials that are produced at the Lucas Heights Research Reactor in Sydney. Radio-pharmaceuticals—in other words, the therapeutical diagnosis drugs that contain a radioactive material—are important in the diagnosis of many diseases and conditions, including cancer. They can be injected into the body, inhaled or taken orally to enable

organisms such as the heart, the kidneys, the liver and lungs to be photographed for diagnostic purposes.

I have been the benefit of this form of medical practice myself on a number of occasions, and I am particularly grateful for the fact that it exists in the first place. I know that many other members of parliament have been recipients of this sort of medical treatment, and I am well aware that many of their friends and relatives have likewise. I hope that no member of the Labor Party would want to see these medical practices discontinued. The reality is that this medicine results in by-products or waste products that have to be stored somewhere. X-rays have long been used for diagnostic purposes.

If we look at the benefits of radioactive materials in industry, there are a variety of ways in which industry is able to improve its safety, in which it is able to improve its productivity, and to obtain information that cannot be obtained in other ways. Radioactive materials effectively influence our everyday lives as they are used in things like measuring devices, process control in factories, civil engineering, checking oil and gas pipelines for leaks and weaknesses, material analysis and oil and mineral exploration. As a former minister for minerals and energy, I am well aware of the benefits of this sort of work in such industries and, importantly, the safety benefits that result from the ability to use radioactive materials in this sort of work.

Measuring devices containing radioactive materials are used in a range of tasks, such as checking faults in aeroplane engines, testing the moisture content of soils in vineyards and during road construction, measuring the thickness of paper and plastics during manufacturing, checking the height of fluid in bottles, and detecting explosives. They are important functions that we all benefit from in our everyday life, but they are functions that result in waste products.

In agriculture, radiation and radioisotopes are used to measure soil moisture content, erosion rates and soil salinity. The Minister for Environment regularly talks about soil salinity, but does he decry the use of radioactive materials in providing him with the information he seeks as minister, and what does he expect will be done with the waste products from such research? Radioisotopes are also used to help farmers increase the efficiency of fertilisers and reduce the amount of pesticide use.

One of the most beneficial uses of radiation is that of sterilisation. Syringes, dressings, surgical gloves, heart valves and surgical instruments can all be sterilised after packaging by exposing them to radiation, and again many thousands of Australians have benefited from this use of radioactivity in Australia. While the Minister for Environment is here, it is important to say that there are significant benefits of radioactive materials to the environment. They are important in a range of environmental measuring processes, including stream flow, sedimentation rates, water quality, which I have already alluded to, and soil and water salinity.

In our homes, most first aid kits contain items sterilised by radiation including cotton wool, burns dressings and bandages, and one of the most common and important uses of radioisotopes in the home is in smoke detectors, the very detectors which, by virtue of legislation passed in this parliament, are mandatory for new buildings in South Australia.

If we are not to have nuclear waste dumps, we cannot derive these benefits from the use of radioactive materials. We simply cannot derive those benefits, and I challenge any member of the Labor Party to stand up in this house and

decry the uses of radioactive material that I have just outlined to the house. I challenge any member of the Labor Party—

The Hon. J.D. Hill: That is not the point.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The Minister for Environment interjects that that is not the point. The minister has been publicly belting the nuclear industry in this country, belting the three mining companies that responsibly mine uranium in this state, and he has been forced to back down in this house and admit that there is no problem with mining—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Snelling): Order! The honourable member will return to the substance of the debate.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister has been forced to admit that there are no problems with uranium mines in this state. Having done that, I am sure that he will accept the benefits that the nuclear industry brings to this state. However, we have a responsibility to dispose of those waste materials and the simple fact is that, over the last 40 years, Australia has accumulated 3 500 cubic metres of waste. For the benefit of members opposite, that is essentially the volume of about eight average size houses or 50 shipping containers. That is 40 years' worth of waste that has been accumulated for the entire nation. We have done that through the methods that I have described to the house—essentially an accumulation of materials used in research, medicine and industry, and even in our own homes. With this has obviously come some benefits.

Essentially, some basic principles must be considered when disposing of this waste, and those principles are nothing unique, certainly not to the nuclear industry. They are not unique to the disposal of hazardous wastes. They are the sort of principles that have to be applied to all hazardous wastes. A variety of hazardous wastes in our environment need to be disposed of on a daily basis. Each waste type, whether toxic or radioactive, requires a specific, sensible, controlled, coordinated management approach that will take into account the specific characteristics of the waste and the associated hazards.

