

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 18 September 2003

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

## ADDRESS IN REPLY

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.  
(Continued from 17 September. Page 117.)

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** I too support the Address in Reply and commend His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr Bruno Krumins, on the delivery of his speech. It is an honour to have His Excellency as Lieutenant-Governor. Members would be aware that Mr Bruno Krumins was the first chairman of the Multicultural Affairs Commission, representing multicultural communities. I note that we have a Lieutenant-Governor from a non-English speaking background and, again, that is a confirmation of our great multicultural society. Now that the Rann Labor government has handed down its second budget and has been scrutinised in estimates committees, and now that we have this government's plans for the forthcoming year as outlined in the Lieutenant-Governor's speech, it is important to analyse what this government is about. It is no longer a new government and it can no longer keep talking about the problems of the past.

A quick analysis shows that after two budgets this government has failed to deliver the promised additional funding to health, education, law and order, and the environment, despite a state taxation revenue bonanza of \$723 million for the period 2002-2004, based largely on increases in property values. Furthermore, this government continues to reap the rewards of a decade of restructuring under previous Liberal governments. According to economics professor Richard Blandy in *Business SA*, issue 11.15, if South Australia's economy continues to grow at the national rate, South Australia's growth will be 30 per cent faster than it was during the state's period of restructuring. The reality is that the state budget has delivered less as a percentage on health and education, including TAFE spending, than the previous Liberal government, despite making all those promises that these were the core issues, and the Premier priding himself on being the education Premier. If we look at the facts, it seems that the Premier needs to be re-educated and should not regard himself as the education Premier. I now refer to Hayden Manning's words in *The Advertiser* of 15 August, as follows:

As we near mid term there is little real indication of his policy ambitions. Beyond revealing itself as fiscally conservative, Labor has attempted little beyond reviewing the government's departments and embracing populist causes.

Premier Rann has made much of his tough stand on law and order. However, the feeling of security, trust in the judicial system, is at a low point and there has been no real commitment to address the causes of crime and to give the police the human resources to allow prompt response and bring offenders to justice. I have raised these issues from time to time as, at a local level, my constituents are concerned about the rhetoric and lack of delivery. I have continued to question the government on its commitment on their behalf and I will continue to do so, especially as it relates to my community.

In the electorate of Hartley, we are still disappointed that the Labor government is not honouring its promise of 100 per cent open space at Lochiel Park, and we are still waiting for decisions on the East Torrens gymnasium at the Hectorville school site. I know that only last night there were discussions at the council with regard to the announcement on Lochiel Park. I find it remarkable that the government is making much of allowing for open space only 12½ per cent of the 4½ hectares at Lochiel Park when on the eve of the last election they said that they would not have private housing there like the Liberal government. Well, although there is a whole 4½ hectares of land, only 12½ per cent of it will be open space. However, the government is required to do that by law; it is no great achievement. I know that because I fought hard to get more than that 12½ per cent, but I did not make unrealistic promises. Members in this place know that I faced 340 people on 4 February about Lochiel Park, as well as the government and the Premier, the former leader of the opposition. I would like to read from his letter to the constituents on the eve of the election, as follows:

We will place a one year moratorium over the Land Management Corporation's plan to develop Lochiel Park, immediately halting housing development.

In that time Mr Black will chair a thorough community consultation process with local residents, community groups, Council and key stakeholders to decide how the space can be best preserved and used for the benefit of everyone in the community. We intend to save 100 per cent of Lochiel Park for community facilities and open space, not a private housing development as the Liberals have proposed.

What is 4½ hectares of private housing? I do not hear any interjections from members opposite, and I can understand why. It is because it is a broken promise. That is what it is. He continued:

Mr Black will work with local space, community and sporting groups to plan how 100 per cent of Lochiel Park can be revitalised, so that the whole community can benefit.

Well, that is interesting. If we look at the press release, the Premier says, on delivering only 70 per cent of his promise:

I know that I will be criticised in some sectors for ignoring the independent report, but I wanted to put the local people first.

One would have thought that the Premier would ask for some input from the local member if he was undertaking a thorough consultation with all stakeholders. If I am good enough to face 340 people then I should be good enough to get some cooperation from the government in including me in trying to find a solution. I have had no such courtesy. But I have represented my constituents and the space group and I will continue to do so because I know that before I intervened, and before the Hon. Nick Xenophon intervened and proposed a bill to secure open space, the government and the Premier were silent. They had to be dragged into making a decision. So much for open government and consultation and the bipartisan approach on which the Premier prides himself. 'No private housing development like the Liberals': if that is not a broken promise, I do not know what is.

I have been thinking about how to assess this government and it reminded me of a little story about a person who was looking for a job. He put in an application with name, address and so on and when they asked for all the details, he had to put in his father's details. He put down his father's name and that he was deceased, after which the form asked for cause of death. The applicant had a bit of difficulty because the cause of his father's death was that he had been hanged. He thought that if he put this down he would be in serious trouble and would not get the job. So, he thought for a while and then came back and put as cause of death, 'Floor collapsed whilst on an official platform.'

I believe that the government, in a way, got itself into government on similar grounds. They did not tell us the whole truth; they did not get over 50 per cent of the vote; and, as we have seen with Lochiel Park, they have twisted the truth and made all sorts of promises that they could not keep. Certainly, we know about the floor collapsing from beneath the South Australian economy with the State Bank, and we know that the Labor party had no official platform and still has not got an official platform. Indeed, I believe they have artificial policies on health, education, law and order and the environment. It all sounds great in rhetoric but very shallow in delivery.

**Ms Thompson:** Don't get worked up. It is not good for your blood pressure to get uptight.

**Mr SCALZI:** I thank the honourable member for Reynell for her concern, but assure her that I have just had a thorough health check and I am ready to go to Bangladesh. I thank her for her concern because I know she is an honourable member, a kind member, who is concerned about the health of her colleagues.

Returning to the Address in Reply, how is the government performing? I will look at education. The Premier wanted to regard himself as the 'education Premier'. That would mean that he would make education a top priority. One would assume that as a percentage of the overall budget, if it is a top priority, there would be greater expenditure on education than in the previous government. If you are going to make it a priority, you will do a better job than the last government. The education budget in 2001-02 (the last Liberal budget) was 25.2 per cent of the budget. If we look at the Labor budget in 2002-03, we will see that it was 23.9 per cent—not much different. In 2003-04 it is 24.3 per cent—again, it is not much different from the 25.2 per cent. But when you consider that this was a major plank of the artificial platform of the Labor Party, you would have thought that it would have put more into education. The federal government has, but here they are going down. If they do this for the priority issues—for the top planks—what are they doing for the rest?

As I said, I am still waiting, with respect to my own electorate, to see what are they going to do with the gymnasium they promised, and the relocation of the kindergarten from the Hectorville site? Are they going to keep their promise and give it to the East Torrens Primary School on site? I am waiting to hear about that, and I will continue to ask questions, which is my responsibility as the local member. I will represent space with respect to the environment, as I have said earlier, regardless of their organisations and meetings, which I found uncomfortable. My responsibility is to represent all constituents who come to me, and I will do so. I am waiting for that.

Health was another plank; a top priority. Again, the Rann government deferred accepting commonwealth funding in the Australian Health Care Agreement (as it did before with Home and Community Care), at a time when our major hospitals are forced to close beds and defer elective surgery, and emergency departments are forced to accommodate patients in corridors for lack of resources. I will not accuse the government for causing all these problems: we have an ageing population, and there has been an increase in demand for health services. I understand that. But this government, when in opposition, said, 'Health is our top priority.' In fact, that was the basis—health, education, law and order.

Let us look at the figures again. The health budget under the Liberals was 24.7 per cent. It is in relative terms: if you make it a priority, you have to give a bigger share of the cake.

If you baked a cake and said to someone, 'I am going to make you a priority; you will get more of the cake than anyone else,' and then you only give them the same piece, you are not honouring your promise. Health under the Liberals, was 24.7 per cent for 2001-02. In 2002-03, under Labor, it was 24.1 per cent. To me, that shows a slight decline, and that makes it worse when you have promised that it is your top priority. If we look at 2003-04, we will see that it is 24.1 per cent again. To put it in context, this government has been riding on the crest of a wave. Unemployment has gone down. We have had a housing boom and an increase in revenue from state taxation. This government has been in a better position to deliver on health and education, and it has not. It has broken its main platform. It has not delivered on what it promised. To me, that is really concerning.

With respect to law and order, despite talking tough on crime, premier Rann has not increased police numbers and there are fears that, over the upcoming Christmas-new year period, up to 70 fewer officers will be available, according to the government's policy on recruitment and attrition. I consider that the Rann government's position on crime prevention is equally unconvincing. We had excellent crime prevention programs in the Norwood, Payneham and St Peter's area and in Campbelltown. I know we had cooperation with local government because I used to attend the meetings and I lobbied for necessary funding for those excellent local crime prevention programs. What did this government do? It cut them. At the same time, it claims it is tough on law and order. No wonder it is criticised for being shallow and not delivering.

We need a little bit more credibility, a little bit more action and commitment by this government on its promises. The honeymoon is over. Government members cannot blame the past because we will go back a bit further than they want to go. This is not New Labor, as they claim to be. It is really New Labor with old tricks. They are the same shallow, artificial policies. New Labor with old tricks, making plans for the economy based on a house of sticks. Sooner or later they will come apart.

As my colleagues have rightly outlined—and I will not go into education and the problems that are being experienced with the SHine program on sexuality, because the member for Bragg has outlined that well—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr SCALZI:** They should be listening to the community. That is what I am hearing: that they are not listening. There are problems with decreasing exports and, as outlined in the house yesterday, there are problems with WorkCover, but the 'Minister for Undercover' is not being open and is not giving us the detail that this house needs to assess the situation. So much for open and accountable government. With the WorkCover blow-out, with the problems of decreasing exports and because the bubble in the housing boom will not last forever, I see a bad moon rising for this government. I can see there is trouble on the way.

Members opposite are very tense, they are pushing their weight around and there is a great deal of sensitivity when questions are asked. We can see that they are trying to put it together. The problem is that they should not make promises they cannot keep. They should be open and accountable. I know that there are some good members opposite, and I commend those who are doing a good job and working hard. It is not easy being in government, but it would be a lot better if they were open and honest and did not twist and turn and deceive the public by making promises they cannot keep.

The figures speak for themselves. If a government makes priorities of health and education, it must deliver. If it does not deliver, it has deceived the public. It must deliver when it has the opportunity to do so. I know that, in the early years of the Liberal government—1993, 1994 and 1995—tough decisions had to be made. We had no choice. We could not bake the cake. We had no flour, we had no milk. Our economy was bankrupt. To compare us—

**Ms Thompson:** What did you build the soccer stadium with?

**Mr SCALZI:** The honourable member has brought up the soccer stadium. I have on the Soccer Federation tie today. I am not a fair weather soccer supporter like some members opposite, who suddenly are behind Adelaide United. I have been a soccer supporter in the good times and in the bad times.

*Ms Thompson interjecting:*

**Mr SCALZI:** Obviously the member for Reynell is trying to build bridges. Perhaps she should ask the Deputy Premier why he spent over \$30 million on a bridge in his electorate. Perhaps she should ask that question. Remember, the member for Reynell, that when the soccer stadium was built we had the Rams, Adelaide City and West Adelaide, as well as the Olympics. Where is the bridge in Port Adelaide? Well done to the members who lobbied for that, but let us not forget that soccer participation by young people is one of the biggest sports in South Australia and Australia.

*Ms Thompson interjecting:*

**Mr SCALZI:** The member for Reynell will continue with that line and with her empty support for soccer—as will the Premier. But he will be there for Adelaide United, kicking off the soccer ball—he will get around to that. He is the sports Premier! In fact, he left the Premiers' Conference on health to get his photograph taken supporting football. It is great, but I wish he was a little more consistent and supported soccer as I do: through the good times and the bad times.

I congratulate Gordon Pickard for coming out and for having a commitment to soccer. It is a great sport, I support it and look forward to getting my ticket as a member of Adelaide United. The time has come for this government to assess its plans and make sure that, as we move on and prepare for next year, if it wants to have any credibility before the next election, it reassesses and gives priority to health and education—as it set out to do—because, if it does not deliver, it will not be believed at the ballot box; you can only fool the people some of the time but not all of the time.

The time has come for this government to deliver on its promises, and not just give us rhetoric about its commitment to law and order, education and the environment by saying that it supports open space, while twisting statistics to suit itself, and saying that 70 per cent is 100 per cent and that 12.5 per cent of 4.5 hectares is a great victory, when in fact it is required to do so by law. It is about time this government came clean and delivered on its promises to the South Australian people.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** The Rann government is now 18 months old. In that time the government has done nothing, taken South Australia nowhere and proven itself to be a populist callow executive, weighed down in the mud and muck of corruption and scandal. It was a less than auspicious opening. We are halfway through the second quarter of Labor's political game. There will be few winners by the final siren. Remember that this government was born in March 2002, out of a backroom deal brokered after a failed

Labor election outcome, led by the nation's least popular leader and key deal maker: Mike Rann and Randall Ashbourne.

Since then, the people of South Australia and this parliament have endured 135 government reviews and six taxpayer funded summits. Only 14 of these reviews have been reported to parliament; 244 questions in parliament by opposition MPs remain unanswered; and 205 questions asked by the Liberal MPs during budget estimates in 2002 and 2003 remain unanswered. These constitute a staggering 449 examples of the Labor government's secrecy and arrogance. Labor rhetoric on openness, accountability and ministerial codes of conduct have not been matched by performance.

The Minister for Environment (the member for Kaurna) faced the second only privileges committee in the history of the parliament in 2002, accused of misleading the House of Assembly in regard to his denial of knowledge of recommendations from his department supporting the proposed establishment of a low level radioactive waste repository. In the resultant whitewash, the government used its numbers to ensure that witnesses were not called and that the matter was not properly investigated. Asked on ABC radio whether he admitted to being either devious or stupid, the minister claimed he was stupid. The government's handling of this privileges matter under the leadership of Premier Mike Rann sounded the knell—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Waite knows that he may refer to the Premier as the Premier. Indeed, he can even refer to him as the member for the electorate that he owns, but he may not refer to him by his family nor given name. That is a simple convention. All members in this place are not here in their own right. They are here on behalf of the 22 000 South Australians, or thereabouts, in their electorates. I remind all members of that point.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Thank you for your guidance, sir. The government's handling of this privileges matter, under the leadership of the present Premier, sounded the knell for truth and honour within the heart of this government. Now we find that the Premier's most trusted adviser and confidant, Randall Ashbourne, faces DPP charges and possible imprisonment for abuse of public office over allegations of corruption investigated by the Police Anti-Corruption Branch, concerning inducements allegedly offered to protect the Attorney-General from prosecution by former ALP dissident MP Ralph Clarke. Anyone who believes that the Premier had no knowledge of the activities of Randall Ashbourne, is, in my view, in denial.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Waite cannot go there.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance on that ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** You have my direction, not guidance. The remark you made in the first sentence on the matter is as far as it is possible for any honourable member to go in making any reference to it—and I believe it is likely to be undesirable for honourable members to engage even in that, as it may prejudice a fair trial. I remind the house that fairness is not merely related to whether or not those accused are found guilty according to whatever feelings honourable members may have towards an accused. Rather, in the public interest, the trial needs to be fair and not prejudiced by opinions expressed in one court about proceedings on foot in another.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** One must assume that, in this government, premiers and their advisers consult closely at

every step taken, and that they have in every leg in their eighteen month journey into government—

*Ms Thompson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Reynell, whilst competent to make a speech, does not need to provide assistance to the member for Waite. I am interested in his remarks, not her interpolations.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** This is the same partnership (Rann and Ashbourne) that did the deals and brokered the trade-offs needed to secure government for Labor in February 2002. I feel most concerned for Public Service CEO Warren McCann, and Auditor-General Ken MacPherson, both of whom, on the basis of information provided to them, investigated the Ashbourne/Atkinson matter and recommended no further action. It now transpires that a police investigation and the DPP have not only found a case to answer but have commenced prosecution.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Any further reference to that matter is disorderly—highly disorderly.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Needless to say, the reinstatement of the Attorney-General at this early stage may prove to have been the Premier's greatest error of judgment. The foul stench of corruption and dishonour—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member is out of order. I warn the honourable member that I will name him if he persists in pursuing that subject. As much as can be said has already been said. To repeat what has been said is—

*Ms Thompson:* Talk about your toenails.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I do not need the member for Reynell's assistance in the matter. There is no necessity for members to try to take control of the proceedings of the chamber, which are properly left in the hands of the chair. To return to the substance of my remarks and directions to the member for Waite, he has said as much as can be said and may have said more than he should have, and to repeat any of what has been said is disorderly. Repetition is expressly forbidden in the standing orders. The member for Waite.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Of course, the errors of judgment emanating from this government are beginning to flare as smoke from a fire. The 'lock'em up' rhetoric on law and order and shallow legislation wordsmiths and messages common law and existing statutes so as to create an impression of initiative, whilst the things that cost money—crime prevention programs and extra police—are cut from budgets: further evidence of the point. As chair of the select committee on a heroin rehabilitation trial in the previous parliament, I learned that over 70 per cent of street crime is drug related.

The Premier's lack of action following the Drugs Summit is, in my view, shameless. Children die, addicts wallow in the gutter and bash and rob and prostitute themselves to support their addiction. Meanwhile, methadone and other programs remain underfunded while the Premier writes media releases and cuts deals in secret. I raise the pitiful state of education and health funding, both cut by Labor in real terms despite promises to the contrary. I raise the issue of bed shortages, cancellation of elective surgery and problems in psychiatric services. I raise the issue of cuts to road funding as people die on unimproved tourist roads.

I raise the issue of the Minister for Gambling's refusal to answer questions or to take action on concerns raised in federal and state parliaments about questionable and possibly illegal ALP fundraising by Senator Bolkus in SA involving the now infamous 'rafflegate' cash exchanges. I ask why the Minister for Industrial Relations has proven himself incompetent to facilitate outcomes or to mediate during industrial

disputes involving nurses, FAYS workers, vehicle component manufacturers and bus drivers. I express my alarm at the same minister's mismanagement of WorkCover, the unfunded liability of which has exploded under Labor from \$85.98 million to over \$400 million, while the health system index for WorkCover has toppled from 116 per cent to 59 per cent.

I ask the Treasurer why it is that he cannot manage the books of account. Despite significant increase in taxes and levies, including River Murray levies, stamp duty increases and a host of other ruses, all branches of government appear to be suffering from savage cuts. As shadow minister for the arts, for tourism and for innovation and information economy, I find that there have been dramatic reductions in funding.

I have previously provided to the house details of \$4.5 million of cuts to Arts SA and \$6.6 million further to be cut or redirected over the coming four years. Tourism has suffered massively from neglect, with almost \$24 million over two budgets extracted in the areas of marketing, infrastructure, events development and in grants to regions. Innovation, science and information economy remained undernourished with plenty of talk but little action on the ground.

The attitude from this government is, 'Hands off the wheel. Let business take responsibility.' That is fine provided government remains an active partner to business, to organised labour and to venture capital. Well, it will not happen. You can delegate to others the work of building a new and better South Australia, but you can never delegate the responsibility of leadership.

Recent ABS statistics released this month, entitled 'South Australia's economic indicators', show stunning deterioration in the value of the state's exports in the past month. In May to June 2003, we saw a decrease of 11.7 per cent. Compared with \$796 million worth of exports in June 2002, exports plunged to \$576 million in June this year—a drop of 27.6 per cent. There has been a decrease of 8.99 per cent in the value of South Australia's exports in the 12 months to June 2003 over the preceding 12 months.

Examination and graphing of the underlying trend reveals a steady decline from a high in August 2002. It took Labor only a few short months to demolish the Department of Industry and Trade, to savage expenditure on industry development and to reverse the strong export growth achieved in recent years under the previous government. In respect of industry development and export growth, this state government is in chaos. The Rann-Foley team is relying on the property bubble and credit-fuelled growth in retail to prop up key economic indicators and employment, while ignoring the underlying fundamentals. I call on the government to explain to parliament in detail why it is that exports have been savaged. Some will be attributed to the drought—but only some. There are cracks emerging in our underlying economic fundamentals at a time when we should be building for the future. This begs the question: where we going under Labor? Is there a strategy?

There is an Economic Development Board. Its draft economic development plan prior to the Economic Growth Summit on 10 to 12 April followed the State of the State report in October 2002. The EDB plan followed submissions from the United Trades and Labor Council and Business Vision 2010. The draft plan followed work completed in 1992-93 by consultants A.D. Little and by Business Vision 2010 in the form of Business Vision 2020, produced in

1996, both of which attempted to plot a course for South Australia's economic development. The EDB plan also complements the former Liberal government's Directions for South Australia series of strategic guidance policy documents, which further set that course for growth and which we are now seeing whittled away.

In general, the draft plan produced by the EDB contains a range of innovative and constructive ideas on economic development. However, it is neither an overarching strategy nor a plan; rather, it is a discussion paper with some very sound recommendations. In particular, the state government is asked to produce a strategic plan, an overarching strategy, a state strategic plan, preferably to be produced within months of the final EDB discussion paper. But we are still waiting. The report also sets down a range of key performance indicators to be reported upon and monitored regularly. Further government reforms, local government reforms, population issues, higher education and export capabilities all require action. The government is clearly seeking to avoid many of these commitments, with some already having been ruled out, such as the abolition of tenure within the Public Service.

