

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 23 October 2003

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

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The **SPEAKER:** There are two matters the chair must bring to the attention of the house. In the first instance the chair acknowledges the presence of two honourable members from a sister parliament in New South Wales: the Hon. Noreen Hay, member for Wollongong, and Marianne Saliba, the member for Illawarra, who are here investigating the framework through which social policy development can occur and having an interest in the Constitutional Convention and the reforms that that may introduce and how that process is proceeding.

PARLIAMENT, REPORTING

The **SPEAKER:** In addition, I have a letter which I received, belatedly I regret to have to tell the house (I make that apology to the house). The chair acknowledges receipt of the letter from the ABC, unreservedly apologising for the breach of the provisions and arrangements by which members of the press are admitted to the parliament. The chair points out to the house that, if we all set about establishing the framework through which a review of the access provided to the parliament can be undertaken in a more democratic fashion, it can involve formally in that process representatives of the press in the same way that sister parliaments within the federation have otherwise also done it.

ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S GATHERING

Mr **BRINDAL (Unley):** I move:

That this house notes the statement on the Aboriginal Women's Gathering made by the Minister for the Status of Women on 25 September 2003.

At the outset, I acknowledge the commitment (my notes say 'and her wisdom', but I will not necessarily say that) of the Minister for the Status of Women for facilitating the Aboriginal women's gathering at Spear Creek and encouraging their valued contribution to increasing the status of Aboriginal women and their families. This parliament should note almost a shift in the paradigm, and in some senses it raises a certain hypocrisy in our own thinking. I am saying this in relation not to Aboriginal women but to multiculturalism generally.

Sir, you would be well aware that at the time of colonisation by Europeans, many of the traditional Aboriginal groupings lived a very male-dominated existence. The women and men in many ways were separated and the men as the hunters dominated in large sections of the community. We have had 150 to 200 years of the two cultures living alongside each other. Sometimes it has been a matter of regret for us all—not in harmony and not to the benefit at all of our indigenous communities. Having said that, we are now in a position, after 200 years of two cultures trying to co-exist, to analyse the consequences. By any analysis, the consequences for the indigenous people of this nation have been an absolute disaster. In relation to their health, education, employment

opportunities and the incidence of Aboriginals in prison, by any measure at all our culture has severely damaged theirs.

It is very interesting—and this is the point I come to in acknowledging the minister's statement—that in a culture that was largely male-dominated there now appears to be more evidence that women are assuming a much stronger role. I think that that is to be applauded. The culture as it exists, placed in the fabric in which it currently exists, clearly has not worked and survived. Despite our best efforts, which could sometimes be described as puerile—and I do not make that as a Labor-Liberal comment but, rather, as a comment on our society's ability to have affected these things; and the minister would know better than I—the life expectancy of Aboriginals is still under 50, generally speaking.

It is appalling, in a nation where the life expectancy for any person in this chamber is fast approaching 80, that we have another group in our society for whom the life expectancy is almost half that. It is totally appalling. Something must be done. That is not rocket science to anyone in here. We all know that. The commonwealth parliament knows that. They have tried different things, none of which appear to have worked. But I applaud this. This is perhaps the way of the future. This is perhaps a shifting in empowerment to a different group within a community to a group of nurturers who can help the next generation. Perhaps this is the way forward.

I make that point because so many people come in here and cant towards multiculturalism, and say, 'This is a cultural practice; therefore it must be preserved and we cannot comment about it.' Previously in this place, I made the same point on a bill that we passed to outlaw the circumcision of women. This place, quite rightly, said, 'This is unacceptable to the mainstream of Australians and certainly to women in Australia: we will not allow it, cultural practice or not.' Where on one hand we say that we support multiculturalism, and we support this and that and we cannot criticise anything multicultural, in fact the parliament chose not only to criticise something that was a cultural practice but also to ban it, and quite rightly so.

While multiculturalism should be applauded, celebrated and encouraged in this nation, any multiculturalism which works to the detriment of anyone within the multicultural group or our society as a whole cannot be tolerated. For example, religious extremism—and many people say that religion is not part of the culture, but if it is not part of the culture I do not know what it is—which preaches violence against other sections of our community is not something that any Australian should tolerate.

We are a country which accepts people from all races and cultures, and what we do in accepting people from all races and cultures is say, 'We expect you to leave your tribal differences, hatreds and prejudices at the door. We value and nurture your culture, traditions and privileges and, if you come into this country, you likewise must respect those of others.' That is a fair thing for our culture and society to do. It is a fair and good thing that the minister is doing with Aboriginal women, if they wish—and it appears that it may well be the case—to shift their culture forward and to modify their culture.