The Labor Party has made a big game about the disposal of nuclear wastes, but what about the disposal of other wastes? Why do we not have bills before this parliament about the disposal of other wastes? Is other waste taken over the border into this state, other waste that might be more objectionable because of its fluidity, its likelihood of spillage? The waste that we are talking about at this time is low level nuclear waste, the type of waste that is less likely to cause difficulty than many of the other toxic wastes that are already disposed of in South Australia.

Federal and state governments have been addressing this issue for some time and, going back to 1992, all governments, federal and state—and it is important to remember that the federal government was a Labor government—agreed that it was sensible for there to be a single, central waste repository for the storage of low level nuclear waste for Australians. After an exhaustive search, after a constructive search, the preferred site was identified and, as members would be aware, that preferred site is at Evetts Field West, within the Woomera prohibited area, about 45 kilometres from the Woomera-Roxby Downs Road. Another two alternative sites were also identified and, as members ought be aware, they are in different locations but both about 20 kilometres east of the Woomera-Roxby Downs Road.

After an exhaustive search involving some of our nation's best experts, it was determined that the best place to deposit

low level nuclear waste was at the Evetts Field West site. They determined that, but Labor is decrying that decision. Labor is saying 'Not in our backyard,' not in the backyard that was defined as a result of a compromise over disputes between penal and free settler colonies at the time the boundaries were drafted to form what we now call the state of South Australia. Labor is saying that it does not want it in the backyard that was defined in that way.

As a consequence, what Labor members are saying is that they would rather see that low level waste deposited where it currently is, and it is presently the responsibility of those who generate it. As a result, nuclear waste is deposited at various sites around Australia. Indeed, nuclear waste is deposited on North Terrace, the very road that this house sits on in Adelaide. That waste is generated in research at the Adelaide University and through medicine and its practice at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. It goes even further than that. That waste might actually be at multiple sites within those organisations because there are various departments within a hospital and within universities, and I am given to understand that some of those institutions have determined that the responsibility for disposing of the waste lies with the departments within the building. So, it might be that at multiple sites at the Adelaide University, the Royal Adelaide Hospital, Flinders University and Flinders Medical Centre and so on, waste is being deposited.

I challenge one member of the Labor Party to stand up in this house and defend the practice of locating nuclear waste on North Terrace, Bedford Park, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Lyell McEwin Hospital and research establishments around our state. I challenge one member to stand up and say, 'That is appropriate; that is where that waste ought be stored.' The Liberal Party supports the establishment of a centralised waste repository and not simply because we believe in honouring the agreement reached in 1992. The word 'honour' seems to be a word that is lost on many of the members of the Labor Party; it was in opposition and it still is in government.

We believe, also, that it is the most sensible thing in the best interests of all Australians, and therefore including South Australians. The notion of members of the Labor Party proclaiming, 'Not in our backyard', is interesting. Not too many members of the Labor Party represent rural South Australia. Indeed, most members of the Labor Party represent areas within metropolitan Adelaide. How many of those members of the Labor Party have been to the site concerned?

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: How many members of the Labor Party have actually been to the preferred site? How many have seen where it is and seen that it is in the middle of nowhere. How many have seen how safe that site is compared to the sites where waste is already being stored?

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: So, the Minister for Environment and Conservation would rather see waste deposited at the Willunga Hospital, the Flinders Medical Centre and the Flinders University. He would rather his constituents go to those locations where that waste is deposited than see that waste deposited in the middle of a desert area? Is that what the minister is saying?

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: That is what the minister is saying. The minister is saying, 'That is right.' Is that what the minister is saying?

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The fact is that there is only one responsible thing to do, that is, for this government to agree that it is in Australia's and South Australia's best interests to have a centralised nuclear waste repository. The government wants to hold a referendum at a cost of \$6.4 million minimum. That is South Australian money—money that could be spent on the construction of a secondary school, money that could be spent on furthering hospital research and money that could be spent on treating people in hospitals. The government wants to blow that money up against the wall. That is what it wants to do.