There are weaknesses in the Economic Development Board's discussion paper. It is conspicuous by what is not emphasised. The report mentions WorkCover reform but skirts the core issues raised in the Stanley, Meredith Bishop review. The plan is virtually silent on industrial relations reform and workplace productivity improvement, which were emphasised in Business Vision 2010's submission to the Economic Development Board and in the Stevens report. State government taxes and charges are being avoided and, in general terms, the plan avoids controversial areas such as microeconomic reform which have been championed by the Howard federal government and by former Liberal state governments and which constitute largely the reason for the sound economic fundamentals in the nation today.

The draft plan or discussion paper, as I call it, proposes significant change to local government, including amalgamations and reductions in local government planning powers. Quality performance and measurement of high service standards in promoting exports is virtually untouched in the draft plan. The draft plan heralds support for key recommendations in the Menadue Generational Health Review and points to efficiency reforms in health, justice and education, no doubt involving the need for further cuts. Any subsequent government strategic plan we still hope to see would be fatally flawed without including such key reform issues. Will that plan be produced and will it address these key issues?

It is the financial infrastructure areas of the Economic Development Board's discussion paper that cause me most concern. The draft plan emphasises the need for up to \$18 billion worth of investment in infrastructure but calls upon the government to borrow substantially to fund such infrastructure development. The draft plan also strongly favours public/private partnerships and suggests that the government consider 'topping up' at taxpayers' expense the cost to business for utilities such as electricity and water flowing from privatisation of assets such as ETSA. These recommendations have profound implications for the state, profound implications for this parliament, and raise the issue of whether a Labor government can be trusted to incur further debt on behalf of the taxpayers of South Australia, given the chaos they delivered to the state following the State Bank debacle.

I do not trust a Labor government to incur debt and I do not trust a Labor government to enter into public/private partnerships that are incurring debt in another guise. I think those recommendations in the EDB's discussion paper, while well intended and making good business sense, overlook the issue of the triple bottom line outcomes that the government hopes to see, where productivity is very hard to measure against debt. Implementation of the plan will require a commitment from the Rann government to action and performance measurement and to regular public reporting. We have seen nothing so far.

These constraints upon the government will present opportunities to the parliament in regard to ensuring implementation deadlines and KPIs are complied with, measured, evaluated and reported upon in an open and accountable manner. No wonder we have not yet seen a plan or any progress on this report, other than media savvy exercises designed to promote the Premier and the government and put them in a favourable light, while achieving nothing in real terms. Most importantly, in the Economic Development Board's discussion paper the role of the media in state development is really not mentioned—and it is vital.

I attended the Economic Growth Summit, along with almost 300 business and community leaders, and there was strong support for many aspects of the draft plan, including support for the recommendations on debt and equity, public-private partnerships, and the proposed building blocks of reform. The presence of former Labor prime minister Bob Hawke and Grant Belchamber of the ACTU on the Economic Development Board was very apparent in respect of what is and is not included in the plan. I now note that the Labor state government has appointed a second former prime minister, Michael Moore, a former New Zealand Labour PM, to the board. We now have two former Labor prime ministers and a very senior ACTU official on the EDB. I have serious concerns about its ability to produce independent work. That is a shame because I, like everyone, want it to succeed.

The summit communique and spirit places considerable pressure upon the government to perform, but it opens the door to some very interesting strategies of concern. This parliament and every member in it need to carefully consider their positions on all the issues raised by the EDB's discussion paper. The whole of government strategic plan yet to be produced by Labor must be produced. It is a very sound outcome of the EDB's work. It is the meat that must go on the bones. The key performance indicators and performance reporting required by government must be adhered to. The advantages and disadvantages of debt funded infrastructure developments need further scrutiny and debate. Public-private partnerships proposed by Labor but opposed by unions also warrant further scrutiny. It is debt in another form.

The absence in the draft plan of serious recommendations on industrial relations, WorkCover reforms and government taxes and charges need to be reviewed. These are the things that really matter. Issues associated with reform of government and efficiency, and to do with local government, require far greater scrutiny and energy. Efficiencies and cost cutting in regard to health, education and justice must be examined further, and the role of the media must be brought into this discussion.

I support the process. It is a good process, but I see nothing tangible from government at this stage, and I hope to see such action. Robert de Crespigny and the board have done a good job, but we now need to see a real commitment. We need to see the draft strategic plan. I am surprised, to say

the least, that business has not been more proactive, more intellectually combative and more critical of the report, and that debate has not been more feisty. All stakeholders need to engage the substance of the EDB's report and the issues raised, and not be distracted by the process. It is about our future; it is not about profile development for a media savvy Premier.

The EDB has bordered on being bold, but it risks irrelevance if it steps back from difficult or unpalatable issues and if it does not hold the Rann government to account on performance. That is why I am concerned about the heavy weighting of the EDB board as a consequence of the Premier's insistence that two former Labor prime ministers and a senior member of the ACTU form the key membership of this board. It is a challenge for the EDB board, whilst containing this influence, to make recommendations and future initiatives that are truly independent.

As I mentioned, the whole-of-government strategic plan must be developed—and it must be developed soon. Later this year (or early next year), the current Labor government's mid-year point will be reached. In the last two years in economic terms nothing has really happened in South Australia. This government has simply ridden the wave of a boisterous national and state economy (the work of previous state Liberal governments and the present federal Liberal government), adding no value of its own. It now must step forward.

This plan must be backed by resources and it must be prosecuted with conviction by a determined, engaged, honest and accountable government. However, as I say to the house, Labor cannot be trusted to borrow. Labor cannot be trusted with public-private partnerships: borrowing by stealth. Once the floodgates open on debt, we invite State Bank mark II. They have done it before and they will do it again. I caution the business community and the EDB on this point. It is too easy for Labor to husband disaster.

I commend His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor on his address to the joint sitting at the commencement of the third session of the 50th parliament. I share his hopes for a bright and prosperous South Australia. I entered this place in 1997 with the highest of hopes for this state, and I still have them. I expect whichever government has the good fortune to occupy the Treasury benches and the great privilege of carrying forward the future aspirations of South Australia to do so with honour and integrity and with the best interests of the people of this state at heart.

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** Madam Acting Speaker, it is my pleasure to support the motion which you, I believe, moved. In doing so, as have most of my colleagues, I offer my congratulations to the Lieutenant-Governor, Bruno Kruminis, for what I believe is his first delivery of the address to open a session of the parliament of South Australia.

I would like to take a few moments to relate a small story that occurred following the opening. My wife was in the gallery in the other place watching the opening, and she said to me at lunchtime that she had been observing a lady in the audience in one of the galleries watching the proceedings. She said, 'I can only assume from the expressions on this particular lady's face that she would have been the wife of the Lieutenant-Governor.' She said that her expressions exuded extreme pride.

A conversation between my wife and I ensued, and I said, 'Well, I'm sure she would have been extremely proud.' I have not had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know our

Lieutenant-Governor, but I do know a little of his background, and I am sure that we would all agree that a most exciting series of events have formed his life. I am sure that he and his loved ones are very proud of the fact that he sat in that chair and delivered that speech earlier this week. I am very proud to live in a South Australia where someone from his background is welcomed into this community and can rise to the position of opening our parliament. I am proud to be a South Australian and to live in a community where that is possible, and I am sure that all my colleagues in this place are just as proud of the sort of society that we have. I think it says a lot about us as a group of people.

Having said that, might I also point out that the words delivered by our Lieutenant-Governor are not his words but words written by the Premier and his ministers, and I hesitate to say that it is the vision of that group of people that is expressed in that speech. I hesitate to use the word 'vision' because very little vision is delivered in the words contained in the speech, and that is the great disappointment that I have. I think it is about the sixth occasion that I have had the pleasure of attending the opening of the parliament of South Australia, and I would say that this would have been the most lacklustre set of statements about the vision that the government holds for this state for the next 12 months that I have ever encountered. As with everything that this government has done, and it has become the hallmark of this government, it contains rhetoric, sophistry and very little action—long on words, short on action: spin, spin and more spin.

It is disappointing that the state government, as my colleague the member for Waite has just said, inherited such a robust economy, an economy that is going along very well, with falling unemployment rates and an absolute windfall in receipts due to the booming property market which has occurred across the nation in the recent past, but it still finds it almost impossible to do something bold to keep things going. An example, Madam Acting Speaker—and it is an example of which you will be very well aware—of the sort of thing that needs to be done to get things up and running is the Holdfast Shores development. A committee which you chair, Madam Acting Speaker, this week handed down a report into the Holdfast Shores development. I heard some discussion on the radio several mornings ago about that and what it might or might not have done for the state.

I was a little concerned about where I believe that debate was heading and what it was trying to achieve, but the point it did miss and the point missed by the whole exercise is that for something like 10 years this state could not achieve one major infrastructure development project. What happens after that occurs is that potential investors give up, they do not even look at South Australia because there are plenty of places in Australia and the rest of the world where you can invest dollars and make a good return. However, because we were so hamstrung with rules and regulations and nimby attitudes no-one ever contemplated coming to South Australia. One of the things the Holdfast Shores development achieved in South Australia is that it broke the shackles of that mind-set.

It showed that South Australia could be a can-do state, that is, you can come to South Australia with buckets of money and have your projects approved. That is one of the significant things about that development. The other significant thing about it was that something like \$258 million worth of construction occurred as a result. We might just ask: what did that do for the state? Might I suggest that it probably created 20 000 jobs. I think that was a significant boost for the state.

I think that development was a precursor to the boom that South Australia has seen in the property area in the last year or two. That development has had a significant effect on the economy that we are now enjoying in South Australia. I know that many of those things are intangible and very difficult to measure. However, there is no doubt in my mind that South Australia at that time—in the early to mid 1990s—needed to have its mindset changed, and that development went a long way to doing that.

I would like to briefly go through the speech delivered by our Lieutenant-Governor, so I have highlighted some things which will bring me to some points I want to make. The first point I want to make is that I totally agree with the comments made by the member for Fisher, in his address, regarding the welcome from Elder Lewis O'Brien of the Kurna people. I totally agree with the member for Fisher. I think that, if we are to continue this nonsense, we are going to, once again, develop a mindset which will do none of us any good, because we are all South Australians.

I live on a piece of land that I farm. My son is now operating that particular property, which has been in my family for over 100 years. My son will be the fifth generation of my family to live and work on that piece of land and, if that is not his birth right and his home, where in the hell else is he to go? I think that, if any South Australian needs to be welcomed by another South Australian to our own home, that is a nonsense, and the sooner we get over that the better. Let us concentrate on some things which will actually benefit the people of South Australia.

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

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I did not hear what the minister said in the interjection; but might I say that I made a speech in the house in the last session of this parliament about the conditions I saw on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara when I visited there some time ago. It was a shameful experience that I had visiting there. We would all be a hell of a lot better off if we did something positive for the Aboriginal people of this state rather than mucking around having them welcome us onto what is our home.

I will move on. A few sentences later, the Lieutenant-Governor said:

During the past twelve months, my government has continued its work to rebuild the state's economy. . .

This is what I was talking about with the rhetoric and sophistry of this government, the hallmark of this government. An integral part of that rhetoric is a huge desire to rewrite history. That statement in itself assumes that there was something wrong with the state's economy and that it was heading in the wrong direction.

I will admit that the state's economy still had a way to go, but a hell of a lot of work had been done in the last eight years to fix up the mess inherited by the previous Liberal government in 1993. No matter how often this Premier and his cronies in the ministry use that sort of rhetoric the people of South Australia will not be swayed from their understanding of who virtually bankrupted this state. As the member for Waite said a few moments ago, he does not trust this particular government—this Labor government—to be able to manage debt and the future of this state or to manage PPPs, where, in his opinion, a debt will be incurred, because this government has no track record in being able to do that sort of thing. It has no business acumen, unfortunately, and I will come to that right now. The government also states:

My government has good financial management amongst its highest priorities.

Well, I am delighted that it has it as a priority, but I just wish that it was able to deliver. We have seen, in this very week, the government and the relevant minister being unable to answer very serious questions about where the management of our WorkCover scheme is going.

There are two things I want to say about the WorkCover scheme: it is there for the benefit of every working man and woman in this state; and it is incumbent upon any minister who is responsible for managing that scheme to ensure that the funds are available for those working men and women in the case of workplace injury. The current minister definitely does not know what is going on, but what disappoints me is that he does not seem to care. He seems to think it is somebody else's responsibility. The fact that the unfunded liability of the WorkCover Corporation during the 18 months that this government has been in office has climbed from somewhere around \$85 million to, we believe, probably in excess of \$400 million seems of no concern to the minister. The minister would have us believe that he has not seen the relevant figures and has not inquired as to what has been going on since the last published figures in March—six months ago. So the unfunded liability of WorkCover is going through the roof over a period of six months and the responsible minister does not seem to be concerned.

I guess what will happen is that in a few months the Premier will call a WorkCover summit. He will probably get the people of South Australia together and say, 'We will have a summit and we will talk about it, and that will fix it.' He has done that with every other issue. We have had a summit and he has done the grand thing: he has brought a whole heap of South Australians—hopefully, leaders in their own spheres of enterprise—into parliament and said, 'This is so important. We will do this in this chamber, and we will have a summit.' And after the summit is over, they will even publish a paper. That is about the only action we have seen on any of these things. There has been very little of a positive nature that has come out of any of the summits that have been held so far, apart from the understanding and the acknowledgment that we will have to do some more work and sit down and nut out a few more words that we can put down on a bit of paper and issue some more reports, and then we will think about them.

I do not think this government will go down in history as being one of action. I do think not think this government will go down in history as one which took the sort of bold step in regard to the Holdfast Shores development to break the mindset and to show some vision and to show the wider investment community that we can actually do things in South Australia. We had an economic development summit, and one of the key things to come out of that was that we set up a venture capital fund in South Australia. Yet, at the same time, we have a committee of this parliament trying to undermine the sort of thing that happened to break that mind-set and create the Holdfast Shores development.

Why would anybody with large sums of money to invest want to bring it to South Australia in the knowledge that a trumped-up little government would kick them in the guts at every opportunity? That is the problem we have in South Australia. We are too interested in playing politics with the future of this state and nowhere near interested enough in getting on and developing the state and creating jobs and a place for us, our children and grandchildren to work and live. That is what it is about. It is not about playing petty politics

but, unfortunately, this government is all about playing petty politics—thus, the rhetoric and the nonsensical little games; and, thus, the summits. There are very few, if any, examples that I could quote where this government has actually gone out and done something positive.

There are a couple of things in the Governor's speech which I hope I will get to in the time allotted to me and to which I will give ticks. There are a couple of things, but not too many. I turn the page and come to the heading 'Health'. I want to spend a few minutes talking about health because, particularly with regard to the refusal and finally the signing off of the health agreement between the states and the federal government, this government has made much of the commonwealth's responsibility for health. There has been a lot of argy-bargy about who said what, who did what and whether a 17 per cent increase in commonwealth funding is an increase or a decrease. The people whom I represent all live a long way from Adelaide. They all live remotely from what I believe is one of the best health systems anywhere in the world. Here in South Australia, particularly in metropolitan Adelaide, we have a very good health system—a system which delivers services which you would be lucky to find in many other places in the world, by and large in a very timely fashion.

The people whom I represent, who live in my constituency, in a relative sense are quite remote from those services. We have some services which make them available. The Royal Flying Doctor Service regularly brings constituents from my area to Adelaide to use those services, and we have a number of hospitals in the regional areas. In this year's budget this government and this health minister delivered an increase of 1.5 per cent in dollar terms to regional health. This same minister, the Treasurer and the Premier now have the temerity to claim that the offer made by the commonwealth government is in fact a mighty reduction. If that is a mighty reduction, what has happened to regional health in South Australia? Indeed, what has happened to the whole health budget in South Australia? The reason the commonwealth has insisted that the states match the increase in funding is that, over quite a period now, the states have been reducing their share of funding into the health budget, and this has been no more evident than in the rural and regional areas of the state.

We have had a very serious decline in the number of services delivered to rural and regional people. We have a fiasco in the South-East Regional Health Service in Mount Gambier right at the moment. Over 12 months, since about this time last year, we have seen some long-term resident specialists being driven out of that community to other parts of Australia because the minister could not come to an agreement with them. What did they want to do? They were more than happy to roll over their existing agreement. It sounds familiar; that is what the minister wanted to do with the federal government. She was asking the federal government to do something that she was not willing to do with the medical specialist practitioners in Mount Gambier. It smacks slightly of hypocrisy to me.

Now that it is 12 months later and we have got rid of the medical specialists in Mount Gambier, and the specialist general surgeons, anaesthetists and obstetricians are no longer there, we are now flying in locums to do the same work at a greatly increased cost. I will tell you about the case of one doctor whose contract was not renewed. That same doctor is now providing the locum service for the Mount Gambier Hospital, I understand at about a 40 per cent increased cost.

It is the same person, but now the service is being provided through a locum service—outside this state, I understand—at a 40 per cent increased cost. No wonder the people of Mount Gambier are wondering what on earth is going on; no wonder the people of Mount Gambier have been wondering for the past 12 months what their elected member is up to.

At the time the member for Mount Gambier was taken into the cabinet of this government, I explained to the people of Mount Gambier that the cost of creating another cabinet position and taking in their local member as a cabinet minister would be more than enough to solve the problems at their local hospital. It involves not just their local hospital: it impacts on the whole region and on the hospitals in my electorate next door. That is why I have a significant interest in the matter. Lo and behold, 12 months later the member for Mount Gambier says, 'If the problem is not fixed, I will quit.' Let me go back half a step. About a week before that occurred, Patrick Secker—the federal member for Barker, whose electorate takes in the city of Mount Gambier—delivered to the Premier's office 2 500 letters from residents of Mount Gambier highlighting the significant issue of delivery of health services in Mount Gambier. Lo and behold, some action was taken.

Unfortunately, the people of Mount Gambier have to suffer a little melodrama because the member for Mount Gambier, the Premier and the Minister for Health do not want the people of Mount Gambier to think that the action of the federal member, Patrick Secker, and 2 500 residents of Mount Gambier actually delivered the goods, in the form of probably \$1.5 million, to solve the immediate problems. I think it will take a lot more to solve the ongoing problems. These ministers do not want the people to think that the actions of Patrick Secker and the local community solved the problem: they want to play out a little melodrama so that the member for Mount Gambier can take the kudos. So, he sticks up his hand and says, 'I will fix it or I will resign and, indeed, I have got the minister coming down.' I think that is on 2 October, and I will bet London to a brick that just prior to or on that date the minister announces a significant increase in funding for that health service.

May I say congratulations to Patrick Secker and those 2 500 people from Mount Gambier who personally wrote to the Premier, for putting this so starkly in front of the Premier's eyes and for winning a reprieve for the health services of Mount Gambier. Because the local member has spent 12 months ignoring the problem. In fact only two to three months ago he was quoted all over *The Border Watch* and the *SES* TV channel in Mount Gambier saying that money was not the problem. Now we have the melodrama where the local member is saying, 'I will fix it or I will resign.' I will bet London to a brick that the local member did not make that statement until he had the money in the bag. Thank you, Patrick Secker, for your help in getting this government to do the right thing with the South-East Regional Health Service.

I said that there were a few things about which I wanted to give the government some kudos, but I want to give it a bit of a brickbat first. It is under the heading of community safety and protection. This government's rhetoric has been no greater than in the area of law and order, but all it has done in that area is continue to increase sentences for various crimes. I do not have a problem with that—apart from the fact that it is not going to do anything to solve the problem. Where I have a problem is when the government tries to fool



the community that increasing sentences and keeping people in gaol for longer will be the solution to the crime situation that we have.

The kudos that I want to give is that the government intends to crack down on outlaw motorcycle gangs and do something about the fortifications that these motorcycle gangs have around their clubrooms, to have those fortifications removed and to have the activities of those motorcycle gangs come firmly under the community and the police spotlight. I believe this is a good move and it has my full support. May I say it has been too long in coming. This was one of the mistakes we made in government and we should have been much tougher in this area of the law.

However, increasing sentences on a range of crimes will not do anything for the crime rate and incarcerating citizens in our gaols is not going to do anything for the crime rate. You merely need to take a quick glance at the crime rate figures across Australia to see that Victoria has the lowest incarceration rate per 100 000 of population of all the states and territories of Australia. Yet it enjoys possibly the lowest crime rate. We should be asking ourselves: why are we concentrating on increasing sentences when that is clearly not the answer. The answer is to tackle crime where it occurs: at its gestation.

Any criminologist understands that the people committing crimes, in particular major crimes, are graduates of the school of increasing the level of crimes that they commit. They will generally start off at a very young age committing what might be minor misdemeanours and as time goes on their criminality increases. It goes back to the work that we do in our schools, in our junior primary schools and the work we do through our FAYS programs.

This government has said that education is one of its priorities. As with the Premier's other priority, health, education has received nothing in comparison with what the rhetoric promised. We know that the funding for the FAYS program has fallen significantly since the change of government. We will wonder in 10 or 15 years time, or maybe a little longer, why our crime rate is still amongst the highest in Australia.