The government wants to blow that money up against the wall simply to be able say to its political mates of the feral left, 'It's okay, we don't support nuclear activity.' That is what the Labor Party wants to say to its feral left-wing mates. The Labor Party wanted a lot of their feral mates to give their preferences in the last election. There is no doubt that a number of feral left-wing groups were prepared to give their preferences to the Labor Party. The South Australian Nuclear Free Future Group—a feral left-wing group that misquoted Liberal minister after Liberal minister in their foul publicity—endeavoured to do nothing else but put a Labor Party in government in this state.

That is what this is about. It is about the Labor Party saying to them, 'Thank you', but ultimately acknowledging that the federal government will probably ride over the top of it and put the nuclear waste dump here anyway. The Labor Party will be able to say to their feral left-wing mates, 'Sorry, but we tried'; but, privately, what do they all really think? Why do not members opposite tell their feral left-wing mates the truth about what they really think? I do not believe that any members opposite are so stupid that they really believe that it is not in our state's best interests to have a centralised facility for the safe disposal of nuclear waste. I do not believe that even the Minister for Environment and Conservation believes that.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): Contrary to what we have just heard from the member for Bright and the other contributors from the opposition, this bill is essentially about democracy. We recognise that, in supporting this bill, some issues are so critical to the future of South Australia's people that they should be directly consulted. If any issue falls into that category of being extremely important to the whole of the population of South Australia, it is this question dealing with the storage of nuclear waste. Although the discussion has been about a low level nuclear dump, we all know that it is probably inevitable that, should a low level nuclear dump be established in the northern part of the state, a very powerful argument will be mounted for high-level waste to be stored at the same site.

In some respects there are issues about the storage on the site itself, but many issues relate to transportation, which probably discloses the greatest risk to our population. It is virtually impossible for anyone, whether they be members of the opposition, scientists, or whoever, to guarantee that there will never be an accident when nuclear waste is trucked into South Australia. That is not only of concern to us, the people who are living in South Australia now, but it will be of concern to our future generations. The Labor Party in South Australia, because we are not in power federally and because we do not control all aspects of the nuclear industry (and certainly not outside state borders), can do little more than reflect that powerful political opposition in the community by giving the community a voice in a referendum.

The issue is essentially about democracy. My prediction is that the people of South Australia, if they are properly informed as to the responsibilities in relation to storage of nuclear waste, the dangers of nuclear waste storage and the likely future of the site in the north of South Australia, will vote against the establishment of the nuclear waste dump. That will send a powerful message to the Howard government (or the Costello government) in Canberra. We trust that the response from the federal Liberal government would be to desist and to look at other alternatives. Obviously, there are alternatives, such as storing this sort of nuclear waste on a local basis.

There are alternatives in terms of the future of Lucas Heights; and, at this stage, it is not for me to say what the ideal alternative is. However, one thing is clear: the people of South Australia do not want a nuclear dump in the state and they do not want a greater exposure to the danger of nuclear hazard. It may well be that the best thing all round is for existing low level nuclear waste to continue being stored at the sites where it is produced, because at least the people who are producing that waste in the name of medical research or treatment, etc., are able to determine exactly what is there, how much is there, how dangerous it is and what security precautions should be taken to care for it.

It certainly removes the whole issue of transportation of the material, and that is a very powerful consideration. I am very pleased to support this bill, which calls for a referendum to take place in South Australia before the federal government can nominate a site in this state for a nuclear dump. As I said, my prediction is that the people of South Australia, if they are sufficiently well informed, will reject the notion that we should be the host to a national nuclear waste dump.

However, the point of the bill is that we will let the people decide. It will not be for me to play the expert and it will not be for the state government of South Australia to determine all the answers because we cannot by ourselves do that. But it will be for the people of South Australia to make their response well and truly known to the federal government, which will ultimately make this decision.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to oppose this bill, which is just another political stunt by this government to try to embarrass the Howard government before the next federal election. We just heard the member for Bright say that the cost of running this referendum will be about \$6.4 million. We know that every government department will be cranked up in the guise of public education and will go off on a political campaign. This is no more than just another huge political stunt at the South Australian taxpayers' expense.

Let us look at what that reputable journalist, Rex Jory, said in the *Advertiser* on 14 May this year under the heading 'Nuclear dump matter of geology, not politics'. Among the things that he wrote is the following:

Mr Rann has been a consistent opponent of most elements of a nuclear cycle. As an adviser to then Labor opposition leader John Bannon in the early 1980s, his opposition to the establishment of the Roxby Downs uranium, copper and gold mine was well known.