My time is almost up, and there are a number of other issues that I would have liked to raise.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I don't think I will try my luck there. But might I just conclude by saying that I am disappointed that the government has not shown significantly more boldness than it has in this statement. I hope that over the next few months the government will come up with some fresh ideas—which is something it has not put its mind to yet—and is able to do significantly more for the people of South Australia than is reflected in the speech given by His Excellency, the Lieutenant-Governor.

Time expired.

**Mrs HALL (Morialta):** I would like to begin my remarks this afternoon by congratulating His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr Bruno Krumins, for his address outlining the Labor government's program for the Third Session of the Fiftieth Parliament. The content of the speech was revealing for a new session which, in theory, is supposed to herald a new program for government priorities. By my calculations, there was only one new initiative in this speech which was, as has been mentioned by a number of speakers, the one detailing the proposal to raise the threshold for

mandatory reference to the Public Works Committee from \$4 million to \$10 million.

We have heard the views, expressed most vehemently, of the member for West Torrens about how he is going to discuss this issue in the caucus, but one can only ask the question: is this initiative stage 1 of the abolition of that particular committee due to, you could say, no work. It has already been acknowledged by numerous speakers in this chamber over past months that the Public Works Committee has no projects before it. I find it extraordinary that we are paying committee members to sit on a committee with no projects to examine. It is quite a bizarre investment priority. I would have thought, paying people to examine nothing. I wish the member for West Torrens good luck in his endeavours within his own caucus meeting.

We know that, for a number of months now, architects have been reporting that there is no work around; that there are no large projects in the pipeline. I think their views should be of concern to all of us who sit in this chamber because, if they are sensing trouble in state development and infrastructure projects this far out, it means that the building industry will be the next to suffer from the fallout. Then, of course, that whole cycle starts of employment and future investment jitters. I believe it is something that we should be focusing on. But, sadly, we have seen all that before with Labor in office in past decades. The community has a right to expect strategic objectives and realistic plans for an economic blueprint as well as social policy goals and objectives. Therefore, the speech content for the opening of this parliament, I believe, signals some concern to the South Australian community, because so much of it was the same rhetoric that we have been hearing for so long. It was very clearly a document written by a somewhat distracted government at the moment, rattled by serious concerns and factional power plays. It is a government that has not lived up to its election mantra of 'We're an open and accountable government.'

During the last election campaign, premier Mike Rann put his signature to reform. The Labor Party distributed hundreds of thousands of pledge cards under the signature of Mike Rann. It is interesting to reflect on the content of the rear of this document, which states:

My pledge to you.

1. Under Labor there will be no more privatisations.
2. We will fix our electricity system and an interconnector to New South Wales will be built to bring you in cheaper power.
3. Better schools and more teachers.
4. Better hospitals and more beds.
5. Proceeds from all speeding fines will go to the police and road safety.
6. We will cut government waste and redirect millions now spent on consultants to hospitals and schools—Labor's priorities. Keep this card as a check that I keep my pledges.

We know that so many of those pledges are already starting to come apart, and I think that enough time has lapsed now to examine the progress.

At every turn, as we know only too well, we find announcements, reannouncements, words repackaged and then reworded, and talk. There is an endless flow of words. There is plenty of spin, but little substance, and even less delivery by the Premier. I think it is becoming well recognised within the community, and I thought it was so brilliantly portrayed during the week with a wonderful cartoon in the *Adelaide Advertiser*—and I thought they captured it better than perhaps another several thousand words. It is headed, 'The Premier challenges school children to read 12 books'. It is quite instructive when you look at how *The Advertiser* cartoonist

depicts the thoughts of premier Rann. We have, 'Mike Rann's exciting times', 'Bedtime stories by Mike Rann', 'Stirring tales by Mike Rann', 'Ripping yarns', 'Adventure stories', 'The thoughts of Mike', 'Life and times of Mike Rann' and 'The adventures of Mike Rann'.

I thought that I would like to move today from the Premier's stirring tales and address the issue of parliamentary reform. I am under no illusions in suspecting that I am one of a fairly small number of individuals who is genuinely interested in parliamentary—and, indeed, in my case, electoral—reform. I await with interest to see what the government plans to do on this issue. We had the Premier's much publicised commitment to vigorously pursue parliamentary reform, especially following the compact for government signed with Speaker Lewis, with the spotlight firmly shining on the Constitutional Convention. From there we have had the signature of the Premier on behalf of the Australian Labor Party when it took office to form the Rann government some 18 months ago.

I suggest one small but essential reform relating to the official opening of parliament and the Address in Reply process. I support the abolition of the traditional ceremonial opening of parliament for each new session, which in turn would mean the traditional Address in Reply debate would take place only once between state elections. I believe we should move to one official opening of a new parliament immediately following an election. I stress that these are my own views and not necessarily the views of my party.

During the past few days, we have seen government ministers moving for the restoration and the reintroduction of lapsed bills from the previous session and then, following brief introductory remarks, second readings have been incorporated from the previous session without being re-read. We have witnessed private members' bills being restored and reintroduced, and there has been a good mix of both. So far, substantial numbers of government bills have been restored and reintroduced, and ditto for private members' bills.

Over a number of years now, the operation and the institution of parliament have been criticised at various levels by political commentators and media alike, and in particular, in their judgment, the Address in Reply is considered a waste of time, with the speeches being described as self-indulgent, repetitive political navel-gazing of the highest order. It concerns me when institutions such as the parliament do not seem to move forward with the times and remain relevant. If my suggested, and in my view essential, reform were adopted, the Address in Reply debate would take place once every four years.

The federal parliament and a number of other states have one traditional opening of a parliament, with all the ceremonial trimmings. That has been operational in Canberra since 1977. New South Wales has the convention of a formal opening following an election, but it takes the occasional exception if a new governor has been appointed during the intervening period. Queensland is the same—an opening following an election. Tasmania has no prorogation at the end of each session, but it uses an alternative procedure that could be looked at here when, each September, the Premier addresses the house and outlines the government's program and priorities for the session, but it does not go through the formalities that we do. Victoria follows the process that I have outlined of having an official opening and Address in Reply following an election, and it is my strong personal view that we should do the same.

I believe that we should commit to this small but rather significant parliamentary reform, and maybe if we go down that track it could also include a South Australian version of the Tasmanian option whereby the government program is outlined on a specific day by the Premier, with a specific time set aside for questions and debate by the parliament of the government's programs and priorities. There are no barriers to prevent this reform occurring: there are no legislative provisions for an official opening of each session; there are no regulations to be amended; and there are no standing orders.

In my version of this process, we would prorogue parliament once, in the last session before the election, which we know is scheduled for March 2006. For those traditionalists who may oppose this change, perhaps the one and only opening of parliament could be upgraded and given some extra status and relevance. It could and should be seen as more than just a ceremony, and the Address in Reply should be seen as more than just a formality. It would clearly lift the importance and relevance of both occasions.

I move from my version of parliamentary reform, which I understand is absolutely cost neutral—and in fact the government may even make a profit from it—and return to the content of the Lieutenant-Governor's speech and the government's program for the next session. Obviously, as with all of us in this chamber, the constituents of my electorate of Morialta are affected by a range of issues. The area of health has been well canvassed by a number of speakers over the past couple of days, that there is a lack of resources and funding, despite Labor's commitment to the contrary.

We have talked of a 100-plus bed shortage in our public hospitals; elective surgery being cancelled; the ever growing waiting lists and times in emergency rooms; and the critical shortage of psychiatric services reaching and stretched to breaking point. But we acknowledge and support the overworked and under-resourced doctors and nurses who give a very dedicated service on a daily basis.

I turn to the issue of the Magill Youth Training Centre. I note that the minister responsible is sitting in the chamber at the moment. I have a major concern that there appears to be a lack of progress and a lack of time lines on the future of this facility. Numerous land use issues are starting to become important in the electorate. I acknowledge that the government announced in its last budget that this is to be a PPP project, but it appears to be remarkably reticent in providing details on the relocation—when and where. Residents in the surrounding areas of the facility, particularly those parents and students at Rostrevor College, were very pleased when the houses I asked to be demolished were demolished—and I commend the government for the speed with which it operated on that request. There is no doubt that this facility is a top priority, not just as a government initiative but for those many individuals who work in appalling facilities and for the clients who have to live and allegedly be rehabilitated in such facilities.

I now pursue a couple of matters raised by my colleague the member for MacKillop on the issue of law and order and the constant headline grabbing of the Premier on how tough on crime he is. We all understand and know that that is not matched by action. We know that there is not one additional police officer on the payroll and that SAPOL now has 70 fewer officers to fight crime and catch criminals. I do not think we should be proud in this state if one of our growth industries is prison incarceration and punishment. We know

that taxpayers will pay approximately \$700 million over the next 10 years for the government's law and order program. I think \$350 million is allocated for men's and women's prisons and \$46 million has been allocated for the youth detention centre. In the words of the Queensland children's judge, Justice Robertson:

It is the easiest thing in the world to increase penalties for particular crimes. It is much more difficult to deal with youth unemployment and homelessness, domestic violence and drug addiction.

But this appears to be this government's approach at the moment: making loud headline grabbing noises but taking a number of easy options. The imprisonment rate in South Australia is on the increase. Our gaols are full and the consequences of this trend raise obvious concern about rehabilitation but, more importantly, about prevention. Yet I am sure it also makes us ask ourselves who we are putting away into prison and why we are putting them there.

Again, it is my view that imprisonment should be imposed upon those involved in committing violent crime. But, is it the only option for those who commit what is commonly known as white-collar crime? If we look at a comparison of maximum sentences, it is quite instructive and, I believe, it often goes somewhere to understanding why the community is generally questioning our system of justice and our application of penalty.

In relation to the issue of maximum sentences, we have death by dangerous driving, with 10 years maximum imprisonment; malicious wounding, five years; possession of a firearm with intent to commit an offence, 10 years; common assault, two years; and assaults occasioning harm, five years. I ask members to compare this to some of the crimes that are considered to be of the white-collar variety. We have money laundering with 20 years; deception, 10 years; dishonest dealing with documents, 10 years; and making off without payment, two years.

Surely we must start looking at the way we handle people who are convicted of a crime. I believe we must relook at the way community service orders are imposed, the way they are enforced, how they are monitored and what we can do to refocus, and perhaps reform, that process. The whole area of penalties, and whether they fit the crime in our 21st century, I believe, deserve serious action. The community questioning of what is going on in our society is a very real issue, and, as legislators, clearly I believe it is a priority to many of us.

I move to a couple of other issues which have already been canvassed. It is issue of schools and the election promises and how they do not appear to be matching the reality of the promise. I want also to talk about housing. I know we have listened to a number of speeches about the concern in our communities and various electorates about the shortages. I think at this stage it is fair to pay a tribute to the magnificent people who work in many of the Housing Trust offices and who are trying to handle the demands being placed upon them.

I also want to touch on the River Murray. I applaud the focus that this whole community appears to be putting on our state's lifeline. I know that the bipartisan support coming from this side of the chamber to keep the River Murray a top priority has been mentioned a number of times. The issue of water restrictions and the application thereof, however, is still causing some confusion and, I would say in some cases, anger. I refer particularly to my electorate of Morialta, where I have a very wide and diverse multicultural community. Despite promises made during the estimates committee, very

little multilingual information has been provided. This is despite promises concerning water restrictions and their application and detail.

My colleagues and I asked a number of questions on this matter during estimates and, with the number of inquiries that are still coming into my electorate office (and I rather suspect, other electorate offices where there is a wide multicultural community), this is an issue which the government must address. We have radio stations and newspapers in considerable numbers in this state, and if they do not want to spend money putting in advertisements on such media they ought at least to be publishing fliers that can be distributed or provided to every electorate office, because it is very confusing that people do not understand what they are being asked to do, and what fines will be imposed upon them if they do not do it.

Another issue in my electorate, which is ongoing and has been for a number of years, relates to the future of Marble Hill. The protection of our built heritage, and its ongoing funding and maintenance, will continue in the case of Marble Hill. I think that it is very fair to pay tribute, again, to the dedicated work and commitment of the Friends of Marble Hill who have worked tirelessly over a number of years. They have been thanked by members on both sides of this chamber for their great work, but I must say that they are a small band of people and they do get a little tired.

They hope that the revamped administrative structures that have been put in place by the minister will help them with a business plan that will ensure the long-term future of this magnificent facility. That is important because we do not want to see that lost to the state of South Australia and, I might say, just on a very personal basis, that I do not particularly want to see it lost to the electorate of Morialta. We all understand and have debated on many occasions the unique character and importance of the Hills Face Zone and the issues of its future protection and land use. They are vital issues, and I trust that the final position reached on this issue will find the appropriate balance enabling local and widespread support.

It is controversial, and it does get people's blood pressure and stress levels rising at a very dramatic rate. Public meetings have already taken place, and I compliment the member for Newland for her incredible effort and involvement in getting the meeting organised in the Tea Tree Gully council chambers. We in Campbelltown were more fortunate and had one scheduled on the initial program. More than 40 people attended that meeting. It was an amazing balance of people including local residents, developers and environmentalists. I think it is fair to say that people came out of the meeting thinking that, maybe, we are going to get it right.

We must get that right balance between local residents (new and old), either those who have lived there for only a short time or those who have lived and worked in the area for generations, and our environmental concerns, particularly with respect to water, the conservation of our native wildlife and vegetation, the issues of development as they relate to tourism projects, such as winery development, and recreation and leisure priorities. I believe that getting that right mix can be achieved through consultation and a spirit of cooperation and goodwill, and I trust that that is a top policy imperative of this government.

Also, I want to talk about bushfire protection. As we approach the summer months this vital issue suddenly jumps the queue in terms of importance, particularly to those very many small communities within the Adelaide Hills. I pay

tribute to the work done on a regular basis by our volunteer CFS brigades and all the emergency service personnel who work throughout the year to ensure the protection of our families and our property. The Community Fire Safe programs, in my view, deserve a five star rating, and particularly those officers who worked tirelessly to prepare specific localised communities with protection plans.

I do urge the government to support more information and educational material to be distributed throughout the community. This particular program is absolutely vital to so many communities, but particularly those within the Adelaide Hills. Each of us remembers those devastating pictures of Canberra. I think that those vivid memories will be with us for many a moon, and God help us if we ever experience that problem in South Australia.

I would just like to make mention of the issue of child abuse and child sexual abuse in our community, which we all know is an issue of absolute betrayal, and the need for policy and progress in the legislative controls in this particular area. We have heard many members speaking about this over the last few weeks and months and I look forward to the debate on the recommendations of the Layton report later in this session.

I want to close in the last section of my remarks by talking about tourism and the growth in our state. It is an issue about which I care passionately because, as I am sure some members have heard me say, I know that it has the capacity to be one of the most important economic generators. It is vital for employment growth and utterly crucial for the future of our regions. Obviously, in later months I will say more about that.

However, I am delighted that, after years of persistence and determination and with the cooperation and the financial commitment of all stakeholders, we are going to get a new terminal. In particular, I pay tribute to Phil Baker and his team for maintaining his sense of humour and a sense of urgency through many difficult times, and I am sure that, on occasions, he wanted to give up.

I hope that the number of flights continues to increase, and I pay tribute to those international carriers that have strongly supported the Adelaide and South Australian market over many years. I know that we all look forward to the new Singapore Airlines flight which will start next month, increasing the airline's number of direct flights into our state from three to four. If that is added to Malaysia Airlines' four direct flights, those two carriers in particular have done a great deal for South Australia. I hope that they stick with us and continue to share in our growth and development in the future.

We all know that the benefits from the tourism industry are enormous, and on occasions we should reflect on how proud we should be of our state and what a special and unique place we have in which to live, work and play. I will close by talking about a number of issues that will, no doubt, dominate this session of parliament, but I will not outline the issue that is to be pursued in the courts.

However, I will mention the government's transport plan (or lack of it) and the constant political games being played by the Labor Party on the low level nuclear waste facility issue and how the Premier is now probably the number one cardholder of the NIMBY syndrome in our state. Of course, he wants us to take all the benefits offered by nuclear medicine, and he is very happy to have the nuclear waste scattered right across unsafe and unprotected areas of our

highly densely populated streets, but he fails constantly to tell us where he wants to put this waste.

I will also mention the looming disaster that is about to engulf WorkCover, industrial relations issues and, importantly, the lack of a state strategic plan. Other issues include the future of economic growth and the much-publicised agreement signed by Labor premiers not to enter into bidding wars with everyone except Queensland. I suspect one of their first payments on that agreement was to take the South Australian icon, the Australian Cricket Academy.

I believe there is a different mood in the community at the moment. Constituents say that they are disillusioned with the actions of this government or, in their case, the lack of action. They are recognising that its indulgent rhetoric does not match what it is delivering. They understand that, over the past 18 months and two Labor budgets, there have been 135 government-funded reviews, six taxpayer-funded summits and more than 400 questions as yet unanswered.

Time expired.

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I congratulate the Governor's Deputy, Mr Bruno Krumins, on his first appearance in parliament as the Governor's representative to deliver the speech opening the Third Session of the Fiftieth Parliament of the state South Australia. The speech stated:

During the past 12 months, my government has continued its work to rebuild the state economy, while at the same time seeking to ensure every South Australian will share in the benefits. It is working to ensure those benefits reach people, no matter where they live and work—in the city, or in regional South Australia.

In particular, it mentions:

My government wants to see a state in which children are given every available opportunity to learn and make the most of their potential.

These are fine-sounding words but, if our state is to afford a high quality of life for all and enable the people of the state to fulfil their potential, the government must encourage profitable businesses that can make the profits and pay the taxes that will enable this to be done. Towards this end, the government stated that it has accepted the Economic Development Board's recommendation that the state should aim to near triple our exports to reach \$25 billion by 2013.

My electorate of Flinders currently produces a billion dollars of export income for this state and could easily triple this in 10 years if it had the power, water, housing and transport infrastructure that other electorates take for granted, and if the brakes are removed that are being put on by this government on almost a daily basis, with its new laws and accompanying regulations that discriminate against rural and remote regions that have not experienced the opportunities of other regions. Perhaps the most far-reaching of these laws relate to the environment and particularly include the native vegetation legislation that will halt proposed development of even freehold land, including that found within the boundaries of the City of Port Lincoln.

The very exciting \$40 million Dean Lukin project for an aquaculture park, fishing industry service wharf and residential development, and an educational campus proposed on council land nearby, are both under threat. When the Labor government took office I invited members to come and look at the huge potential of my 42 000 square kilometre electorate of Eyre Peninsula, and I was pleased when country cabinets were held in Port Lincoln and Ceduna. My staff and I facilitated meetings with constituents wherever possible. When Robert Champion de Crespigny was made chairman

of the new Economic Development Board I was one of the first to visit him with a comprehensive, written submission in my hand, and I subsequently lobbied most of his board members along with anyone else I could think of in positions of influence with the new government.

Last year in my Address in Reply speech I asked the new Labor government to designate Eyre Peninsula as a special development region, pointing out that the region could not fulfil its considerable potential without the necessary infrastructure, and I outlined the issues once again. Like Monday's speech covering the government's plan for our state, the government has been high on rhetoric and low on constructive action, despite the efforts of myself, my 10 councils, our regional development board, the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association and many other people and organisations to address the obvious needs within this electorate.

People will not stay and work in this wonderful region and produce this export wealth if they do not have basic services such as doctors and health professionals that are provided by the presence of 10 acute care hospitals. However, when it comes to health, one can only hope that there is still a public health system beyond Gepps Cross when Labor loses office. The so-called funding reforms and improvements so far instituted by Labor are a decrease in real funding for country hospitals, thus putting more stress on their hard-working staff, their patients, families and supporting organisations. This is particularly the case with the 10 hospitals located in the electorate of Flinders, where a significant proportion of funding is supplied by volunteer organisations and considerable work is undertaken by volunteers supporting home and community care networks and the ambulances.

Even the retrievals from these country hospitals to Adelaide are paid for from the local hospital budgets as they are too far away to use the helicopter that is paid for by the emergency services levy. Labor's claim that education is one of its highest priorities is a farce. The education minister stopped works that had been approved and were in a planning phase under the Liberal government, and the only reason I can see is so that she could pour money into Labor-held electorates—perhaps her own electorate, where I understand that a school building program including a library is currently being undertaken.

One of the schools that had its plans shot to pieces was Ceduna Area School. Funding was cut from \$5 million to \$3.9 million, \$1 million of which is federal money. Then the minister caused further distress to this isolated community by proposing that the district council fund the community library. This is a council with a very small rate base that is already trying to provide services for people who live outside its council area, many of whom are disadvantaged. The school community library is the only library in Ceduna servicing the needs of people to the Western Australian border and north to the east-west railway. Indigenous people undertaking further study to improve their qualifications and job prospects use the Ceduna school community library as much as they can, even from places like the Oak Valley and Yalata Aboriginal communities.

We are supposed to believe that Labor has a great interest in improving the lot of our indigenous people, but where is the proof? The current library is difficult to access and would be hard to find even for people used to rambling schools. It badly needs to be included in the current redevelopment, but not at the cost of the local community. Students at the Ceduna TAFE campus source materials from the Port Lincoln

Library, which is a similar distance away as Adelaide is from Melbourne. It was planned that an upgraded and extended Ceduna School Community Library would also pick up some of this need, thus assisting in training and study for the students using this remote campus.