But there is a hint of popular politics, even hypocrisy, in Mr Rann's outspoken opposition to the low level nuclear waste repository. . . [We should remember that] Roxby Downs. . . pours millions of dollars of royalties into the state Treasury.

Mr Jory went on to state:

If this waste material is deemed to be too dangerous to bury in rock, clear of artesian water, then how can it be safe to store [it] in the basement of Adelaide University or the Women's and Children's Hospital?

Mr Jory continues:

Ironically, the Independent Speaker, Peter Lewis, whose vote is keeping Labor in office, is a firm advocate of a nuclear waste facility in SA. Who knows what weight his view will carry? Mr Rann should embrace the big picture, the national vision.

The other day in the house it was said that the history of the Labor Party is a proud one. Let us look at the history of the Labor Party and see if it really is proud of its nuclear waste history. Let us remember that it was the Federal Labor government that started looking at nuclear waste. Let us remember that it was in the early 1990s that state and federal Labor governments made the decision to store nuclear waste here in South Australia. Let us remember, too, that it was in 1994 that a Labor government moved 2 000 cubic metres of low level nuclear waste to Woomera without any public consultation. Let us remember that in 1995 the federal Labor government moved 35 cubic metres of intermediate level waste to Woomera without any public consultation. And let us look at what the former member for Elizabeth and now federal member for Bonython said in November 1999. Martyn Evans said he agreed with the storage, saying:

It has to go somewhere and, just because it is in South Australia, we can't have a not in my back yard view.

Let me tell you that it is not just in your back yards: it is in your hospitals, it is in your schools and it is in your homes; it is everywhere. Back in the early 1990s Mr Crean, Mr Arnold, Mr Rann and Mr Foley were all involved. At no stage did any of these people oppose this storage site. The Rann government's position is purely politically motivated rather than being based on genuine grievance. Once again, we see this government preying on the people of South Australia, using fear and ignorance as tools and weapons, and fear and ignorance to continue to feed their lust for power. This government has to face reality. It has to face the fact that with power comes responsibility. Government members have to recognise their responsibilities and to stop relying on outdated science, outdated ideology and outdated sociology.

Let us look at some of the clauses in this bill under the definition of 'nuclear waste'. Nuclear waste is categorised in categories A, B or C radioactive waste. Any waste material that contains a radioactive substance is derived from—listen to this—the operation of decommissioning a nuclear reactor; a nuclear weapons facility; radioisotope production; uranium enrichment; the testing or decommissioning of nuclear weapons; and the conditioning or reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. Reading that list scares me, so what are the poor Joe Averages outside going to think about the proposal of a nuclear waste repository? Of course they are going to be scared if they do not know the truth.

As I said a moment ago, we are surrounded by radiation, and not just in our back yards—it is in our hospitals, in our schools and in our homes. We use low level radioactive materials in our everyday lives. Last year alone, 440 000 people were treated with radioisotopes obtained from the Lucas Heights reactor—and apparently from cyclotrons as well. I, for one (and I am sure there are many other members in this house as well as people sitting in the gallery—there are a couple of people in the gallery) and staff in this house and other places have relatives who have had radiation treatment for one reason or another.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker. The member for Morphett is new in this place, but he should realise that it is contrary to standing orders to make reference to the gallery or to play to the

gallery during speeches, and I ask you to inform him of the rules on that matter.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I did not hear that.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I thank the—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morphett will resume his seat. I missed the reference to the gallery, but I remind or inform the member for Morphett that it is highly improper to refer to the gallery in the course of his speech. I will allow the member for Morphett to continue his remarks.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for your education on that matter. I will try not to infringe your ruling, sir. It is not only medicine and life-saving procedures that require these radioisotopes. Australian industry has used radioactive materials in a variety of ways to improve productivity and safety and to obtain information that could be obtained only in this way. In agriculture, radiation and radioisotopes are used to improve crops, preserve food and control insect pests. They are also used to measure soil content, erosion rates, salinity and for the efficient use of fertiliser. Perhaps we should remember salinity measurements when we are thinking about the 500 tonnes of salt that enter the Murray River every day.

The Minister for Health currently has consultants looking at the protocols and methods of overcoming in-hospital infection in our major hospitals. Let me remind her and the rest of this government and the people of South Australia that one of the most beneficial uses of radiation is for the sterilisation of instruments and preparations. They are sterilised by using radiation—gamma radiation. This type of sterilisation can be used where more traditional methods such as heat and steam cannot be used, such as the sterilisation of powders and ointments as well as biological preparations such as tissue grafts.

Like other applications of radioactive material, the radiation sources used to sterilise these materials must be disposed of at the end of their useful lives. The most common form of radiation we are exposed to is good old ultra violet light from the sun, and who would oppose the 'slip, slop, slap' campaigns that are heavily promoted at all times? We can limit our exposure to radiation by managing radioactive materials and wastes in the same way that we can manage our exposure to the sun—by thinking carefully and sensibly about what we do.

This bill talks about intermediate and high-level waste. Let us look at the classifications of radioactive waste. Low level waste contains enough radioactive material to require action for the protection of people but not so much that it requires shielding during handling and storage and transport. Next up the chain are the short-lived intermediate level wastes. These are wastes which require shielding but little or no provision for heat dissipation, and they contain low levels of long-lived radionuclides. These generally have a half life of less than 30 years.

A similar group of short-lived intermediate level wastes is the long-lived intermediate level wastes. These are radionuclides that put out very little heat but require some shielding to be able to handle them safely. They generally have a half life of more than 30 years. Low level short-lived intermediate level wastes and long-lived intermediate level wastes are all produced in Australia and are all used for numerous beneficial uses.

The most potent form of radioactive waste, of course, is high level waste, and this is waste which contains large concentrations of both short-lived and long-lived radio-

nucleides and are sufficiently radioactive to require both shielding and cooling. High-level waste generates more than 2 kilowatts of heat per cubic metre. That is about the same heat as produced by an electric kettle. Australia does not—I repeat, Australia does not—produce high level waste. For the information of members, radionuclides are atoms that are radioactive.

In the bill we read about categories A, B and C nuclear waste. Let us look at them. Categories A, B and C are low level and short-lived intermediate level radioactive wastes classified under the International Atomic Energy Agency safety guide. The National Health and Medical Research Council defines category A, B and C wastes as suitable for near surface disposal. This is where the waste is disposed of in a repository on or below the ground, a few tens of metres below the earth's surface where the final covering is in the order of a few metres thick—a near surface repository. Near surface repositories may either be with or without engineered barriers and include sub-surface trenches and cabins and above and below ground vaults.

The repository design is determined by the geography and geology of the proposed site and the types of waste to be stored at the facility. Australia's inventory of A, B and C waste includes lightly contaminated soil, laboratory equipment, laboratory clothing and smoke detectors. The long lived intermediate level waste we spoke about before is S category. The amount of long lived intermediate level radioactive waste generated in Australia is very small. It mainly includes waste from the production of radio pharmaceuticals and used radiation sources from medical research and industrial equipment and some waste from the processing of mineral sands. Category S waste also includes long lived intermediate level radioactive waste returned to Australia from the treatment of spent fuel from the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's reactor at Lucas Heights. These wastes are not suitable for disposal in a near surface repository but can be safely stored in purpose built facilities above ground.

Most of Australia's waste consists of low level and short lived intermediate level radioactive waste and fits into categories A, B and C, according to the NHRMSE classification scheme. Australia has accumulated less than 3 500 cubic metres of radioactive waste over the past 40 years of research, medical and industrial use of radioactive materials. If all this material were collected together, it would fit into about 50 shipping containers. Over half Australia's current waste consists of 10 000 drums of lightly contaminated soil. This is the legacy of the CSIRO's research into processing radioactive ores during the 1950s and 1960s. The amount of radioactive waste generated in Australia is very small and typically consists of laboratory equipment, laboratory clothing and smoke detectors. Each year Australia produces less than 50 cubic metres of radioactive waste, which is less than the volume of one steel shipping container. In comparison, Britain and France each year individually produce 25 000 cubic metres of low level waste. In one year, these countries generate seven times the amount of low level waste Australia has accumulated over 40 years. There will be about 500 cubic metres of low level and short lived radioactive waste produced by the decommissioning of the Lucas Heights reactor. The decommissioning, I understand, will happen in the year 2035.