What sense is there in Labor raising the school age for our students when inadequate provision is made for them when they are at school, even for something as basic as a good library? Lack of a good education and the frustration of not being able to obtain meaningful work are the basic causes for young people turning to crime. Labor's much vaunted claim to be concerned about crime is refuted by its slashing of crime prevention funds and programs. Surely, it makes more sense to prevent anyone—but especially young people—from forming criminal behaviour patterns, rather than with repressively dealing with the behaviour at a later time in their lives.

The cost to our communities of allowing criminal behaviour to start is inestimable. The cost to the criminals themselves when intervention may have prevented these often sad and angry lives is something I would like to see improved. A funding commitment to crime prevention, rather than tough on crime rhetoric, would be a positive start. *The Economist* of 23 August 2003 (page 26) commented on what has happened in America with its tough on crime policy. From 1974, when 1.3 per cent of the adult male population was a con or ex-con, the percentage has gone to 2.7 this year. It is expected that 11.3 per cent of boys born in 2001 will go to gaol in their lifetime and that this will be one in three if they are black. The article comments:

Unless something changes in the rotten rehabilitation record (two-thirds of prisoners are rearrested within three years), conservative politicians will have created a criminal class of unimaginable proportions.

One could suggest that they should do something about crime prevention as a matter of urgency, and so should we unless we want to go down the same path as the United States.

A main plank of Labor's proposed law and order is tough penalties and longer sentences on those who attack public officials, including teachers. Will we see new gaols open for children who, in anger and frustration at being kept at school longer and provided with inadequate opportunities for a better future, attack their teachers? The Port Lincoln crime prevention program, run under the auspices of local government, was highly effective, with practical programs producing positive results that have now been scrapped by the Labor government. A program at Ceduna targeting children and youth at risk of offending also affected changes in participants that will be lifelong.

Crime prevention would seem a better option, but Labor is weak on crime prevention. It is not a priority, and it will cost everyone dearly in the future. It seems easier and certainly more popular for the government to speak of harsher penalties than of crime prevention. However, when people fall into crime, the previous Liberal government put in place an extensive range of educational options for its prisoners. Many of those in the prison located in Port Lincoln make use of the well-equipped education centre to gain qualifications that will enable them to secure employment upon their release. It is estimated that 60 to 80 per cent of prisoners lack literacy and numeracy skills. Therefore, these programs are especially beneficial in rehabilitation and in cutting recidivism.

Prisoners also have access to psychological services. So, it will be interesting to see what the government claims are

'for the first time a comprehensive range of prison-based rehabilitation programs'. In addition to education, the Prison Rehabilitative Industries and Manufacturing Enterprise (PRIME) seeks out contracts with private enterprise to supply them with goods for sale. Port Lincoln and Cadell prisons grow food products to sell to private industry or to use within the prison; milk, vegetables, fruit, cereals and meat are produced. These and the PRIME programs give prisoners skills they can use when they are released. Programs currently run in prisons cover victim awareness, anger management, alcohol and other drugs, domestic violence, literacy and numeracy, and cognitive skills. So, one wonders where the 'first time' rehabilitation programs will fit. The \$1.5 million a year allocated to this fantastic supposed new venture works out at about \$300 per prisoner. This amount will be less if prisoners are kept in gaol longer and if gaol terms are the preferred option to deal with those coming before the courts.

Other major items mentioned in the speech under infrastructure are continuations of projects and programs started under the Liberal government: the deep sea port (whether it is at Outer Harbour or Port Adelaide), rail and road connections to the port, the Adelaide-Darwin railway, and building on the export performance of the past few years. There is no mention of the rest of the state's rail system, power, water and roads. Labor has reneged on upgrading our railways so that they can carry a higher tonnage of freight which would cut down on the maintenance required for roads.

The state government has a war chest of at least \$10 million set aside at the time of the sale for the upgrading of the rail system that remains under state control. Is that still there, or has it been squandered on some scheme that Labor considers will bring it praise and votes? Perhaps it is included in the \$50 million required for the new trams to Glenelg.

The Labor government has cut funding for rural, regional and outback roads. It has been suggested that some events that were so successful in the Year of the Outback should be repeated. Whilst the deterioration in the roads that serve these areas is not rectified, repeats would be inadvisable for safety reasons alone. Those who have always travelled on sealed roads (wherever they come from) have no experience in dealing with corrugations and are unaware of the dangers that can arise when driving over them.

The government claims that it has 'made an historic breakthrough on rescuing the Murray'. It was the Liberal government in South Australia and the Liberal federal government that got the River Murray onto the national agenda. The introduction of the River Murray levy (\$30 for householders and \$135 for businesses based on SA Water meters) is another example of botched thinking. We on Eyre Peninsula use no River Murray water, yet we are forced to pay the levy while at the same time we are paying a levy towards our own water catchment management. We had water restrictions well before the rest of the state and were denied the rebate for water-saving devices which was made available only after those on Murray water were put on restrictions.

To add insult to injury, SA Water is charging an augmentation fee of \$5 500 for each new block in Coffin Bay and 23 other regional towns for which I can see no legal basis. They are doing this while making a profit of \$223 million and providing free water to the Corporation of the City of Adelaide and the former City of Port Adelaide, according to their charter, while the people living west of Ceduna have to pay a premium for their water over and above that charged to those living in the rest of the state. The government then

has the gall to say that it cares about country people! This is the way that it is working to ensure that 'benefits reach people no matter where they live and work, in the city or in rural and regional South Australia'.

Then there is the astonishing claim that the government views science, research and innovation as critical in developing a higher performance state with economic growth in industry and the research and development sectors. The proposed Marine Innovation South Australia (MISA) project to be based in Port Lincoln to provide a world-class centre of excellence in innovation, education, research and development for temperate zone marine species which was ready for announcement on the change of government has not been heard of since.

However, I was delighted to hear the Premier's support for the SKA radio telescope yesterday, and I thank him for acknowledging my involvement in this project. I am still somewhat concerned, though, about our state's progress to host the site. Western Australia was two years ahead of South Australia, but we had caught up. I was concerned, therefore, that, in a radio interview in August, CSIRO Professor Ron Ekers, Federation Fellow hosted at the Australian Telescope National Facility and President of the International Astronomical Union, said that Western Australia is leading the pack because we have dropped the baton. He said:

You can quote me as saying that the reason why Western Australia is certainly on top of the list at the moment is that the Western Australian government has been not only pro-active but they've actually put money into it—a substantial amount of money into it.

He added that the decision on where to go in Australia would be affected by how much support the project is given, and I can only infer that this government is not throwing its full weight behind the project. We have many companies such as BAE Systems that can supply the technology required for the radio telescope, and if South Australia gets this project, more companies will come. If not, it is quite possible that we will lose companies. Yet I understand that the \$3.4 million in research and scientific services was not spent in the 2002-03 budget.

The government has slashed funding for the vital primary industries and resources portfolio by about \$18 million last year, and dropped capital funding from \$13 million to \$8 million this financial year. That hardly equates to treating research as important, let alone critical, when primary industries are a major source of the export income the government wants to triple in 10 years. Research done by the primary industries department in South Australia leads the world, especially research into dryland farming techniques, much of which is based at the Minnipa Research Centre on Eyre Peninsula. After the Liberal government helped the people of our state struggle back from Labor's massive State Bank debt, the state's economy is already suffering again under Labor. Its claim to be rebuilding the state's economy looks somewhat foolish, particularly when the multi-million dollar blow-out in the unfunded liabilities of the workers compensation fund is brought to mind.

In line with the government's inability to make decisions, the position of the WorkCover CEO was vacant for more than six months. I am sure that this lack of direction for WorkCover, this lack of the government's ensuring that someone was in charge to make decisions, has contributed to WorkCover's dismal record. WorkCover's unfunded liability has gone from \$22 million in June 2000 to \$384 million at March 2003, and is still rocketing upwards. Yet Labor claims

that it is seeking to ensure that every South Australian shares in the benefits of its 'economic management'. They are only managing by increasing taxes and charges and inventing new ways of raising revenue, and they are certainly sharing these costs with every South Australian.

Just one example connected with WorkCover involves a constituent who has the highest possible bonus for safe work practices and who has recently been slugged an increase of 7.403 per cent in his WorkCover levy. It is also interesting to note that the \$25 collected from every boat registration which has helped to put facilities into coastal towns around the state is not being allocated. The South Australian Boating Facilities Advisory Council has not met for more than 12 months due to this government's preoccupation with reviewing everything ad nauseam. Boaties' money is not being released to the many worthwhile projects awaiting funding for which the boaties have already paid. This is just another example of Labor's so-called rebuilding of the state's economy and ensuring that all South Australians share the outcome. With friends like this, who needs enemies? Labor rhetoric is plentiful, while its constructive action is scarce. A Liberal government is needed back in this state as soon as possible.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel):** It is a real pleasure to be able to respond to the speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr Bruno Krumins, on the opening of this session of our parliament. I certainly commend His Excellency on the manner in which he performs his duties. I have met His Excellency, who is a most personable man, and I think all of us in this state are very fortunate to have both Her Excellency, Mrs Marjorie Jackson-Nelson, and His Excellency, Mr Bruno Krumins, holding these very important vice-regal positions. I would like to comment on some of the issues that His Excellency spoke about in his address in opening the parliament. First, the financial accountability and management of this government. In the Lieutenant-Governor's address, he spoke of the government's restated commitment to financial accountability. Last year, the Rann Labor government took the reins at a very fortunate time.

This contrasts enormously with the shambles the former Liberal government inherited a decade ago in 1993. One year after the Rann Labor government came to office, this government is benefiting from the massive financial windfalls it has received, particularly from stamp duty and the hike in gambling taxes it has implemented. Yet, this year, in the middle of a housing boom, the Treasurer has found it prudent to increase state stamp duty on mortgages. These are obviously more broken promises—no increase in taxes and charges—we have seen as a hallmark of this government.

I want to talk about an election promise made by the former opposition leader during the election campaign in January last year. The former opposition leader and now Premier (Hon. Mike Rann) said:

None of our promises will require new or higher taxes and charges and our fully-costed policies do not contain provisions for new or higher taxes and charges.

That was Mike Rann talking on ABC Radio on 18 January last year during the election campaign. Obviously, we have all seen that this is a total farce. Coupled with that, we have seen severe budget cuts brought in. I spoke about this matter in my speech on the budget when it was brought down a number of months ago. The Premier, the Treasurer and this government are all playing the oldest trick in the book: that

is, holding back funds so that it can fund a war chest when the election comes around in March 2006.

I also want to talk about economic development. We have seen the formation by the government of the Economic Development Board, which is headed by Robert Champion de Crespigny, an esteemed, well-known businessman. The board has now released its report, which consists of roughly 120 pages and sets out 72 key recommendations. It is said to be the government's blueprint for the prosperity of this state, but, arguably, it is more of a discussion paper. The report makes it clear that the state's strategic plan needs to give directions on what actions are needed to grow the economy. That is a very important point. No-one knows when we will have a state strategic plan, but it is most likely that we will not have one until the third year of this government's term.

Meanwhile, the Department of Industry and Trade, which played a big part in the trebling of exports during the term of the previous Liberal government, is totally lacking direction and resources. Maintaining the momentum of economic growth in South Australia has now been left to private industry, and the government has washed its hands of any responsibility. The Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Rob Kerin) spoke about that at length in his speech and gave several examples of where this government is lacking.

Compare that with the previous Liberal government's achievements. Under John Olsen, Rob Kerin and Dean Brown, the Liberal government tripled exports. We came from a position of a low base from which to work—high unemployment, under-utilised infrastructure—and a commitment to improve infrastructure, and a commitment and long-term strategies, such as the state's highly successful Food for the Future plan.

This is certainly in contrast to the current situation. We have a high level of industrial performance and a high Australian dollar; work force shortages in the major regions of South Australia; and strained infrastructure (especially in housing and power)—and, again, the leader spoke about those matters. We have no commitment from the government; no plan and lost momentum; and an attitude that pretty much leaves it all up to industry. The alarming results are already beginning to filter through.

The latest South Australian economic indicators released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in September 2003 reveal that the value of South Australian merchandise exports, in original terms, for the month of June 2003 was \$576.6 million, a decrease of 11.7 per cent from May 2003 and a staggering 27.6 per cent decrease on the June 2002 figure of \$796 million. There has been a decrease of 8.9 per cent in the value of exports in the 12 months preceding June 2003. That is alarming. The value of South Australian merchandise imports, in original terms, for June 2003 was \$403.6 million, a decrease of 18.8 per cent from \$497.3 million recorded in May 2003 and 2.7 per cent higher (which is encouraging) than the June 2002 figure of \$393.1 million. I know the member for Waite spoke about that as well, but those statistics are alarming in themselves.

Like the Liberal Party, the Economic Development Board promotes sensible fiscal management and also recognises that the government has an important role to play in the provision of vital infrastructure. The board vehemently opposes the Treasurer's pursuit of zero borrowing but, after the collapse of the State Bank, he is obsessed with proving himself to be a good financial manager. He is obsessed with this AAA rating. It is a worthy goal, but the Treasurer views this as the holy grail. Not only do we on this side of the house recognise

the shortcomings of that strategy but we also know his colleagues are displeased with his approach. It is tunnel vision. I quote an article appearing in *Access Economics* in June this year, as follows:

Broader policy considerations and economic prospects—rather than budgetary policy and the state's balance sheet—are likely to determine if and when South Australia regains the AAA credit rating it lost in the early 1990s as a result of the State Bank fiasco.

This state lost its AAA credit rating as a result of the extremely poor financial management of the previous Labor government.

I also refer to an article that appeared in last Saturday's *Advertiser* written by well-known journalist Greg Kelton headed 'Missing: one plan for a rainy day'. The article states:

[South Australia] might be doing very, very well—but we are riding on the back of a housing boom sparked by low interest rates and a wave of increased consumer spending. Once interest rates start to rise, and they will, that consumer spending will rapidly tail off and the housing boom will 'bust'—and bust in a big way.

The question everyone, including the opposition and industry, is asking is: what will happen to [South Australia's] economy then—and how is the government preparing for such an eventuality?

I seek leave to conclude my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

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

#### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**The SPEAKER:** I direct that the written answers to the following questions on the *Notice Paper*, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 84, 86, 88-93 and 96-98.

#### PAPER TABLED

The following paper was laid on the table:

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

Regulations under the following Act—  
Education—School Community Care.

#### SCHOOLS, EVICTION POWERS

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Today I table new regulations that will give schools the power to evict and ban troublemakers from school sites. The regulations will become effective from the start of the 2004 school year, and will enable people who enter school grounds and cause disruption to be evicted and banned for up to three months. This is part of the government's efforts to ensure that South Australian schools remain safe and secure. The safety and security of our students and teachers is a major concern, and any issue that impacts on the safety of the learning environment can impact on the quality of learning. Everyone has the right to walk into a school and feel safe. Schools are not a place for people to act in a threatening and disorderly way. This government identified a need for schools to have similar rights as hotels to evict people who are acting in an inappropriate manner and/or stop them from returning. The government has consulted with various principal and parent groups and unions about our intentions, and all unanimously support the

concept. As a result, the government has amended the Education Regulations 1997 to provide schools and police with clear power to:

- refuse entry to schools and other premises used by schools to people behaving in a violent, offensive, threatening or intimidating manner;
- remove people who are misbehaving or trespassing on school grounds;
- bar such people from schools and other premises used by schools for a period of up to three months and subject to conditions; and
- remove from schools people who have previously been barred.

These powers will be exercised only in appropriate circumstances and after full consideration of the seriousness of the matter. Principals will be able to use the amount of force necessary to ensure that they keep themselves and others safe. Training and information sessions will occur during term 4, and an information package has been developed in draft for consultation and will also be distributed in term 4.

### QUESTION TIME

#### CHILD'S BIRTH

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I stress that this is a matter of grave concern. Will the Minister for Health immediately order a full and independent inquiry into the circumstances of a tragic delivery which occurred at the Women's and Children's Hospital on 4 September this year? Will the minister explain why the recommendations of the Coroner in the late Jaiden Trimboli inquest of July 2001 were not in operation at the hospital on 4 September 2003?

On that date, a delivery occurred at the Women's and Children's Hospital which was seriously mismanaged and where fundamental mistakes were made. Already the hospital's loss assessor has interviewed the mother. The extent of the damage to the baby's brain is still being assessed. Throughout the lead-up to the delivery, there appears to have been a significant breakdown in medical supervision. Up to five different doctors had contact with the mother on the day but, despite pleas from nursing staff, close medical supervision did not occur.

Staff told the mother afterwards that there were significant medical issues very similar to those at the birth of Jaiden Trimboli. Having reread the Coroner's inquest findings, and discussed them with the mother, it is obvious that a number of the recommendations of the Coroner were not implemented in this recent delivery. In particular, the mother was not advised how to read or how to recognise the significance of the alarm light on the CGT. When the foetal heart rate on the CGT dropped to a low rate of 30 per minute and even 20 per minute, and fluctuated up to 200 per minute, the monitor was specifically turned away from the mother so she could not read it. The mother has asked that I raise the issue in this manner, so that the mistakes are not swept under the carpet, and so that action is taken immediately to change medical practices at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call on the minister, can I tell the honourable member that this question, like all other questions, as he gratuitously observed, is very serious, and does not need a remark to that effect.



**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** The honourable member has raised some very serious matters this afternoon in the house. I will certainly look into the things he has just spoken about. I ask him to provide all the information this time so that I can immediately take steps to get to the bottom of it.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Minister for Infrastructure and the member for Unley know what they can do with those parts of their anatomy as I have invited other members to do earlier in the week. If they wish to have a conversation, do not disrupt the proceedings of the chamber.

### DAVOREN PARK COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

**Mr O'BRIEN (Napier):** My question is to the Minister for Health. How will the opening of the Davoren Park Community Health Centre last Sunday benefit people living in my electorate of Napier and how does the centre reflect the generational health reviews approach to primary health care?

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** I thank the member for Napier for his question and congratulate and thank him for his advocacy and interest in health and other issues in his electorate. As many members of this parliament may be aware, the suburb of Davoren Park and surrounds have a high level of welfare dependency. This vulnerability is reflected in poor health outcomes for the community. In fact, the *Social Health Atlas's* cluster analysis has characterised the Elizabeth statistical area as having a poor health status, high use of health services and low social health.

Last Sunday I had the pleasure to open a new community health village in Davoren Park in the northern suburbs. The centre, developed with an \$800 000 upgrade of surplus Housing Trust flats, brings together speech pathology, nutritional and general counselling and education groups and, shortly, an early intervention service from the Women's and Children's Hospital will also be collocated there. This is particularly important as the area has the highest percentage of single parent families in the state and has the highest percentage of children aged 0 to 4 years.

The village is also close to Swallowcliffe Primary School, to SHine and to a large local health service. Together all of those agencies will make a new campus for health care in the northern suburbs. This is an innovative approach to the delivery of primary health care and reflects what John Menadue found through the Generational Health Review, namely, that the best way to improve and deliver health care is by basing it on a primary health care approach.

Last Friday I launched the renewed primary health care policy for the government to inform and shape the reform process that the Department of Human Services is rolling out. The government's plan is to provide an effective range of hospital based acute care services that are well integrated with the network of community based primary health care services. The integration of these services will in return assist the development and work of the new regional health services. This approach is driving health reform measures around the globe, and internationally it is understood that nations with the most robust primary health care enjoy favourable health indicators for their populations.

Primary health care leads to better health with lower costs. This means having services as close to the community as possible, ensuring that they are accessible, affordable and available when people need them. It means making certain

that services are based on health promotion and illness prevention to the greatest extent possible. It means that acute care and rehabilitation services are linked in and supported by primary and community based health services. It means that people are provided with the necessary resources and information to take greater responsibility for their own health, as well as being involved in the development and delivery of health services. To have a more primary health care oriented system means working in close partnership with GPs, pharmacists and other private providers, as well as providers from the non-government sector and local government.

Finally, we are laying down strong foundations to build a better health system for this state and primary health care is a key driver of our reforms. This village in Davoren Park will be an important part of this effort.

### WORKCOVER

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport):** My question is to the Treasurer. Will he release today the 2002 report by Treasury and Finance that examined the financial risk, corporate governance and other practices critical to the financial and risk management of the WorkCover Corporation. The Treasurer was asked questions about this report on 12 May this year. At the time, the Treasurer advised the house, 'We are dealing with the matter and I would be more than happy for that report to be made public.' It is now four months later. A new session has begun. The report is yet to be released.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** What I do know is that, upon coming into office, my colleague the Minister for Industrial Relations and I requested a review of the corporate governance and financial health of WorkCover. That report found that when this opposition was in government a number of things occurred. As my colleague has mentioned, a rebate was provided to business which, in my view, was an ill-timed rebate given the financial strength of the business. The report also showed that the then Liberal government supported a levy reduction that the organisation actuarially could not sustain. We saw the levy rate drop to a level that has been found by officers of Treasury and SAFA to have contributed in excess of \$100 million—closer to \$120 million, from memory—to the unfunded liabilities of WorkCover. Under political and community pressure over spiralling costs of electricity in this state, and in a grubby attempt to ensure that there was some deflection from the price rise in electricity, this government was happy to see WorkCover's rates drop to offset the cost in electricity. This Liberal opposition, every time it stands in this place—

**Mr BRINDAL:** I rise on a point of order, sir. I believe that the words 'grubby attempt' canvasses debate, or at least is calculated to inflame this side of the house, and I ask you, sir, to rule on this matter.