High-level waste is defined by the International Atomic Energy Agency as waste material that generates heat at greater than 2 000 watts per cubic metre. Management of this

type of waste requires special procedures to manage both the heat and radioactivity. High-level waste is produced from the reprocessing of spent fuel from nuclear reactors used to generate nuclear power in nuclear power stations. Both the current reactors at Lucas Heights and its replacement will be used for research facilities. They will not be used to generate nuclear power. Nuclear power reactors generate large quantities of radioactive waste and higher levels of radioactivity than research reactors. Australia's reactor does not generate high-level radioactive waste and I do not think any government is considering a nuclear power industry for Australia.

Let us remember that we all benefit from the use of radioactive materials, both in our homes and in medicine. Let us not forget that we all originate from nuclear reactions. There may be some people and even some in this house who do not quite agree with the big bang theory of the creation of the universe, but for the sake of the argument, we will get a bit of a cosmic connection going here. The world around us is dominated by protons, electrons, neutrons and neutrinos. The universe erupted from a point-like singularity about 15 billion to 20 billion years ago. The first few minutes after the big bang saw such extremes of energy that it is believed that all four interactions of physics were unified and that all matter melted down into an undifferentiated quark soup. Unbelievable energy was released at the time. There were strong forces—electromagnetic forces, weak forces and of course the force of gravity. These four forces became indistinguishable during the first microsecond. Following this, all the quarks combined to form the strongly interactive particles we see today. There are a few leptons and antimatter particles remaining out there that are observed by nuclear physicists today.

Until about 700 000 years after the big bang, the universe was radiation dominated. Ions absorbed and re-emitted photons, thereby ensuring thermal equilibrium of radiation and matter. When the universe was about 700 000 years old it had expanded and cooled to about 3 000 degrees Kelvin and protons could bind with electrons to form neutral hydrogen atoms. Radiation no longer dominated the universe, and clumps of neutral matter steadily grew—first atoms, followed by molecules, gas clouds, stars and finally galaxies. The left-over glow from the big bang still interferes with microwave transmissions today. The atoms, molecules and gas clouds formed as a result of the big bang still exist today. Everything around us is made up of atoms, some of which are unstable. Unstable atoms break down and release energy as radiation and form more stable atoms. Radioactivity is the term used to describe this breakdown of unstable atoms and the associated energy release.

Ionising radiation and non-ionising radiation are the two main forms of radiation that we are aware of today. The most common form of radiation we see is good old sunlight. Of course, this contains ultraviolet radiation, which can be damaging in large doses. Ionising radiation is radiation with enough energy to cause atoms to become electrically charged or ionised. Gamma rays are an example of this. Excessive exposure to ionising radiation is unsafe because the electrically charged atoms generated in this way can damage living matter. Radiation really occurs in two main forms nowadays—that is, natural radiation and man-made radiation. Naturally occurring radioactive materials are present in the soil, rocks and floors of our homes, schools and offices and the food we eat and drink. There are also radioactive gases in the air we breathe and naturally radioactive elements in our

muscles, bones and tissues. We are exposed to radiation from outer space, particularly when we fly in aeroplanes. The radiation from these natural sources is called background radiation and varies from one place to another.

In 1896 a scientist called Becquerel accidentally discovered that uranium crystal salts emitted an invisible radiation that can darken a photographic plate even if the plate is covered to exclude light. This process of spontaneous emission of radiation by uranium was soon to be called radioactivity. Three types of radiation can be emitted by radioactive substances. There are alpha decay, where the emitted particles are helium nuclei; beta decay, in which the emitted particles are either electrons or positrons; and gamma decay, in which the emitted rays are high energy photons. A positron is the anti-matter twin of the electron.

About the same time that Becquerel was doing his work, Madame Curie was involved with her husband, Pierre, in studies on piezoelectricity. Piezoelectric materials are used to measure the activity of radioactive substances. Madame Curie demonstrated the radioactive nature of the elements uranium and thorium. It is rather ironic that Madame Curie died of leukemia caused by years of exposure to radioactive substances. Thanks to the work of Madame Curie and others like her, we recognise the danger but also the benefits of radioactive material. This is why radioactive material needs to be handled in very managed ways. The most damaging radiation we encounter on a frequent basis is ionising radiation in the form of gamma rays and X-rays. In biological systems it is common to separate different types of radiation into somatic damage and genetic damage. Genetic damage can affect the reproductive organs and lead to defective offspring.