**The SPEAKER:** I have to agree with the member for Unley. It probably is, but I know that the member for Unley belongs to a very robust group of people who have got a far more mature view of their importance in life than that which the Treasurer attributes to them. The Treasurer.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** The actions of the former Liberal government, in a number of critical areas—

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** I rise on a point of order, sir. The point of order relates to answering the substance of the question. The question was quite specific: will the Treasurer table the report?

**The SPEAKER:** That is a legitimate point of order, as I see it. Would the Treasurer be kind enough to let the house know whether it is his proposal to table the report?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I am certainly coming to that. I just need to be able to say that, when it comes to WorkCover, every time a Liberal member stands in this place let no-one be in doubt about the causes of the current problems at WorkCover. It is, without doubt, the opposition's decision to—

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I understand, sir, that you ruled on a point of order just raised. The question was whether the report would be released, not a dissertation from the Treasurer on his spin.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, it would be helpful to get the information from the report. The Treasurer.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** As I said at the time, there are aspects of that report, as the shadow minister knows—

**The Hon. I.F. Evans:** I don't know; I haven't seen it.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** As a former minister—

**The Hon. I.F. Evans:** If you released it, I might know.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** My memory is that the honourable member acknowledged to me in conversation that there are elements of the WorkCover legislation—

**The Hon. I.F. Evans:** Rubbish!

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I said, 'from memory'. If the honourable member wishes to say that is not the case—

**Mr Brindal:** Your memory is very poor lately. You don't remember the law very well.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** What was the name of your federal colleague? Do you remember that?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I reckon that leaking cabinet documents breaks the law. Do we want to go there?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** That quietened them down a little, didn't it? They need not come in here and preach to us about breaking the law. They need not preach to us, but I will say this: there are aspects about the public release of information that require us to seek opinion as to what can be released. That is the information that they have been provided with. I am happy to find out the status of that work. I am happy also for that report to come out, because that report showed that the then government's actions contributed to it. Very, very poor actuarial advice from the then Actuary under the Liberal government's governance saw a reduction in the levy rate that should not have occurred. The mistakes happened under the Liberal government's watch: they are being fixed by this Labor government.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I invite the Treasurer to say, given the assurance provided to the Speaker and the house, when is it likely that the report will be tabled.

**The Hon. K.O. Foley:** I will take that on advice, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Then I trust I have that advice before the end of next week.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Mr Speaker, I am sorry: I did not hear your response there. Could you repeat that so that it is clear to the entire house?

**The SPEAKER:** I trust that the advice is provided to the chair and the chamber before the end of next week.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** If I can just say, I am happy to give that advice as soon as possible. As I said, I am quite happy for the financial information to come out, but I have just been reminded by my staff that there are legal impedi-

ments to the disclosure of information as it relates to officers of WorkCover and others who have given information. I have sought Crown Law advice, and that is a concern of which I would have thought members opposite were aware, because they ran WorkCover for eight years.

**Mr BRINDAL:** On a point of order, you, Mr Speaker, have made a ruling which implies that a document should be tabled before the end of next week. The Treasurer has just risen and said that he may choose, on the advice of persons other than in this house, to qualify that report. I ask you, sir, to consider whether, if you ordered a report to be tabled in full, anyone has the right to come in here and not do as you have instructed.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Unley has no point of order. I have simply indicated to the Treasurer that, under the terms of the code of conduct and the arrangements made in the compact, it would not be, in my judgment (and I am talking about the member for Hammond's judgment), in the interests of the chair or the chamber for further delay, and that I invite those people who are giving that advice to prepare and conclude it before midnight tonight. If they cannot do that, I question the competence of some of the people who work in Crown Law. The member for Torrens.

#### LOCHIEL PARK

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** Will the Minister for Infrastructure advise the house if the government has kept its promise on Lochiel Park?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Infrastructure):** The government has kept its promise. I find it strange—

**Mr Scalzi:** Has the Premier kept his promise?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** And the Premier has kept his promise. The Premier is, for the benefit of the member for Hartley, part of this government. In fact, he leads it, if the honourable member had not noticed that from as far back as he sits. It does pain me that I have to do this, because I would have thought that after the announcement last week it was fairly obvious. After the announcement last week, though, the member for Hartley claimed that we had broken our promise. This was a puzzle to me, as we preserved 100 per cent of the open space. In fact, at Lochiel Park we went further and added open space from a formerly demolished area to the linear park, so we actually went a bit beyond 100 per cent. I was, therefore, very surprised to hear the member for Hartley again today telling us that the Premier and the government had broken their promise on Lochiel Park.

**Mr Scalzi:** No private housing!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The member for Hartley is still persisting. Perhaps I will give him a moment to persist a little longer. Many people have heard the opposition say that the government has broken its promise and the government say—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Another one says that we have broken our promise; that's very good. Of course, the government says, 'No, we've kept our promise.' The ultimate arbiters, the only true judges, are the members of the public themselves.

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

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The member for Bright—and never was a member more ill-named—interjects. I will not take the member for Bright's word for it. As I said, this man who called for Liberal Party unity (come on Joan; let's see you smile!) is going to give me—

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. In spite of your ruling yesterday, the minister continues to deviate from the topic. My point of order is, again, one of relevance. It is the same one I raised in relation to the same minister yesterday. He is not addressing the subject matter and is broadly canvassing other debates.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister for Infrastructure must address the substance of the question without debating it.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Sir, I must apologise; I was distracted by the juvenile display by the member for Bright. As I said—and I am sure, Mr Speaker, you will agree—the ultimate arbiter of whether a government has kept its promise is not the opposition or us but the people themselves. After hearing again the claim by the member for Hartley that we had broken our promise, I approached Margaret Sewell. As many members would know, Margaret Sewell led the campaign to defend Lochiel Park from the previous government. I repeat: Margaret Sewell boldly and bravely led the campaign of the locals against the previous government's proposition to turn all the beautiful, rolling open space at Lochiel Park into a subdivision. I asked Margaret Sewell if she would mind my reading in parliament her recent letter to the government on the outcome. She said that she would be delighted, and I intend doing so.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am quite happy to table it; it makes very good reading. You'll enjoy it. It states:

Dear Mr Conlon,

On behalf of Campbelltown SPACE—

the group which fought so hard to protect Lochiel Park—

and the many members of the community who supported the retention of open space and revegetation of Lochiel Park, we would like to thank you for the incredible effort and time spent in reaching the decision to retain this area as open space and for recommending this action to Premier Rann.

We appreciate the difficulty you have experienced in addressing this issue that had already been decided upon by the previous government and sincerely commend the decision you reached by listening to the community and acting upon their submissions.

Members of Campbelltown SPACE feel assured that the Premier has honoured his commitment to retain 100% open space for the community and acknowledge—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hartley will come to order or find himself in the same place as the member for West Torrens.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I continue

... acknowledge that at the time of his letter in February 2002 the land occupied by TAFE and MFS buildings etc. was not considered by us open space. We can only request that the sensitivity of the area be addressed when housing development planning procedures take place on the demolition site, and that appropriate and sympathetic design and allotment sizes will be in keeping with the surrounding urban forest.

Throughout our campaign we have been mindful of the issues linking the Kaurna community to the particular site and it would be really significant if some form of acknowledgment is shown to the traditional owners—

that is absolutely valid—

of the land by means of recognition within the urban forest.

Campbelltown SPACE appreciates your recognition of the stand we have taken with Lochiel Park and thank you sincerely for listening to us.

Can the government do any more than quote in its support the people who fought to protect Lochiel Park? We have been accused of breaking our promise by the member for Hartley. Of course, the member for Hartley was a member of the government that wanted to subdivide 80 per cent of Lochiel

Park for housing. He was the subject of a campaign, so he worked hard with his government. He got it to go from 12.5 per cent to 19.3 per cent. We have given them 100 per cent of the open land. Do you know what? They appreciate it. The letter is also signed by June Jenkins.

I put on the record that, if it was not for the work of these two outstanding women and the community behind them, the previous government would have had its way and we would not have been able to intervene to save the existing opening space as we have been able to do. I also say that the ridiculous notion of the member for Hartley that we should have knocked down all the buildings would, of course, have threatened the historic Lock End House, and I am sure that is not—

*Mr Scalzi interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The member for Hartley says that we should have knocked down every building and turned it into open space, but of course that would have meant knocking down Lock End House—and I point out that we have given some land around Lock End House to the council to ensure that the heritage building is preserved—and, of course, knocking down the FAYS' buildings that he was worried about last week. The community speaks for itself and the government rests its case.

**The SPEAKER:** I remind the minister that he did not have to make a case; all he had to do was answer a question.

## WORKCOVER

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport):** My question is to the Treasurer. Does the Treasury and Finance report referred to in my previous question recommend that the WorkCover levy rate be increased to around 3.9 per cent to address the increasing unfunded liability of the WorkCover Corporation?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** No, I do not recall that, but I will get that checked because I do not recall that the report was about prospective action that the government should take, but I stand to be corrected: it was about what had happened. Given that I implemented this report shortly after coming to government, it talked about the historical position of WorkCover, and it makes clear that actuarial advice given to the WorkCover board at the time was used to reduce the levy rate. From memory, and I stand to be corrected, other actuarial advice was given to the board that had a different outcome, that is, any person taking that actuarial advice on board would not have been prepared to see the levy rate drop, because the levy rate dropped at the time the international and national equity markets were weakening.

I am not being critical of the board necessarily at all for their decisions to invest the WorkCover funds, because we have had the same problem with Funds SA and the Motor Accident Commission. We have gone through the most significant downturn in the world equity markets for decades. That has affected everyone's superannuation fund around Australia. I say to people listening, 'Look at your superannuation returns; look at what has happened to the market; and look at what has happened to insurance companies.' WorkCover is no different, and it has seen a growth in its unfunded liabilities. However, the overwhelming impact on its unfunded liabilities was a levy cut that should never have been made. It happened under this government and it was able to be exploited by the then Liberal government, as I said before, in what I consider to be an exercise in trying to deflect their sensitivities about electricity price increases. However, that cut in the levy significantly deteriorated the financial

position of WorkCover, as did the rebate and the downturn in world economic and equity markets.

The SAFA report (and I will be having more to say on that before the end of question time) is good reading for anyone concerned about WorkCover because it is a historical reflection on the then Liberal government which presided over a deteriorating and worsening financial position of WorkCover that this government and the Minister for Industrial Relations are in the process of fixing.

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for McKillop have any problems?

**Mr Williams:** No, sir.

**The SPEAKER:** Then I will thank him to be quiet.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TRAINING AWARDS

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey):** My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What is the significance of the 2003 South Australian training awards, and did the Torrens Valley Institute, which has a large campus in my electorate, feature in any of the awards?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education):** I thank the member for Florey for her interest in this sector. She, like me, realises that the employment and training portion of my portfolio is probably one of the most significant areas that I oversee because it has such a profound impact on the lives of individuals and the opportunities for our industry and manufacturing sectors.

I was very pleased to be involved in the training awards last Friday, 12 September, held at the Convention Centre. They are particularly important because it is a prestigious event at which the training providers and the outstanding students and apprentices of the year are commended and acknowledged, and their efforts are rewarded by a series of awards which are the forerunners to the national events which will be held later this year in Queensland.

Those people who were acknowledged were involved in developing high performance work forces. There were awards for both industry and business sectors involved in economic growth and in developing a competitive global marketplace, but also those providers and students who are involved in the sector. The individuals who were involved included apprentices, trainees, vocational students and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student of the year; there was an enterprise section, an employer and small business section, a small training provider award (which generally goes to the private sector) and large training provider award (which acknowledges our large TAFE institutes), as well as a training initiative award.

This year, I can advise that the Torrens Valley Institute, which I visited several times in conjunction with the member for Florey, was successful in winning the large training provider of the year award, and I acknowledge their efforts in being creative and showing initiative in new areas of vocational training. They deserve this award and I am very pleased that they won it. The other winners in the events are as follows. The Apprentice of the Year was won by apprentice chef Jonathon Kemble from Woodcroft; the Employer of the Year Award went to Bedford Industries; the Small Business of the Year Award went to Jetset Norwood, a business which has been in operation for only two years (another deserving winner); the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student of the Year was Noeline Wills, and she is

already employed by the Adelaide institute as a student services officer; the Trainee of the Year was Christopher Crouch from Crystal Brook, who attended the Spencer Institute of TAFE; and the Vocational Student of the Year was Kristy Wright, a customer services officer at Westpac Banking Corporation in Whyalla and, again, she attended Spencer Institute.

The South Australian Training Initiative Award went to Regional Arts SA, and the VET in Schools Excellence Award went to my ministerial colleague's new program Futures Connect between Riverland and Murray TAFE and the local schools. The Small Training Provider of the Year, whom I congratulate for the second year in a row, was Kaylene Kranz and Associates, one of our fine private RTOs. This event is very important because it acknowledges a sector which was devalued, undermined and significantly damaged by the previous government.

### WORKCOVER

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport):** My question is again to the Treasurer. What is the most recent estimate of the level of unfunded liability of WorkCover of which the Treasurer is aware?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** Given the importance and significance of the question, I am not going to give a figure off the cuff. If someone asked me now, 'What is the exact amount of unfunded liability for Funds SA?', I would not have that exact figure. I think it is in the many billions. If you asked me, 'What is the funded component of the Motor Accident Commission?', I do not have that figure at my fingertips. And, equally, I do not have at my fingertips the last piece of advice on the unfunded liability of WorkCover. But I am happy to get that answer and come back with that figure and release it at the appropriate time. As I have outlined to the house, we are dealing with a corporation that, after eight years of Liberal government, is suffering some difficulties. The work of my colleague has been outstanding in getting together a board of high calibre business people and community people.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! If the Hon. the Treasurer does not have this information, we understand his anxiety about the way in which things have developed to this point and we will be pleased to get the information when the Treasurer has it.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will conclude on this. The unfunded liabilities—

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I rise on a point of order, sir. My understanding was that you had indicated that the Treasurer should sit down and provide the information when he had it, and not just ramble on without any intention whatsoever of providing the information.

**The SPEAKER:** The Treasurer was concluding his remarks. The Deputy Leader did understand my intention. However, if the Treasurer had some relevant information I would be pleased to hear it, otherwise it would be better to proceed. Does the Treasurer have any further information?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** No, sir.

### VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** Will the Minister for Emergency Services advise the house of any fundraising plans of which he is aware by the Volunteer Fire Brigade Association?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services):** I am happy to do this. I am sad that it is necessary to have to talk to the house about this, because fundraising by the volunteer fire brigades and the Volunteer Fire Brigade Association is nothing new at all. However, I can say that some time ago the Volunteer Fire Brigade Association—and I make the point that it is an organisation entirely independent of direction by the minister, which I am sure the former minister would know—came to me to discuss their plan to go another step in fundraising and run 18 raffles over the next three years to raise some money for what I stress are non-operational aspects of maintaining and supporting volunteers. I do not think it is any secret—it has been identified in a number of places—that, since the very bungled introduction of the emergency services levy, fundraising has become much more difficult for brigades. At the time I said to the association that I had no influence over what they chose to do or not do, but I advised them to be aware that people will try to play politics with this. As a result of that, the Volunteer Fire Brigade Association went to speak to the Leader of the Opposition, advising him of their plans.

As we all know, the Leader of the Opposition is a decent fellow, well embedded in his local community up there in Crystal Brook. He understands the needs of his local volunteers, and I understand he had no difficulty with the plan. However, in an abundance of caution they also went to see the shadow minister, who told them that on the other hand he believed that he would have to deal with it politically. That is what I am advised they were told by him. I am very disappointed to receive a very short letter from the shadow minister, stating:

It is my understanding that the South Australian Volunteer Fire Brigade Association is about to begin conducting a car lottery in order to raise funds for equipment. If they are already receiving adequate funding from the emergency services levy why are they then resorting to such measures?

Well, he knows the answer to that, sir, because they told him. The letter continues:

Do you endorse this act?

You will observe that a little earlier in question time I said that the honourable member knew that I have no influence over them, and he nodded his head, but I have got a letter from him asking whether I endorse this act. What difference would it make if I did? The real question is whether he endorses their act. If he really does want to play politics with us I can say this: other than our disappointment for the association and the volunteers, financially it is no skin off our nose. I can point out the massive increase that we put into the emergency services fund since coming to government, without increasing the levy. But these people are going out to do what they have traditionally done in a new way. The reason I am raising it today is that it is absolutely obvious that he is going to keep his word to them and he is going to play politics. I can say, sir, that I think that he should talk to the Leader of the Opposition and adopt his approach. He should not play politics with the Volunteer Fire Brigade Association, because it will not hurt the government; it will only hurt them. He has put them under pressure and I think he should withdraw and reconsider.

## WORKCOVER

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport):** Will the Treasurer advise whether he is aware of unfunded liabilities as stated

in the draft June 2003 Workcover quarterly performance report?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** I cannot recall specifically whether I have seen the draft annual report to which the member refers. As he would be aware, the Minister for Industrial Relations has responsibility for the Workcover Act. I am briefed periodically on the performance, but I cannot give a precise answer on the specific reports I have received. I will take that question on notice and get back to the member for Davenport.

## SEX EDUCATION

**Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood):** Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services advise whether a survey has been issued to South Australian high school students about their sexual experiences?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** The survey to which the honourable member refers is a survey connected with the SHARE program (Sexual Health and Relationships Education Program) being trialled in 15 of our government schools. It is a survey which is being conducted by La Trobe University and which the Liberals oppose, according to the Liberal opposition education spokesperson. Members might have read in *The Advertiser* this morning of the shadow minister's complaints about the survey. She put out a press release yesterday and has been repeating claims in the press today. The press release is labelled 'Labor prying into school kids' sex lives.' Her complaint is that 'the questions are alarmingly loaded', and she believes that questioning children about their sexual experience in this manner is inappropriate.

**The Hon. W.A. Matthew:** It is absolutely outrageous.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The member for Bright says it is outrageous. The shadow minister further lists the offending questions. The interesting thing about this is that there is another survey in existence; that is, a survey funded and commissioned by the federal government called the 'National Survey for Secondary Schools and Sexual Health'. It was conducted last year and I understand that the results thereof will be announced shortly. Let us look at the questions that are so offensive, according to the member for Bragg. She lists four.

The first one, to year 10 students is as follows: How many people have you had sex with in the past year? The federal survey question is: Over the last year, with how many people have you had intercourse? It then lists options of up to 11 or more people. The second question in the state survey is: How often do you have sex with your regular boyfriend, girlfriend or casual partner? The federal survey question is: Was the last person you had sex with someone you had just met for the first time, or someone you had known for a while but not had sex with before, or someone you had known for a while and had had sex with before but was not your current girlfriend/boyfriend.

The third question to which the member objects in the state survey is: In the past year when you have had sex, how often were you under the influence of alcohol and drugs? The national survey question was: 'Were you drunk or high last time you had sex?' The fourth question, to which the member for Bragg objects, was: 'Have you ever had sex when you didn't want to because you were too drunk or high at the time?' The national government's survey question was: 'Have you ever had sex when you didn't want to? If yes, was it because you were too drunk at the time or was it because

you were too high at the time or because your partner thought you should or because your friends thought that you should?" Indeed, they are identical questions. Perhaps the honourable member should have words with her federal health minister about that.

The interesting thing is that the member for Bragg goes further in her complaint. She says that she objects to the way the survey was conducted. She acknowledges that parents need to provide their permission before students take part in the survey and that they have the right to view the survey before they give that consent. That is exactly the same circumstance for the national survey, about which she has complained. In addition, when surveys of such nature are distributed to school students, state permission is required—and I notice the former minister for education showing me that he knows what I am about to say by the smile on his face and a giggle. It was the state Liberal government that authorised the distribution to South Australian high school students of the national survey, which contains virtually exactly the same questions that she now says are totally inappropriate and outrageous. Member for Bragg: do your homework.

#### GEORGANAS, Mr S.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** My question is to the Minister for Gambling. Given the announcement that the South Australia Police have been called in to investigate the ALP Hindmarsh raffle matter, has Mr Steve Georganas been stood down as gambling adviser to the Minister for Gambling pending the outcome of those investigations? On Monday the Treasurer advised the house that the police had been called in to investigate what he described as 'a raffle or lottery conducted during the 2001 federal election in the seat of Hindmarsh'. Mr Steve Georganas was the Labor candidate for Hindmarsh in that election and was employed in the office of Senator Nick Bolkus at that time. According to the ministerial directory, Mr Georganas is presently the Senior Ministerial Adviser, Gambling, in the minister's office. When police investigations commenced into another matter, the Attorney-General and a senior ministerial adviser in the Premier's office were required to stand aside. Why is the same standard not being applied here?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** As the Treasurer and minister responsible for Revenue SA with carriage of this matter, I am the appropriate minister to answer this. It is interesting that towards the end of question time in the first week the opposition would go after government staffers in this manner. I reflect on the actions of the former government's staffers. We can think of many of its staffers who were embroiled in various matters, and they were never dealt with in the manner to which the honourable member refers, as far as I can recall.

I am sure I can think of at least one of my colleagues on the front bench who was subjected to some pretty disgraceful and despicable acts by government staffers under the last government, and I am not sure what happened to them. They were the standards of the last government. As I said the other day, this matter was referred by Revenue SA to SA Police, because our officers in Revenue SA do not have investigative powers.

As members opposite know, I am the police minister, and I am not certain as to what, if any, inquiries are occurring. That is an operational matter for the police. The matter in question is something that happened before that staff member

became a member of a ministerial staff in this government, and it is a matter that relates to issues that existed before this government was formed. I do not know whether the person in question is under any form of inquiry. The police commissioner, I am sure, will advise me if and when appropriate. At that point the government will consider the appropriate course of action; and to suggest any other course of action at this time is, I think, inappropriate.

#### FOODBANK SA

**Mr SNELLING (Playford):** My question is to the Minister for Social Justice. How are agencies working with disadvantaged people able to keep the cost of food down?

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Social Justice):** I must say that one of my concerns when I became the Minister for Social Justice—and under that umbrella came my responsibility for community services—was the number of people in South Australia who live in poverty, particularly the numbers of children who live in poverty. Also, I realised that we needed to establish—and I commend the previous government on this initiative—an organisation called FoodBank South Australia. Recently, Foodbank South Australia achieved a milestone of distributing one million kilograms of food to South Australians who are in difficult financial situations.

I would like today to take the opportunity to commend the workers and volunteers associated with Foodbank South Australia, because they have managed to deliver this remarkable achievement. As a number of people in this chamber would know, Foodbank South Australia is a not-for-profit charity which operates by sourcing donations from food companies and storing them in its modern distribution centre located at Edwardstown. I am very pleased to say that it is located in the electorate of Ashford; so, as the local member, I have another interest in Foodbank.

From that point, welfare agencies use the contributions that have been made to food relief programs. I guess the serious point I am making is that in South Australia we, too, now need to be able to provide food to some South Australians because, for a whole lot of reasons, they are not able to access that very basic resource themselves. I am told by Foodbank that approximately 150 000 South Australians are supported by the work of Foodbank South Australia. Agencies distribute the food as food parcels or prepared meals to people who are experiencing hardship. Foodbank South Australia began with 12 welfare agency members, and it now has 280 across the state.

Some of the donated food is surplus or unsaleable for minor reasons, such as mislabelling, but all the food distributed by Foodbank is nutritious and meets the food regulations. I must say that this is one of the most commonsense approaches I have seen in the community services area, and it is a very successful partnership between the government, the business community and particularly the community services sector.

The state government's community benefit fund has made a substantial contribution towards the establishment and development of this organisation. It has contributed more than \$66 000 over three years to assist with the purchase of coolrooms and the food handling facility at Edwardstown. The program is worthwhile. As a result of the good work that has already been done, I am trying to make sure that Foodbank can operate more efficiently. We are looking at many different areas to try to assist this organisation.

I would not only commend Foodbank to members in this house but say that this is an area where I think all of us could contribute in our own electorates. As I said, it is fairly shocking to think that we have people in need who cannot get access to food. This is even more serious in the rural and remote areas where just the transport costs of food make some very basic foodstuffs unavailable to people because they cannot afford to pay to get the basic food staples. I would like to commend and congratulate Foodbank and say that this is an area that I think we can all support and enhance.

#### ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S REMARKS

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen):** Why has the Attorney-General not corrected statements he made to the parliament on 1 April 2003 concerning the professionalism of Professor Tony Thomas? The inaccuracy of the Attorney-General's statements was highlighted in another place by the Hon. Angus Redford on 16 July and again on Monday 15 September. The Attorney-General himself has been advised of his errors and yet, over four months later, he has still not corrected the record, nor has he apologised to Professor Thomas.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** I am preparing a ministerial statement on that matter and it will be with the house next week.

#### OPERATION SAFELANDS TWO

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** Will the Minister for Police assure the house that Operation Safelands Two in the Pitjantjatjara lands was discontinued due to a requirement to review the method of operation relevant to the police industrial award and not because of lack of funding for the police budget?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister for Police):** I do have a brief on this, because I was expecting it. This matter was raised with me by the Police Association, from memory, and had been the subject of questions by the member opposite during the estimates committee. The honourable member will correct me if I am wrong, but on 5 June the member for Mawson asked me why the police commander had advised officers that Operation Safelands Two was to cease in May 2003. As Minister for Police, I took that question on notice.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Always play safe. On 14 July 2003 I provided a response in parliament advising that Safelands Two was suspended in May 2003 because there was a requirement to review the method of operation relative to the police award, which is what the member is now referring to. On 7 August 2003 in a meeting with me the Police Association President, Peter Alexander, raised this matter and whether or not I had misled parliament with my response on 14 July, which I am sure is now what the honourable member is referring to. On 13 August 2003 I raised this issue with the Commissioner of Police because, as we know, this is an operational matter. As Minister for Police I am not responsible for the operations of the Police Department so I took up this matter with the Police Commissioner.

He advised me that the response that he gave to me, which I provided the parliament, was accurate. I am advised by the Commissioner that he has since met with Peter Alexander of the Police Association and explained to him that, in the opinion of the Commissioner, the advice that he provided to me was accurate. So, the Police Commissioner stands by the

advice he provided to me, which I provided to this parliament. I can do no more than that. Of course, the Police Commissioner has my total confidence and I stand by his answer.

#### METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** Does the Minister for Emergency Services agree that the advice he gave the house yesterday regarding existing and future South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service recruitment will still mean that by 2004 numbers will still be down by at least 55 firefighters; and does the minister support the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service current average daily recalls of between 25 and 45 officers, costing an additional approximate amount of \$110 000 per week?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services):** I certainly do not accept the numbers in terms of their being 55 short. That is certainly a long way from our understanding. For the first time in nearly a decade after eight years of this mob, we now adequately and properly recruit for the Metropolitan Fire Service. If the shadow spokesperson seriously believes that we will be 55 short by recruiting 47 in the next financial year, how on earth can he explain those four or five years where they recruited no firefighters when they were in government? If we are to leave it short by recruiting 47, how could they spend four years recruiting none?

Recalls are a matter of concern for us. I am advised that the primary cause of them is the total wreckage the previous government made of the promotional system. As I said yesterday, from memory we are promoting 40 station officers, eight district officers and three commanders. We have such a backlog because, under the leadership—and I use that term lightly—of the member for Mawson, the previous government completely wrecked it. We have a former firefighter here; he knows all about it. The member opposite completely wrecked the promotional system. We have it back in order and in a decent state of repair.

The member for Mawson really needs to get more serious, instead of asking the wrong questions and attacking fund raising. Members opposite have a peculiarity about fund raising. I see that Stephen Baker has got the sack from Legh Davis, which shows they have a sense of humour. Poor old Stephen Baker; they sack him every time they get an opportunity! We had a choice, but we appointed Stephen Baker and not Legh Davis to head the reform of the fire services, perhaps because we do not have as big a sense of humour. But we thank you for that.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. Given the seriousness of this and other questions, I ask you to rule on the basis that the minister is digressing from the relevance of the question asked of him.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The point of order raised by the member for Mawson is interesting, in that the minister was not digressing; he was not even relevant. I uphold the point of order.

#### ELECTRICITY GENERATION

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright):** My question is directed to the Minister for Energy. Further to my question of him yesterday, in view of his answer and in view of recent revelations by the national electricity market company, NEMMCO, of future summer electricity shortages

in New South Wales, can the minister now advise the house exactly what he is doing after 1½ years in the job to secure extra electricity generation capacity for South Australia? Yesterday the minister told the house that, to secure extra electricity generation for South Australia, his government has ‘worked enormously hard on achieving an interconnector with New South Wales’. However, in its recently released Statement of Opportunities 2003, in relation to New South Wales NEMMCO revealed that ‘there are sufficient reserves for the next two summers only’. In other words, New South Wales will not have enough electricity for itself.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy):** I can add little to yesterday’s answer; I thought it was comprehensive. I understand that the member for Bright may not have understood it. I can understand that, because I have been trying to educate him for 1½ years in this place and I have not made much progress. As the athletics coach said, you cannot put in what God left out.

Let me repeat: the fundamental problem we have had in a regulatory system (which everyone in Australia recognises is crook) is that the previous government turned its back on the regulated interconnector because it thought MurrayLink was a better idea. In short, MurrayLink has failed abjectly; that is why it is applying for regulated status. In doing that, Murraylink, under a faulty regulatory system, has had SNI tied up in court for two years.

I believe that I have some influence in many circles, but I certainly cannot control courts in Victoria, the Supreme Court of Victoria and the Murraylink people supported by the opposition. I will do everything in my power in the circumstances I can control, and tomorrow I will again be in New South Wales talking to three state ministers in order to try to progress this matter.

However, what it does remind us is that South Australians deserve a better regulatory system than they have, and I can say this: I will measure my reputation in the national electricity market and that of the other ministers against that of the former minister any day of the week.

#### SCHOOLS, PARADISE PRIMARY

**Mrs HALL (Morialta):** Will the Minister for Education and Children’s Services inform the house whether a decision has been made on replacing the playground equipment at the Paradise Primary School to ensure that it meets occupational health and safety requirements? During the estimates committee hearings on 19 June, the minister indicated that she would have officers of her department urgently review this unsatisfactory situation. Three months have since lapsed and, in that period, the children have been denied the use and enjoyment of play equipment in their recess and lunch breaks and playtime.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children’s Services):** The member quite accurately says that this matter was raised with me in estimates. In fact, the very next day officers of my department went to the school to inspect the equipment. A proposal was then put by the school to the government involving more than just the playground equipment. The government is considering that further proposal and is consulting with both the school and the council. The matter is being addressed, but what originally was just a matter concerning a playground is now a matter concerning other refurbishment at the school and future use of school facilities.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am sorry I did not raise this earlier, but you gave the call to the member for Morialta. Mr Speaker, you have spent nearly two years trying to raise the standards of this place, and I think the whole place would acknowledge that. The standing orders quite clearly say that members should not denigrate one another and be gratuitously abusive. I do know that humour is very important in this place, but I do ask you, Mr Speaker, to consider at your leisure the sorts of remarks now being made in a daily fashion by the member for Elder, when in the form of humour he says things such as, ‘You cannot just put in what God left out.’ I accept that that may be meant to be funny, but I do think that comes very close to being abusive and getting towards sarcasm, which I do not think, sir, you would tolerate.

**The SPEAKER:** So long as members are not disrespectful, nor impugning the reputation of other honourable members, it is within standing orders. I did not understand the context in which the Minister for Energy remarked about the foresight, or lack of it, of divine providence. I did not think it either humorous or relevant, because I did not hear it. I therefore conclude that there is no point of order, other than that the member for Unley may be drawing attention to a general deterioration in standards of respect shown by some honourable members for other honourable members. I note that in my absence from the chair this morning the chair was not respected by some members on more than one occasion, and I thank the honourable member who occupied the chair during that verbal exchange for the trouble that honourable member took to try to remind the members who were, in simple terms, misbehaving, about their misbehaviour. I urge all honourable members, even if they do not care about their own reputations, to think about the reputation of the rest of us and of this place.

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#### WORKCOVER

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement, and the member for Davenport will be interested to hear this.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I have been asked today to produce a copy of the report on the investigations carried out by the Department of Treasury and Finance into WorkCover. Pursuant to section 112(1) of the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986, a person must not disclose information if ‘the person obtained the information in the course of carrying out functions in, or related to, the administration, operation or enforcement of this act’. The information is about commercial or trading operations pursuant to this act. I am advised that disclosing the report had been requested—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members will keep the conversation in the chamber down so that they and the chair can hear what the Acting Premier is saying.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Thank you, sir. Disclosing the report, as has been requested, without proper authorisation would transgress this section and could be an offence. Even if ministerial authorisation was given under this section, disclosure of the report could also give rise to other legal liabilities such as breach of an equitable or contractual duty, or defamation. I am advised that these problems ought to be



avoided if a report is published pursuant to a parliamentary motion. The government will prepare a motion and bring it forward in the near future.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Treasurer for that relevant information.

### SCHOOLS, BRIGHTON SECONDARY

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Yesterday during question time the member for Morphett asked me a question in relation to the Brighton Secondary School choir and its impending visit to China. Specifically, the member asked about a teacher at Blackwood High School and whether a temporary relief teacher resource would be paid to Blackwood High School to enable that particular teacher to attend with the choir. I believe the honourable member got the wrong school; it was not Blackwood High School. Nevertheless, the circumstances that I have been advised about are that that teacher was previously a music teacher at Brighton Secondary School. At the time that the tour was initially to take place (earlier this year), that teacher had been transferred to another high school but, as the tour was to occur during school holidays, it was not a problem for the teacher to accompany the Brighton Secondary School choir.

However, the impending November trip is not during school holidays and this teacher is a SACE coordinator at the school where he now works. The principal of that school has been very clear that the responsibilities of this teacher, the SACE coordinator, make it 'absolutely impossible' to release the teacher at this time. The principal of Brighton Secondary School concurs with that, and believes that, had it been his school, he would have made exactly the same decision. So, the teacher in question is not available, and he has been informed of that.

Brighton Secondary School has in place a process to select two remaining staff to accompany the tour, and that process has brought forward more than a dozen detailed expressions of interest from within the current Brighton staff. So, it has been a very good response, and the school is confident that it will have a teacher from its own staff. Therefore, there is no necessity for relief teaching time at another high school.

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright):** Yesterday and today in this house we have seen the Minister for Energy demonstrate that he is not acting in the state's interest to resolve a very serious matter, that of the state's electricity supply. If the minister is serious in the answers he has delivered yesterday and today, he is either holding the parliament in contempt or he does not know what he is doing in relation to his handling of this matter.

We have come to expect in this house that when this minister is in trouble on an issue he acts in an abusive manner. Indeed, during this week he has abused at least half a dozen members of the opposition when he has been under pressure. And he is under pressure today for very good reason: the minister failed to answer a fundamental question

that was put to him, and that question relates to the electricity capacity of New South Wales.

I questioned the minister about the latest report of NEMMCO, the National Electricity Market Company. Each year NEMMCO puts out a report that effectively advises the state of play in the electricity market—its statement of opportunities. In its statement of opportunities for 2003, NEMMCO has advised of dire circumstances facing New South Wales in the future. They have advised that, in relation to New South Wales, 'There are sufficient reserves for the next two summers only.' The report goes even further than that, and for the more technically minded who prefer to see the capacity expressed in megawatts, the report advises the amount of capacity that New South Wales will have before it, by saying:

The reserve deficit is forecast to be 94 megawatts in summer 2005-06, and in summer 2007-08 demand is forecast to exceed supply side capacity.

The message is very clear: in the future, New South Wales is heading for electricity shortages in the summer. That has happened for a very good reason, namely, that the New South Wales Labor government, which owns the electricity generation capacity, has simply not been expanding that capacity. Now, we have in this state a government which came to office with a very clearly stated aim, and I will quote from the card headed 'My pledge to you' which was letterboxed to South Australians and which is signed 'Mike Rann, Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide. Labor: The right priorities for South Australia'. He asks us to keep this card as a check that he keeps his pledges and, sir, I and many other members on this side of the house have kept this card. The second pledge, 'Labor's commitment to South Australians', was as follows:

We will fix our electricity system and an interconnector to New South Wales will be built to bring in cheaper power.

The generator is not going to bring in cheaper power. There is not going to be the power for it to bring in, for New South Wales has not been updating its capacity. In relation to the SNI, NEMMCO makes some very interesting comments:

If SNI or a similar augmentation project is built for the summer of 2004-05, Victoria and South Australia reserves for the summer are improved but still fall just below the minimum reserve levels. It should be noted that SNI is subject to an appeal before the Victorian Supreme Court. But there is no change to reserve levels in any other years due to SNI.

Effectively, NEMMCO is saying that if SNI goes in, it is not going to make any difference. The problem still remains. There is only one sure way to increase the electricity capacity needed in South Australia and that is to build more generator capacity, just as the Liberal government encouraged at Pelican Point—the capacity that was fought against by Labor and opposed strongly by the Treasurer. Had it not been built, we would have had a diabolical circumstance upon our hands. I should note that NEMMCO did put out an amendment in relation to the 2004-05 date, because there is one power station in Victoria that is bringing forward an increasing capacity that at least holds the levels out by a couple of years. But the problem remains.

Time expired.

**Mr RAU (Enfield):** I rise today to speak about a matter which has come to my attention through the rather impressive activities of a member of another place, the Hon. Nick Xenophon. As members here would know, the Hon. Nick Xenophon is nothing if not inventive, and I would go so far

as to say imaginative, in his quest for attention. He does impress me greatly because seldom do two or three days go by without my hearing his dulcet tones on the radio, or observe him getting out of a small vehicle or on the television.

This morning I was looking at the paper and I noticed on page 3 of *The Advertiser* that he has come up with yet another way of making something of an impact in the body politic, and that is a decision by him to promote a bill in relation to the passing on of remarks made to a priest in the context of a confessional. I would like to approach this problem from the perspective of a lawyer, rather than from the perspective of a person who is likely to be in a confessional, as I must admit I have never been in one and do not really know what the circumstances are that one might find in such a place.

I would like to make a few remarks about the legal context in which this occurs. According to the report in *The Advertiser*, we understand that: 'priests would be forced to report confessions of child sex abuse, under controversial draft laws introduced in parliament today'. There are just a couple of things I would like to say about this.

First of all, members of the house may or may not know that the Evidence Act in the states of Victoria and Tasmania and also in the Northern Territory provides what is described as a 'priest privilege'. In other words, it is impossible for a priest in those jurisdictions to be compelled to provide evidence to a court which came to that priest's attention in the context of their pastoral duties. As I understand it, and the member for Bragg might be able to correct me, it might also be the case in all of those jurisdictions that doctors are in the same situation. Certainly, there are difficulties in Victoria if one wishes to subpoena medical notes without the permission of the patient, because the doctor is obliged under the act not to release those notes. In this state, no such legal privilege under the Evidence Act applies.

However, I am a little troubled by Mr Xenophon's proposition, and I say this in a spirit of assistance because I am a great admirer of Mr Xenophon. First of all, he is targeting only one kind of offence, namely, offences against children. It does concern me that this has the same conceptual weakness as what I regard as a silly argument in favour of so-called hate crime legislation. You either have a general proposition or you do not; you do not go around picking the eyes out of things. Offences against children are very serious, but what if Osama bin Laden decided he wanted a bob each way and headed off to the local cathedral and said, 'I just want to have a bob each way in case I've had it wrong for all these years and I wouldn't mind just imparting a few of my sins to you.'? So, he gets in there and confesses that, amongst other things, he has planted a bomb in this esteemed establishment and that it will go off tomorrow. He is given a certain number of Hail Marys and off he goes. He is covered, as he has played both sides of the ledger.

Will the priest not be obliged, because of Mr Xenophon's legislation, to tell us that parliament is to be blown up, but would be obliged if Osama had said, 'And, by the way, I did something inappropriate with a youth.'? It exposes the stupidity of picking on one offence. It should be all serious offences or none at all. The other point I make is that, if Mr Xenophon wants to say in other contexts, that is, outside the confessional or outside a doctor/patient relationship, that there should be a broader duty to advise the police of suspicious activity, we could move forward and look sensibly at that. However, the idea that we are targeting one offence, in circumstances I can think of such as terrorism, kidnapping,

murder, rape and various others, Mr Xenophon should go back to the drawing board.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson):** Today I will put facts on the public record to correct those raised by the Minister for Emergency Services. What he said in *Hansard* yesterday and again today in the parliament reflects at least inaccurate if not misleading statements. He said yesterday, 'We have had to recall people because the previous government wrecked the promotion process.' I put on the public record that neither Labor nor Liberal have wrecked the processes when it comes to promotion and that under the Liberal government and still under a Labor Government the problem, I am advised, lies within SAMFS. Promotional processes within SAMFS have failed, I understand, because it did not have an unbiased process. Therefore, outside the UFU—its union—individual fire officers have taken SAMFS to the Industrial Relations Commission. Its findings are that the IRC said that it proved there was a bias in protocols against individuals, which is totally unacceptable. The IRC told SAMFS it should set protocols, and fire officers are telling me that they do not believe those protocols have yet been set.

I have had firefighters raise elementary matters with me which still are of concern to me as shadow minister and which would have been had I still been minister or had they been brought to my attention in any format. Some of the questions being put to firefighters in applying for promotional opportunities are such that they have not even received any basic instruction or material relevant to those questions, and therefore the process still appears to be fundamentally flawed. Given that the minister now has the opportunity, I hope that he will address that matter in the best interests of the firefighters. Not only is the opposition concerned about the enormous amount of recall but, while many firefighters say they appreciate the money—as would all of us—their families are not seeing as much of them, it is a cost to the budget that does not need to be there and, finally, you would have to question the safety of those officers and the lives they protect at times when they are doing two or three recalls a week on top of their normal workload. They are the facts behind this matter; they have nothing to do with Liberal or Labor. The minister should recognise that and get SAMFS to sort out, in an unbiased manner, the processes for people who need promotion.