How do we know how much radiation we are getting? It is carefully measured now in sieverts, millisieverts and roentgens. There is also the RBE or relative biological factor. We know about radiation and how to manage it; what we need to do now is recognise the fact that we can also store it very safely. The fear and ignorance that this government is playing on illustrate the fact that this is just a political stunt. If they were truly open and honest as they claim, members opposite would be out there educating people, and certainly they would be making themselves aware of the facts, not just creating fear. Nuclear waste can be stored correctly. Let us not just have knee-jerk reactions: let us have some hope and understanding out there. Apart from the question of whether we store radioactive waste, why do we not ask the real question: can it be stored safely and will you educate the public on the types of waste?

I know that a lot of work has been done in South Australia on the technology to store nuclear waste. SYNROC technology is one that is being worked on here, and I hope that it will help to cope with the large amounts of high-level nuclear waste overseas.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: They were talking about SYNROC when I was a student!

Dr McFETRIDGE: And they are still working on it; that is how careful you have to be with the stuff. As I have said before, let us be open and honest; let us not be outdated; let us not be political opportunists. For the good Christian souls in this chamber, the only time I want to see science and religion mixed together is in carbon dating, a particularly interesting example of the use of nuclear physics. The beta decay of carbon 14 is commonly used to date organic samples. A particularly interesting example of this is the

dating of the Dead Sea scrolls. This group of manuscripts was first discovered by a shepherd in 1947. The translation—

Mr RAU: I rise on a point of order, sir: I question the relevance.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Snelling): I am anxiously awaiting when the member for Morphett draws this all together into the bill, so I will allow him to do so.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, sir. The translation shows the scrolls to be religious documents, including most of the books of the *Old Testament*. It is because of their historical and religious significance that scholars wanted to know their age. Carbon dating was applied to the fragments of the scrolls and to the material in which they were wrapped. The age of the scrolls is about 1 950 years. Without the use of radioisotopes and the knowledge gained from nuclear physics, even the religious scholars would not be benefiting, never mind the rest of the world. I oppose this bill.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): My inclination, at this stage, is to support this bill. However, I will reserve my final judgment until a little later in the process of the bill through this house. I have always been a supporter of asking the people, and I believe it is the essence of democracy. However, I would prefer that people are asked at election time, because it saves a lot of money on contentious issues. I have argued for quite a while that at election time we should ask people their views on a range of issues.

This bill relates to what is called a referendum. Technically, it is probably a plebiscite. As I understand it, it is more in the category of a plebiscite and an indicative poll rather than a binding referendum. Accusations have been made that this is a very political act, and it obviously is. However, I do not find that surprising, because we are in the business of politics in this place. Whether it comes in the category of a stunt, I leave for others to judge.

It is clearly a trigger to be used as a lever if the commonwealth government proceeds with its intention to store other states' low level waste, intermediate level waste or, less likely, high-level radioactive waste. It is clearly, if you like, a trigger mechanism that is there as a political lever in case the commonwealth seeks to go down that path. I do not see anything inappropriate about that. Indeed, the current government indicated in the election campaign that this was part of its policy, and that in itself is a reason for giving it favourable consideration. I do not believe that it is my role actively to thwart the government of the day.

The member for Davenport reminded me of a poll conducted by the *Advertiser* in August 2000 where, in response to the question, 'Do you support a referendum on whether to have a nuclear waste dump in South Australia?', I was reported as having said no. To the question, 'Do you support a low level waste dump in South Australia?', I said yes, which is not surprising when you look at the poll and the context of the question. Without reflecting on the *Advertiser* or the science of its polling, I do not believe that it is an accurate translation of the current situation in which we find ourselves in considering this bill. According to the *Advertiser*, 78 per cent of the people polled supported a referendum on the issue of whether or not there should be storage of nuclear waste in South Australia.

I believe that the cost of the referendum was initially suggested to be in the order of \$10 million. That figure is unnecessarily high and, I believe, if conducted as a postal ballot under the auspices of the State Electoral Commission, it could be less than \$3 million. It is still a lot of money but,

if it is expressed in terms of the population of South Australia, it is less than \$2 a head, or slightly more if you focus purely on those who are able to vote.