I also touch quickly on another point that the Minister for Emergency Services raised today. He never gives all the facts in any matter—I have never seen him do that on any occasion—but, rather, he selectively quotes. I wish the VFBA tele-marketing lottery all the best and hope that it makes money for firefighters. However, the political point is that the reason the Volunteer Fire Brigade Association is going out over the next three years with a car lottery through tele-marketing is that the minister has cut a \$1 million program, assessed by an independent panel, that allowed for niche pieces of equipment and other opportunities for emergency services, particularly volunteers.

The CFS used to get about three quarters of that—\$750 000 a year. Generally, it is not getting equipment delivered from the government and it is sick and tired of that, and the VFBA has now had to come out and raise this money, because this mean-spirited Labor government cut that funding program for individual volunteer brigades and units across South Australia. That is why I am politically opposed to it, especially when the Labor Party in opposition did everything it possibly could to work against the introduction of the

emergency services levy. The Minister for Emergency Services was the worst when it came to trying to spread innuendo and working against the best interests of the volunteers with the introduction of the emergency services levy. He should now commit genuinely to the volunteers, as is the opposition, and ensure that he adequately funds them, not only on paper but also with delivery.

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** On Sunday afternoon I had the pleasure of attending what we hope will be Parkinson's South Australia's first annual fun day. That was to launch Parkinson's awareness week in South Australia. The aim of the fun day was to bring together as many people as possible who have Parkinson's disease and provide a very pleasant atmosphere for those people to get together, enjoy a barbecue, talk with other families and friends who have family members suffering with Parkinson's disease and exchange some information about recreational activities, leisure and some equipment that can help make their lives a little easier. Parkinson's South Australia was supported by Unley Lions, which were there running the barbecue along with the Third Goodwood Scout Group, and I place on record my appreciation and that of Parkinson's South Australia for their involvement in the day. Unfortunately, it was a very bleak and unpleasant day, and the people who turned out showed how strong and tough they are. It was windy, cold and miserable, but there were lots of good fellowship and good spirits around the barbecue.

The organisation estimates that about 80 000 people in Australia have Parkinson's disease, and that translates to possibly about 14 000 people here in South Australia with that disease. It is a degenerative neurological condition which can affect anyone and which is particularly debilitating. The symptoms of Parkinson's can cause tremors and rigid muscles which can lead to problems with mobility and which can even make speaking and swallowing difficult. We do not yet know what causes Parkinson's disease, and there is no cure. Sadly, not everybody responds to treatment medications.

However, there are lots of ways that the symptoms of Parkinson's can be managed, and programs are available, which is where Parkinson's South Australia comes in. It works hard at getting that information out to families and sufferers of Parkinson's. It is a dedicated group which consists mostly of volunteers. I understand there is only one paid employee and the rest are volunteers, who provide a great deal of practical assistance to help people manage their condition. They provide education and information for people suffering, along with their families, health professionals and the community in general.

The health professionals have adopted a hospitalisation form on which people can indicate the sorts of symptoms they are experiencing in relation to their medication requirements, ambulation, coordination, communication and eating and swallowing, those sorts of things, so that the hospital is very clear about someone's needs. As I said, they have a very strong core of volunteers. Indeed, they have a nurse specialist who also volunteers her time to work with families and patients who are suffering Parkinson's. They are also embarking on a Parkinson's friendship quilt project, which they hope to have completed by World Parkinson's Day on 11 April 2004.

They are supplying calico blocks and patterns, if people want them, so that people can work up their design of a tulip on the patchwork quilt. I am sure that will go across very

well. If someone wants to be involved in that project, I am sure that Parkinson's South Australia would be pleased to hear from them. They also provide a lot of information about how people can cope on a daily basis and how they can manage their Parkinson's disease. The awareness week is about building awareness in the general community, and also getting people to come along and join Parkinson's South Australia so that they can avail themselves of this organisation. They are also sending off posters to hospitals, community health centres and medical clinics. They are conducting an education workshop in Mount Gambier. They have also entered a team in the City-Bay Fun Run.

Time expired.

### MANNUM FOOTBALL CLUB

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I am truly proud of many people and their achievements in my electorate. I would like to bring to the attention of the house the great effort by the Mannum football and netball clubs in the last two weeks. The Mannum Football Club has, unfortunately, been the poor cousin of the River Murray League for many years, as you, sir, would know. Competing against the strength of teams from Murray Bridge, Tailem Bend and surrounding districts, Mannum has failed to secure an A grade premiership for 47 years. The last premiership for Mannum was during that truly amazing year of 1956.

During that year there was the greatest flood that European eyes have ever seen, and Mannum had water flowing down the main street. It was a time when that town was incredibly challenged, and the football club provided some form of joy. However, 47 years is a long time between drinks and, at last, they have won. Is this an omen that the River Murray will flood this year?

As with many teams around the country areas of the state last weekend, it was the team with the greatest desire that got up and won, and that happened at AAMI Stadium. The weather on Saturday was deplorable, with howling winds and driving rain. These are the conditions that teams with their backs against the wall relish—teams with a point to prove, and they go out and do it. This is just what happened when Mannum got over the very highly fancied Murray Bridge Imperials last Saturday. It was a tumultuous week for the Mannum Football Club, its Vice-President Mr Allan Carter having passed away during the week. I extend my sympathies to his family and the club. The coach (Mr Peter Milsom) of the Mannum Roos said:

It had been a hard week in the lead-up. Critics were a bit hard on us and we lost our Vice-President, who died on Thursday night. It provided more incentive to win. They've always been the bridesmaid so it wasn't too hard to get them fired up.

When one talks about bridesmaids, one realises that this team definitely qualified. Since 1990 the team has competed in six grand finals, and this is its first trophy. Coupled with this (and no pun intended), the Mannum A grade netball club received its first A grade premiership in 21 years—something that the football team drew on. I am sure that the cheers have flowed continuously in the town of Mannum since last Saturday night. I congratulate the players, the coach, the club and the supporters. I hope that the club has another great year next year.

While on sport, I would like to wish the best of luck to all those teams in my electorate that are still competing for the ultimate prize. I would particularly like to wish the best of

luck to Angaston in the Barossa and Light League, and also to Kapunda in the B grade. I would also like to wish the Kapunda A grade netball girls all the best. While I am talking sport, the house knows where my allegiances will be this weekend at the big one—the AFL preliminary final. I just wish it was the grand final! It will be the grand final! I am sure that I join all South Australians, and most of the members in this house, in wishing Port Power all the best in its battle with Collingwood at the MCG on Saturday.

I am confident that they will win. This will be a great match. I extend my best wishes to acting captain Warren Tredrea, Mark Williams and the team. Your loyal supporters and, indeed, the majority of South Australians are with you, even though they would not admit it: after all, they are South Australians and, surely—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** I know that they would support any South Australian team to beat the pride of Victoria which, of course, is Collingwood. To take on Collingwood at the MCG is a herculean task. I know that all South Australians support Mark Williams, Warren Tredrea and the team. Their loyal supporters and, indeed, the majority of South Australians are with you and you deserve to go top, top, top. Gavin Wanganeen had a fabulous season, and I wish him all the best for the Brownlow.

### BUSHFIRES

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** It is apparent to all of us that, once again, we are rapidly approaching the so-called bushfire season.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** Yes, the member for Schubert focuses on the football season; I am focusing on the bushfire season. We all know that fire and lightning strikes are a natural part of the Australian landscape. We know, too, that south-eastern Australia is one of the most fire-prone areas in the world. We know from research that there is an average of 15 000 fires in Australia every year, burning something like 23 000 square kilometres of forest, grass crops and townships, yet Australians really have not come to terms with fire or understood it as part of a natural cycle.

Research indicates that 80 per cent of fires are deliberately or accidentally lit as opposed to natural causes, such as lightning. The causes include fuel reduction burns, sparks from power lines and vehicles, unattended camp fires, discarded cigarettes and arson. We know that the worst fires are associated with extreme weather conditions, a succession of dry years, seasonal conditions where temperatures reach extreme levels of around 40° celsius and dry, gusting winds from the north. Hazard reduction burning and firebreaks can do little to prevent their spread.

Last year was Australia's hottest year on record. Unusually high temperatures, low rainfall and high evaporation combined to make it a freak fire season—the worst in 30 years. What we have now is a cry from a lot of people for fuel reduction burns, or what are sometimes called cool burns. I support their use in appropriate circumstances, but we need to remember that hazard reduction burning must be used strategically and selectively for the protection of life, property and biodiversity. It requires careful planning and strategic targeting to protect life and property while sustaining the environment.

Usually it needs to be undertaken in a mosaic pattern to slow bushfires. Position, frequency and timing are crucial

elements to be considered in hazard reduction burning. Frequent hazard reduction burning should not be confused with indigenous fire stick farming. Indigenous fire stick farming was usually very precise and created a mosaic in the landscape. It had a number of objectives, including improved hunting, root growth promotion, fruit production and sacred site protection. Broad acre burning off is the converse of fire stick farming and is not sustainable. Too frequent fires and too extensive fires change the ecology, reduce diversity and encourage fire friendly plants to dominate plant communities.

Even for those plants that need fire to germinate, such as wattles and banksias, too frequent fires can prevent plants establishing. Extensive burning off of bushland areas has been a feature of the past 200 years in Australia, but it has not prevented wild fires every 10 years or so, including horrendous fires in 1939-1940, 1952, 1957, 1968, 1977-78, 1983, 1988, 1994, last year and this year.

We need to remember that, contrary to popular opinion, the majority of fires do not start inside national parks and conservation areas: they start outside and burn into them, in most cases. A study done in New South Wales showed that an overwhelming majority of the fires in national parks between 1974 and 1984 burnt into them, not the other way round. So, much of the talk about parks being locked up is just not correct. The reality is that national parks and other conservation areas suffer as a result of negligence or arson on the part of people mishandling or misusing fire. Those statistics are basically replicated here in South Australia.

In the Adelaide Hills, where people are thinking more and more about the bushfire season, we need to remember that only 16 per cent of native vegetation is left, much of that compromised through weeds, feral plants, phytophthora etc. In using cool burning or fuel reduction burning we must be mindful of the impact on the environment. We need better research but we also need the application of appropriate cool burning. We still have a way to go. South Australia has done very little research in this regard and will be relying on research done in Western Australia and Victoria, but we should avoid the catchcry of cool burning without it being based on a strategic and research basis.

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### STATUTES AMENDMENT AND REPEAL (STARR-BOWKETT SOCIETIES) BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

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

That this bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this bill is to repeal the Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1975, and to amend the Fair Trading Act 1987. A 2001 bill was introduced by the previous government but had not passed both houses before it lapsed as a result of the general election being called. The 2003 bill, in the same terms as the lapsed bill, was introduced on 26 June 2003 but lapsed when parliament was prorogued and so requires reintroduction. I seek leave to have the balance of the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

A Starr-Bowkett society is a type of building society that causes or permits applicants for loans to ballot for precedence, or in any way

makes the granting of a loan dependent upon any chance or lot. The *Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1975* currently prohibits this activity except in relation to a Starr-Bowkett society that was registered under the previous Act. The Act also prohibits trading or carrying on business as a society unless the person or body is registered under the Act.

Following the deregistration of the last Starr-Bowkett society, no further regulation is necessary except in respect of any possible offences and to prohibit trading or carrying on business as a Starr-Bowkett society. For this reason, it is proposed to repeal the *Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1975* and amend the *Fair Trading Act 1987*.

The amendment to the *Fair Trading Act 1987* will prohibit anyone trading or carrying on business as a Starr-Bowkett society in South Australia, including balloting for loans. The maximum penalty for contravention of the prohibition is \$5 000.

A prohibition is considered necessary for the protection of consumers, even though the risks are considered to be slight because—

- the last borrowers in a Starr-Bowkett society are disadvantaged because of waiting for a loan to be advanced and it is theoretically possible that a person may never obtain a loan due to the element of chance; and
- there is a potential for mismanagement of the balloting process to the disadvantage of members of a society.

Without a prohibition, there would be a regulatory gap where a person or body of persons, whether incorporated or not, could trade or carry on business as a Starr-Bowkett society. A prohibition is proposed to be included in the *Fair Trading Act 1987* to provide certainty. There would be a net public benefit by imposing a restriction on competition. However, the costs of the restriction would be low because of open access to housing loans.

New South Wales is the only jurisdiction that provides for the regulation of Starr-Bowkett societies with no prohibition on balloting for loans. The proposed Bill provides that an interstate Starr-Bowkett society will not contravene this prohibition if it conducts business with a member of the society in South Australia, provided the person became a member of the society before the member commenced to reside in South Australia.

Provisions that permit investigations and proceedings for any offences under the repealed Act are saved by the operation of section 16 of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1915*. The time limit will be 2 years, as applies under the Act being repealed.

The provisions of the *Fair Trading Act 1987* will permit investigations and proceedings for any offences of the prohibition to be inserted into that Act.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

Clause 1: *Short title*

Clause 2: *Amendment provisions*

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of Fair Trading Act 1987

Clause 3: *Insertion of Part 8A*

This clause inserts a new Part in the *Fair Trading Act 1987* that relates to Starr-Bowkett Societies and the activity of balloting for loans. The new provisions prohibit the trading or the carrying on of a business as a Starr-Bowkett society or using the name "Starr-Bowkett" (that is, a person or body that causes loan applicants to ballot for a loan, or makes the granting of a loan dependent on chance). There is an exception for an interstate Starr-Bowkett society, which may continue to do business with a member in South Australia if the member joined the society before moving to live in this State.

Part 3—Repeal of Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1975

Clause 4: *Repeal of Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1975*

This clause repeals the *Starr-Bowkett Societies Act 1975*.

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

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

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

(Continued from page 134.)

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel):** Before lunch I was quoting from an article from last Saturday's *Advertiser*,

written by Greg Kelton, the well-known political journalist. The article continues:

There has been no sign of any detailed economic strategic plan from the government apart from the proposals outlined by the Economic Development Board. . . No moves to try to create a completely new economic and industrial base to act as a springboard in the future—for the bad times as well as the good. . . What we need now is some indication from the government of where the economy is headed, how it will be managed and what new industry sectors it is going to target and nurture. It's all well and good to talk about ending corporate welfare and sign pacts with other states not to try to outbid each other on industries. We all know that that pact will go out the window as soon as any state government gets a sniff of a chance to get an industry which can create thousands of jobs—even more so when an economic downturn could be on the horizon.

I now refer to an article in the *Flinders Journal* of August, written by Dr Haydon Manning, a senior lecturer—

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** And a Woodville West Torrens supporter!

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY:** Very good. He is a senior lecturer in the School of Politics and International Studies at that university. The article is entitled 'Rann and Labor yet to make a mark' and states:

If the first year has allowed Labor to put its affairs in order, there has been little sign of a policy agenda, and the government has left itself little room to manoeuvre, Dr Manning said.

'With a fiscal policy so dogmatically determined to please the credit rating agencies, we find a government—notwithstanding the Premier's early claim to be a kindred spirit of Don Dunstan—that is conservative and cautious. Even smart initiatives such as the Economic Development Board seem compromised when it urges tough policy making such as taking on the public sector unions so as to free up capital for government economic policy.'

Dr Manning said it was telling that beyond the premier, treasurer, and environment minister, the front bench is virtually unknown.

Although that has changed in the last few weeks, obviously, with the Atkinson Ashbourne affair. The article continues:

'One would have thought by now we would have had a strong sense of the work, the interests and the policies of ministers,' he said. 'All we know at this stage is that it is a prudent government and a conservative government, and that it pursues populist issues with real fervour. They have two years left to show some substance.'

Instead of increased investment in infrastructure, we have seen funded upgrades of hospitals scheduled by the former (Liberal) government postponed, road funding cut by millions and maintenance work left undone, particularly in the regions and the Outback, and much needed upgrades of public schools around the state put on hold. I will expand on that a little later, if time permits.

This government is nearing mid term, and we have not seen any semblance of new ideas or any real policy direction. All we have experienced is the relaunching of former Liberal government initiatives, and a most recent example of that is the Premier's trying to take all the kudos and credit for the announcement of the redevelopment of the Adelaide Airport. He is today in the Northern Territory at the completion of the southern section of the Adelaide-Darwin railway line. I know my colleagues and I certainly trust that this government will work tirelessly to further develop the export trade to fully utilise this vital infrastructure link to our international markets.

The hallmarks and highlights of this Rann government to date are those of one staggering or lurching from crisis to crisis. It is struggling with the effective and efficient administration of this state. We have seen Family and Youth Services being underfunded and understaffed; the funding crisis faced by the Cora Barclay Centre (and what a fiasco that was); the reduction in resources for schools; the resignation and

reinstatement of the Attorney-General; the misleading of parliament by environment Minister John Hill; the handling of the Nemer case; the Glenelg flooding issue, which is an important issue for my colleague the member for Morphett; the bus strike; and general union unrest. These are just a few examples of Labor's poor handling of the important matters that affect all South Australia.

I now turn to some important issues that relate to the electorate of Kavel, which I have the privilege of representing in this place. I have spoken about this issue in the house previously. I note the member for Fisher's comments in the grievance debates earlier. I refer to the bushfire risk in the Adelaide Hills. Measures that are critical in reducing the risk of fires in our region need to be addressed. I mention a recent article in our local Adelaide Hills newspaper, *The Courier*, a highly respected paper and duly recognised for its performance, having won numerous awards for its work in the media. I refer to an article dated Wednesday 10 September, only a week or so ago. Headed, 'Fuel reduction: a token effort,' it states:

Less than one per cent of Hills parks and reserves will be burnt off to reduce the increasing level of fire fuel and lower the bushfire risk in summer.

The Department for Environment and Heritage has planned to burn less than 40ha of the 12 000ha of Hills parks throughout the next few months.

The small scale of the burn-offs has left some members of the CFS bemused, with at least one describing it as a 'token effort' that will have 'limited benefit'.

The State Government has allocated \$10m over the next four years for fire hazard reduction—

and that has been confirmed in a question that I asked of the Minister for Emergency Services—

in national parks and has created 31 new full-time jobs including 20 bushfire prevention officers, a fire ecologist, a fire research officer, a fire management officer, a project officer, a training officer and six regional fire management officers.

With all those extra resources put into the initiatives, what do we see? We see 40 hectares—about 100 acres in the old measurements. The article goes on to say:

But local firefighters believe more of the parks should be burnt to give people a more realistic level of safety.

I totally concur with those comments. As I said, I have asked a question of the Minister for Emergency Services concerning this vitally important issue, the latest being on 23 May this year. I will just go over that. The question I asked was:

Can the Minister for Emergency Services outline to the house the detail of the program in place for cold burning in parks and other government owned land, particularly in the Adelaide Hills?

I will paraphrase the minister's response on that day, as follows:

... it is a serious question. It is a matter that I would have thought people on that side of the house accept as something to which I have been committed, and I have made many public comments in support of it. I will treat this question seriously, and I will ask the Country Fire Service, which works in conjunction with Environment and Heritage on this, to give the honourable member as much detail as the seriousness of the question deserves.

That is fair enough. To the credit of the minister and that of his office, only a few days later, on 29 May, I received a response. The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon. Patrick Conlon, in a more detailed response to my question, said:

On the 23rd of May the Premier announced a \$10m increase in the Department for Environment and Heritage's Budget over the next four years.

That was obviously confirmed in *The Courier* article from which I quoted. Further, the minister stated:

This increase will enable DEH to plan and implement fire management programs in parks across the state through partnerships developed with the Country Fire Service and local communities and to ensure the protection of life and property and the maintenance of biodiversity values.

DEH will recruit key staff to improve the agency's capacity to plan and implement sustainable fire management programs and develop strong links with the district bushfire planning process. This partnership will identify areas for fuel reduction strategies and upgrading of the fire trail networks and Parks and Reserves and increase the capacity to implement on ground prevention, protection and suppression works in strategic locations.

Training and equipping of staff will be enhanced to improve the capacity within DEH to safely deliver on ground fuel reduction programs and effectively suppress bushfires. Coordination of research and monitoring will be improved through recruitment of specialist staff and use of information learned through recent fires in the eastern states and Canberra and input into the bushfire CRC.

DEH fire management programs will be implemented in close consultation with the CFS to ensure that the staff and volunteers within the CFS are able to assist in the planning and implementation of on-ground activities and share in the knowledge developed through a proactive fuel reduction program.

I certainly appreciated that more detailed response from the minister. However, I hardly regard burning off 100 acres as a proactive fuel reduction program. Nevertheless, I sincerely believe it is essential that a far greater area in this program of mosaic cold burning in our parks and public reserves takes place. The Minister for Emergency Services needs to take real control of this now.

Coupled with this, I also implore all those who live in the Adelaide Hills, in the most beautiful part of our state, to start planning and working on their own individual fire safety strategies. This is the time to start that work, not in the middle of February, when we see a hot northerly wind blowing, when the countryside is tinderbox dry and when temperatures are in the high 30s. It is too late then. It is in the spring that we all must work our own fire safety strategy plans. We have seen, and some of us in this place have personally experienced, the ravages of fire, particularly 20 years ago on Ash Wednesday. It is critically important that all residents in the Hills prepare for fire because it will come again, and, as I said, we all certainly need to be prepared.

I would like to continue my remarks regarding other matters of importance in Kavel and the Adelaide Hills region in general. During the recess, I attended a meeting convened by the Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board, the Adelaide Hills Council and the Mount Barker council, and those attending were presented with the results of some very good work done by those three organisations. In particular, the CEO of the District Council of Mount Barker, Mr Andrew Stuart, the CEO of the Adelaide Hills Council, Mr Peter Peppin, and the CEO of the Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board, Mr Michael Edgecombe, and their respective staff have prepared a report. The report is a strategy for the regional and economic development for the whole Hills region.

It is quite a comprehensive document and, unfortunately, time does not necessarily allow me to go into considerable detail. I believe that it is vitally important to further enhance our Hills regional identity and to strengthen the Adelaide Hills so that it stands out as a region. It is obviously a unique region within our state and our country and it certainly deserves its own identity. I do not want it to be a satellite suburb of the greater Adelaide region: the area is too important to become that. This document, which was

prepared by those three organisations, looks at the plan, the vision and the strategy for the future and the continuing development of our magnificent Adelaide Hills region. I congratulate and commend those officers of the Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board, the Adelaide Hills Council and the Mount Barker council for their initiative and foresight in preparing this strategy and, when the opportunity presents itself, I will certainly expand on that strategy in the house.

In conclusion, coming back to the earlier points I made, this government has shown this state nothing—no vision, no plans and no strategy to progress our economy and, in turn, improving the lives of all South Australians. Empty political rhetoric is all we get—political spin, no substance. Come March 2006, we will see this government swept from office.

**Mrs GERAGHTY** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett):** I rise to talk about a few issues happening in the electorate of Morphett in the few minutes that I have available to me. It gives me a lot of pleasure to speak about these issues. Today, I have been assured by the Minister for Education and Children's Services that the trip to China by the choir from Brighton Secondary School will go ahead. It will be fully funded by the state government and there will be no need for the parents of Brighton Secondary School students to fundraise or for the governing council of Brighton Secondary School to worry about having to find funding for temporary relief teachers.

I am pleased to have been informed by the minister that the teacher who was scheduled to go with the choir to China on the earlier trip this year, which was aborted, has since been transferred to another school and will not be going because they are dedicated to serving their current school and, more importantly, the students in that current school who are undertaking matriculation exams. Those students are going through a very crucial time in their lives. It is very important that they receive all the support they can get, and I know the particular teacher is a very dedicated teacher. The minister also pointed out in her statement that 12 other teachers from Brighton Secondary School have volunteered to go on the trip to China. I can say that it will be a very difficult task for the governing council and the principal of Brighton Secondary School to decide who will go.

I know from my own experience as a member of the governing council that that school is a fantastic school. The teachers are very dedicated; they apply themselves above and beyond the call of duty. I wish the choir well in its trip to China. I know they will thoroughly enjoy themselves and they will display the talents not only of Brighton Secondary School but also the young people of this state, and we have a lot to be proud of in the young people of this state. I am not only proud of the choir of Brighton Secondary School but the jazz band, the big band and also the team performing in the rock eisteddfod. The young students are amongst the most talented that I have ever come across in the musical area. The only equivalent I can think of at this stage is the students

from Immanuel College. I had the pleasure of attending their music extravaganza at the town hall last Friday night.

The performance was outstanding, particularly from such young students. A young fellow, I forget his name, I think it was Nigel, was playing the drums. He is a year 9 student. I was reliably informed by the principal Kevin Richardson that he is playing at fourth year university music level. Students from Immanuel College have gone on to great things in the area of music, as have many students from Brighton Secondary School.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** While I appreciate the member for Schubert's enthusiasm for Port Power this weekend, and I wish them well, I wish I could share his enthusiasm in supporting the Glenelg Football Club. Unfortunately they have not reached the heights that Port Power has this year, but we will next year, I have great hope. I will speak about them at some other time in this place because that is another great example of the dedication and perseverance of young South Australians. Brighton Secondary School also has another concern, that is, the state volleyball centre. I have raised this matter on a number of occasions in this place. It looked as though we were making progress but now we have taken one step back. The state volleyball centre was first mooted by the former Liberal government, funding was in place, the early planning was done and it was not only going to be a national facility but a first-class facility.

The facility will enable the volleyball students of Brighton Secondary School to compete not only at the excellent levels they are now but also at national levels. I should say that they are already winning at national levels without a fantastic facility such as the one that should be there. There have been a number of hiccups with funding. A private investor has failed to satisfy all the criteria required in relation to its particular part of the funding. The local council, the state government and Brighton Secondary School have put up their money, and the school may even be able to provide more money to allow this centre to go ahead with this state government's cooperation. The Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing is well aware of the problem. Unfortunately, he has handballed the problem to a bureaucrat who has handled this matter previously.

We have been in contact with them but it just seems to go nowhere. It cannot be allowed to not go anywhere. This is a centre which is ready to go, the funding is almost there, and with a little bit of help and backing from the minister and his department it will go ahead. Not only will the students of Brighton Secondary School and other high school students benefit from this centre but the whole state will benefit.

Another great thing is happening. It is a nice thing to say about the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing that he will be coming down to the Bay on Sunday, along with me and thousands of other people, for the City to Bay Fun Run. He and my son Lachlan will be running in it. Lachlan has been training and tells me he will run it in about 55 minutes. I think the record for the 12 kilometres is about 38 minutes. My wife, my daughter and I will be walking. Last year we did it in one hour and 40 minutes. My poor old knees cannot stand the jogging any more, but I will certainly be with the rest of the people enjoying themselves with family, friends and sometimes pets. I should put in a bit of a plug for those taking their dogs. Keep them on a lead; make sure that they do not walk on the bitumen all the time and wear out their pads. You have lovely sneakers on your feet, so think of their feet on the way down. But join the thousands of people,

including the Premier, the minister for sport and recreation, and I do not know how many other members of this place, but certainly I will be there on Sunday. It will be 23 degrees and perfect weather for the City-Bay Fun Run. Come and enjoy not only the walk to the Bay—a pleasant 12 kilometre walk—but also the great day of entertainment that is put on at the Bay afterwards. It never stops at the Bay. There are 350 events a year. The Glenelg Jazz Festival is coming up shortly, when people will come from all over Australia and all over the world.

**Ms Thompson:** Name the 350!

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I would love to name all 350 in one day. As fast as I speak in this place, I will get in the 350. Next weekend is the Bay to Birdwood Classic. It goes from the electorate of Morphett to the electorate of my good friend the member for Kavel.

**Mr Venning:** I am a judge.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** And what better judge could we have than the member for Schubert? We should call this the Morphett to Kavel Classic, not the Bay to Birdwood Classic. Hundreds of classic cars will take part. This year it is the classic cars, last year it was the veteran and vintage cars and next year we will have the veteran and vintage cars. These cars are lovingly restored by their owners and, with judges of the calibre of the member for Schubert, I am sure that the winners will be well rewarded.

Last weekend, we had millions of dollars—and I mean millions of dollars—worth of Ferraris at the Bay. We even had the latest model, which costs about \$500 000; it is a racing car. I think there were 60 or 70 Ferraris, and 99 percent of them were Ferrari red—and what else would you expect? It is one of the many events we have involving cars. The Bay to Birdwood Classic is on the 28th and I encourage people to come to the Bay, line the roads and watch what is going on.

**Mr Meier:** 28th of what?

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** 28 September, Sunday week, the day after the Grand Final when Port rolls somebody else, but Port will be there. I have another couple of plugs to mention. The Somerton Park Rotary Club and the St Leonard's Primary School parents will be putting on barbeques in the morning to feed the thousands who come to the Bay to Birdwood Classic.

This morning I had the pleasure of hosting the British Consul-General from Melbourne in this place, Tony Sprake. Mr Sprake was in town for a little while and the South Australian representative Mr Vic Warrington asked if I would show him through the house before we went to a delightful dinner. Members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association are coming to South Australia on 28 September, and perhaps they will come to the Bay to Birdwood Classic. The Right Hon. Gavin Strang, Mr Peter Bottomley MP, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Mr Dennis Murphy MP, Mr Peter Viggers MP, Mrs Betty Williams MP and Mrs Helen Haywood (secretary of the delegation) will visit Adelaide on 28 September. I wish them well. I hope we can host their visit with all the enthusiasm, charm and manners that are usual for South Australians. It is a fantastic place to live and we are very proud of it. I hope they will be as impressed with this place as are we.

**The SPEAKER:** I assure the honourable member and all other members of the house that I have applied my best attention to their visit, and it will be well hosted. They will enjoy themselves; it is compulsory.

Motion carried.

At 4.25 p.m. the house adjourned until Monday 22 September at 2 p.m.



## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 15 August 2003

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### CEDUNA DISTRICT COUNCIL

84. **Ms CHAPMAN:** Why is the Ceduna District Council expected to contribute towards the cost of a proposed community library to be located on a school ground, what is the general policy regarding Councils contributing towards establishing or redeveloping community libraries on school grounds and how much have they contributed in the past?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Ceduna Area School has accommodated a school community library service since July 1982. The building that was originally established as the library is now planned to be replaced as an element of the school redevelopment project that was announced in the 2002-03 Capital Works Program. Because new facilities are planned, the District Council has been asked to contribute towards the cost of replacing the library under the School Community Libraries Policy that was negotiated in July 2001.

The recommendations of a report entitled "School Community Libraries in South Australia—Funding and Governance" were approved in 2001 by the Libraries Boards of SA and the Chief Executive, DECS. The Agreement confirmed the financial responsibilities of Local Government Agencies with respect to School Community Libraries (and all future Joint Use Library Services). Local Government's contributions to major upgrading, refurbishment or renovation of School Community Library buildings and facilities are to be based on a minimum proportion of 30 per cent of the total cost of the project, but can be increased if agreed by the Council.

Existing DECS policies relating to the provision of building space, furniture, equipment and materials, and staffing entitlements for school libraries continue to apply to schools which operate School Community Libraries. Under school asset management plan capacity calculations the floor area of a school community library will be based on the school's 'standard' area entitlement (calculated from student enrolments) plus 30 per cent for community use. School Community Libraries have existed in SA since 1977, but records in respect of the contribution made by local Councils towards their initial establishment are not recoverable. During the early establishment period (1977 to 1986, when the majority of School Community Libraries were created) a capital grant scheme operated with the State Libraries Board providing a matching grant against the Council's contribution, which was, therefore approximately 25 per cent of the cost to establish the school community library. The most recent new Joint Use library (at Seaford 6 to 12 School) involved the City of Onkaparinga contributing one half of the establishment cost of the library service (the approximate contribution was \$1.2 million in 1997).

#### SCHOOLS, VICTOR HARBOR PRIMARY

86. **Ms CHAPMAN:** When will the proposed building work on the Victor Harbor Primary School commence and how much is budgeted towards this work in 2003-04?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The tender for the construction work at Victor Harbor Primary School has been let.

On site construction is expected to commence in August 2003 with completion scheduled by the end of February 2004.

It is expected that \$1.270 million will be expended during 2003-04.

#### COMPUTER RECYCLING SCHEME

88. **Ms CHAPMAN:** How much funding is allocated towards the computer recycling scheme in 2003-04, what percentage of surplus government computers are managed through this scheme, how many computers were recycled in 2002-03 and will there be any provision for any increase in technical and management support to this service?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The Computer Recycling Scheme provides the schools sector with a low cost option to obtain Information Technology hardware to help fast track IT learning technologies. It is the South Australian chapter of the Computer Technologies For Schools Project and also the storage and distribution centre for the Smart State PC Donation Program.

Computer Recycling Scheme revenue is raised from schools (State, Independent and Catholic) that pay a re-commissioning fee for the computers.

The percentage of surplus Government computers managed through the scheme is unknown, however the following agencies provided the Computer Recycling Scheme with surplus computers in 2002-03:

- DECS & DFEEST Corporate
- SA TAFE Institutes
- Defence Force (SA bases)
- Federal Government agencies

Approximately 95 per cent of all Smart State PC Donation Program computers are from various State Government Departments.

The Computer Recycling Scheme has recycled approximately 3900 complete computer units plus a large number of additional monitors, printers and other computer peripherals and components in 2002-03.

#### SCHOOLS, GEORGETOWN PRIMARY

89. **Ms CHAPMAN:** When will construction of the new administration and staff room facilities at the Georgetown Primary School commence?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** A feasibility study was undertaken in late 2001 early 2002 to relocate and upgrade the administration area of Georgetown Primary School.

The feasibility study identified that the estimated cost of the administration upgrade (which included the provision of an additional classroom and extension to the library/resource centre) exceeded available funds. An alternate proposal was developed in association with site representatives, which involved provision of a transportable dual classroom in lieu of constructing an extension to an existing building.

A building was demolished and the site prepared for the delivery of the classrooms in July 2003. An electrical upgrade costing \$74 170 is in progress and it is anticipated (weather permitting) that the classrooms will be operational before the end of Term 3.

The provision of the additional classrooms will enable the site to reorganise and make minor alterations to the existing administration area to meet their requirements.

The school's 2003 Asset Funding of \$147 000 will be used for their hardplay area. This funding is a significant increase over the school's January 2002 asset funding allocation of \$1 9870. It is proposed to develop a cost estimate for the minor alterations to the administration concurrently with the approved hardplay project to determine whether some asset funding can be redirected.

#### SCHOOL BUSES

90. **Ms CHAPMAN:** Are Departmental bus services available to all Area Schools and if not, why not and are they available for specific curriculum purposes and excursions?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The intent of the school transport policy is to provide transport assistance to all students who are disadvantaged by distance, and who reside 5 kilometres or more from the nearest government school, whether it be Area School, Primary School or Secondary School.

The criteria specified in the School Transport Policy is that a school bus will be provided and maintained where there are a minimum of 10 eligible school age student travellers.

There are many schools throughout the State, including Area Schools, which manage without access to DECS owned school buses, relying on services provided by school bus contractors for their daily transport needs and excursions. Further to this, there are also many schools around the State who choose to use contract services for excursions rather than utilise DECS school buses which are located at the school.

Where available, DECS owned buses may be hired by pre-schools and schools for school excursions. However, the provision of transport for curriculum purposes is a school responsibility and schools may choose the most appropriate method of transport available to them.

It is DECS policy to give private operators an open and fair opportunity to do business with Government. When planning school excursion transport, pre-schools and schools are encouraged to do business with local operators, and the School Transport Policy states that they must seek quotations from private operators and compare the costs and benefits of all options before choosing to use a DECS bus.

If schools decide to use a department owned and operated bus, there are certain expectations concerning its use, including:

- Compliance with Government policy which requires appropriate departmental

- approval to use Government vehicles outside South Australia;

- The use of the bus must not interfere with the daily conveyance of students to and from school, unless the principal and chairperson of the school council are satisfied that satisfactory transport arrangements are made for the children who would normally use the bus which has been taken on the excursion. These arrangements must not include the diversion of another bus in the area or the hire of another bus unless at the cost of the school or preschool;

- An approved driver is in charge of the bus and compliance by the driver with the Commercial Motor Vehicles (Hours of Driving) Act, 1973;

- Principals or directors of departmental preschool facilities must ensure that the roads to be used on excursions are all weather and suitable for use by buses and that the driver has had recent experience driving a bus in the type of terrain to be covered by the excursion. Commonsense must be exercised by the principal or director in the selection of the location of the excursion, and hazardous areas should be avoided.

Finally, the use of buses is not restricted to the school to which the bus is allocated.

#### TEACHERS, SPECIAL EDUCATION

91. **Ms CHAPMAN:** How do schools in rural and remote areas access special education teachers and what is the average assessment time of special education students at these schools?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Special educators are available to all children attending DECS pre-schools. Special educators are accessed by a pre-school director making a referral to Support Services allocated to the referring site. Special educators plan a schedule each term to visit all pre-school sites. Consultation with the special educator by phone is freely available for site staff. The special educator arranges for additional support staff (early childhood workers or teachers) within the pre-school (Pre-school Support Program-PSP). PSP staff are recruited from the local area and supported by the pre.- school director, visiting special educator and other visiting professionals.

Special education teacher time is allocated to schools having the greatest need as part of the annual DECS global budget process. Schools may decide to appoint a special education teacher or a School Services Officer with that funding.

Disability Coordinators with special education qualifications are available to students identified as having a disability. Disability Coordinators are accessed by the Principal making a referral to Support Services after the student has been verified as a student with a disability.

I am advised that the average assessment time by pre-school special educators is two to eight weeks.

Students in special education may be assessed by speech pathologists or guidance officers in rural and remote areas.

For new non- priority requests for guidance assessment, the wait may be one term or more and is dependent on the distance to the school and the time between the referral and the next planned school visit. Priority requests are usually responded to within 2 weeks.

Rural and remote speech pathology assessments are undertaken within one school term (including Anangu schools). Some students wait longer because the site negotiates that they are a lower priority than other students, they are absent during the speech pathologist visit or because the frequency between visits to a particular site is longer.

Regarding assessment times by country guidance officers, this will normally involve testing, informal measures, class room observation, file and other record review, parent, school leader and teacher interviews and feedback, report writing and travel time which can mean the process takes 2-3 working days.

#### SCHOOLS, BALAKLAVA HIGH

92. **Ms CHAPMAN:** When will the proposed redevelopment of the Balaklava High School commence?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** A feasibility study identifying a possible scope of works was commissioned by the Department.

The feasibility study will be considered for possible inclusion on a future capital program.

#### EDUCATION ALLOWANCE

93. **Ms CHAPMAN:** When will the amount of the State Education Allowance be reviewed and will advice be included with the application form rather than a separate attachment?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The State Education Allowance is a source of state government funding that is designed to assist with ancillary board and travel costs for families living in isolated areas of the state and where their children are required to live away from home to attend secondary schooling.

This assistance is available to families who qualify for Assistance for Isolated Children boarding allowance that is payable by Centrelink on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.

The State Education Allowance rate has been periodically renewed and is currently \$1230 per annum.

There is no provision in the Department of Education and Children's Services budget to increase the State Education Allowance beyond existing levels at this stage.

However, the rate of \$1230 per annum is considered favourable compared with rates paid in other states:

e.g. Western Australia \$695 per annum  
Queensland \$1028 per annum  
Tasmania \$917 per annum

From 2004 onwards, it has been agreed that Centrelink will forward the State Education Allowance application forms to eligible families as an enclosure to the Commonwealth Allowance Notice of Approval.

#### SCHOOL CARD

96. **Ms CHAPMAN:** How will efficiencies be achieved in verifying eligibility and processing of School Cards in 2003-04.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The verification of eligibility and processing of School Card has been a headache for schools for many years. Several improvements have been implemented during 2003.

The Government has ensured that the relationship between Centrelink and DECS has improved, to achieve, not only greater efficiencies, but also enhanced effectiveness. The outcome has been that Centrelink now provides DECS with an excellent customer service. The audit checks are completed well within specified timelines, additional information requested by School Card officers is attended to effectively, and ongoing support provided.

As a result of the Government initiatives officers from the School Card section have been able to inform both schools and parents of the outcome of their application and Centrelink audit in a significantly more timely fashion. Families are now being informed of the progress of their application thus reducing misunderstandings and stress.

In a significant change to the 2002 process, it is now the Department's School Card section that handles the administrative burden of notifying parents of Centrelink audit outcomes.

In order to improve communication between agency and families further, the Government has introduced an updated telephone system that allows calls to be responded to more quickly and with the capacity that the caller can leave messages after hours and receive a call back within one working day.

Further business improvements are being investigated for the 2004 School Card Scheme.

#### WORKCOVER

97. **Ms CHAPMAN:** Has there been any increase in Departmental WorkCover claims made between 2001-02 and 2002-03 and if so, what are the details, and has there been any change to the WorkCover rating and, if so, why?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** In 2001-02 there were 1 180 new workers compensation claims for DECS employees. In 2002-03 there were 1,198 new claims, an increase of 1.5 per cent.

There has been no change to the WorkCover rating.

We have improved procedures in a number of areas:

- All managers are trained in Occupation Health and Safety

- procedures;
- A DECS Psychological Health Action Plan has been developed and managers have been trained in Psychological health procedures;
- Manual handling procedures have been developed and training provided to sites;
- Auditing of all sites has taken place, identifying sites that require more assistance and providing that assistance;
- Crisis Management policy and procedures have been developed and a web site for crisis management is near completion.

#### **SCHOOLS, FUNDING**

98. **Ms CHAPMAN:** What funding will be made available to the proposed works at the Ascot Park Primary School and the Kilparrin/Townsend School in 2003-04, including details of any joint or common funding arrangements?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** The Kilparrin and Townsend House facilities will be relocated and re established onto the current Ascot Park Primary School site. It is planned to accomplish this through the provision of new accommodation and the partial upgrading of the existing facilities at Ascot Park. The end result will contain unique as well as joint use/accessible facilities.

The total funding currently scheduled for expenditure during 2003-04 is \$0.750 million with \$0.5 million allocated against the Kilparrin/Townsend House facilities.