The issue whether or not it should be a voluntary vote is not germane here. If members are concerned about compulsory versus voluntary voting, I believe that should be addressed as a general issue specifically rather than dragging it into this issue of whether or not a referendum, as proposed here, should be compulsory or voluntary.

I do not believe that it is necessary to store other states' low level waste here. Australia is a very stable continent, and I do not see any justification why other states' low level waste cannot be stored appropriately in their own state or territory. Whilst I acknowledge that the area around Woomera may be the preferred site in some respects, I do not believe it rules out other sites in other states for the storage of locally generated radioactive waste.

In relation to intermediate waste, which normally includes such things as radioisotopes, I do not believe we are talking about a huge amount of material. I think people have visions of some huge cavern out near Woomera in which radioactive waste will be stored. The information that I have is that we are talking about relatively small amounts of material. The commonwealth government assures us that there is no high-level waste in Australia at all. I am not in a position to dispute that but, in respect of this bill, I believe we are talking about essentially low level and intermediate waste.

The former government had a bill passed that related to prohibiting nuclear waste storage in this state. I guess the opposition is saying that that will cover any action by the commonwealth, but we all know that the commonwealth government can easily override that and ignore it. I believe that the commonwealth government is less likely to ignore something which has a political ramification in terms of possible loss of seats at the federal level. The trigger mechanism of a referendum is a much more serious and substantial threat than the existing legislation expressed through the Nuclear Waste Storage Facility (Prohibition) Act 2000.

In essence, I will watch the progress of this bill closely. As I indicated some weeks ago and again today, my inclination is to be supportive of it unless I can be convinced to the contrary by other members or by people who are wiser than I am. I believe that the government has the right to proceed with this, because it went to the people on it.

Public opinion polls conducted by the *Advertiser* seem to indicate that there is strong public support for the public to have an opportunity to express a view on this topic. I will monitor the progress of this bill and participate with great interest.

Mrs REDMOND secured the adjournment of the debate.

INSURANCE, INDEMNITY

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I refer the house to the deputy leader's question without notice on building indemnity insurance. The honourable member has asked about the level of consumer protection for those who contract with builders whom I propose to exempt from the building indemnity insurance provisions of the Building Work Contractors Act 1995.

I have issued a set of guidelines to assist builders in the exemption process. In addition to builders providing me with an explanation of their circumstances, including their ability to finance the project for which they seek exemption, the builder is asked to seek the informed consent of the owner to proceed without a policy of insurance in place.

As I said earlier, informed consent is a fundamental principle of consumer protection. My departmental staff have prepared a certificate for builders to give to owners, explaining that the building work is not insured, and seeking their agreement to proceed. The staff of the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs advise me that some owners have already signed these certificates, because they have decided, in full knowledge of the difficult situation the builders are in, to proceed.

It would not be possible to require a builder to disclose his financial circumstances on that certificate because those circumstances tend to be complex, and may involve securities on other properties and a whole host of interrelated information, some of which involves third parties' confidential information. Once the builder has provided me with a certificate, accompanied by the requisite information on which I can assess whether, in all the circumstances, an exemption should be granted, it is my role to grant or refuse the exemption. One of the factors I will take into account is the financial backing that the builder has. It must be remembered that the insurance policy is the last resort for the consumer. It can only be invoked where the builder has died, disappeared or become insolvent. If the builder is still

operating the consumer is required to attempt to recover costs associated with non-completion or breach of statutory warranty by the usually civil remedies.

Therefore, one of the most significant questions for me, in determining whether a builder should be exempted from the insurance requirements, is his current financial backing. However, it is not the only information I will consider. There are other factors related to risk and circumstance that I will take into account. Where I grant the exemption, the builder is issued with a certificate of exemption which can be used to establish, for financial institutions and councils, that the insurance requirements do not apply to the particular project. Again, it is not appropriate for me to disclose on that certificate a builder's personal financial details, or the details of the rights he has over third parties that are relevant to my decision. The details of each exemption granted will be notified in the *Gazette*, as required by the act, which will ensure that there is a comprehensive, official database of the exemptions granted.

SUPPLY BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.52 p.m. the house adjourned until Monday 8 July at 2 p.m.