The point I make in connection with Aboriginal women is the same point I make in connection with people of Greek, Italian, Fijian or whatever background: culture is not set in stone. Culture is a movable set of conditions and beliefs. I think the minister would agree that what is seen in Australia as the preservation of cultural traditions from the homeland

sometimes becomes more an encapsulation of a historic condition of the homeland than what the homeland is like today. Many English people go back to England and say, 'That's not the England we remember or came from.' Certainly, a lot of Greeks go back to Greece, and in their mind's eye they have a preconception of a Greek culture that did exist, but it existed in the 1940s or 1950s. When we in this place talk about multiculturalism and supporting indigenous people, we have to acknowledge that we are not supporting a culture that is static: we are supporting a dynamic. That is what the minister most needs congratulations for in this Spear Creek initiative. I hope it represents a different paradigm in Aboriginal communities. Clearly, some of the factors of Aboriginal culture have not helped them, given that our culture is often in conflict, and I am not excusing the fact that we have to do better. However, I am arguing that they have a right to move and change their culture in a way that better fits them to be part of whatever it is that all Australian society will represent in the future. In a sense, the minister has been very brave. In some ways, she has interfered with cultural traditions. I see it not as interference but as a dynamic. She is to be congratulated.

I hope that the women are able to achieve much more than any of us have been able to achieve in the last 100 years. If any group in our society has the chance to change things it is very often the women, because they are the ones who bear the children and who are the carers and nurturers. Indeed, some of our scientists believe that they have more of the factors that essentially make us human. Some scientists say that as men we are much too logical and, in a sense, emotionally cold and that therefore, in many ways, women keep whatever it is that is the flame of humanity. I note that the member for Colton laughs, but there is a bit of a woman in him, too. We are told that there is a bit of the man in every woman, and a bit of the woman in every man. It is his feminine side that makes him so endearing to the house, as the minister acknowledges.

Members interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I don't know. I won't repeat that, because your partner might not think it was a good comment to be recorded in *Hansard*.

Members interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: Well! No-one in this house would deny the need to do something and our failure to properly address these questions. I remember going to the tribal lands of the North West some 20 years ago and seeing young people who were as bright, intelligent and keen as any other young people. You would see them in school at four, five and six years old, but by 10, 11 or 12 years old, you would see them not in school but on the side of the road, with a can around their neck and a rope to the can. If they were not dead from petrol sniffing or some other related cause within a year or two, it would be quite remarkable. In fact, given what petrol sniffing does to the human brain, probably death would be a kindness after two or three years of petrol sniffing. It is an abysmal consequence to something that does not, I believe, give much of a thrill. That was 20 years ago, and it is still going on.

All of the things that we stand up and say in this place that we must fix, a succession of governments (both Liberal and Labor) simply have not been able to do. This problem is beyond the capacity of the Australian nation at present to solve. We have had our ATSICs and all sorts of things, but none of them have worked. The way forward could be for Aboriginal women to say, 'We must empower ourselves and

give ourselves a greater voice in terms of our culture and change our culture to that extent.' If that is the way to protect, help and perhaps strengthen future generations of our indigenous people, then I say: more strength to the minister's arm and more strength to Aboriginal women, because the only thing that is conclusive to this state in Australian history is that, despite all of our best attempts, we have failed—and we have failed badly.

So, I congratulate the minister. I hope this initiative comes to fruition. I wish the Aboriginal women well, and I trust that every member of this parliament will support new efforts in the future for these people. If someone has the temerity to stand up and say, 'You can't do that because it interferes with their culture,' I think they should get a better understanding of the word 'culture'.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I would like to make a brief contribution. The role of Aboriginal women (particularly older women) is becoming absolutely significant in terms of trying to enhance or restore the cultural dignity of Aboriginal people. This is not a reflection on Aboriginal men, but the reality is that we have seen some good examples of Aboriginal women taking the lead to try to help their people retain their culture and to advance themselves in our society. So, I commend any initiative that is directed towards that outcome. I have mentioned in the house before that—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Unley to take his seat and to turn his face rather than his back to the chair.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I have mentioned before in the house that, as a youngster, I had the privilege of having in my home Lowitja O'Donoghue and Faith Coulthard, two of the first Aboriginal women to undertake nursing training at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. They were colleagues of my older sister and, to this day, I am still friendly with Lowitja, and I sometimes see her spending her money at the Marion Shopping Centre, which we are all prone to do.

Lowitja and Faith are great examples of what Aboriginal women can achieve not only in their standing in their personal life but in their contribution to the public life of this community. They are very important role models for Aboriginal people. Although the member for Unley spoke in supportive terms, he acknowledged (as do I) that we have a long way to go before Aboriginal people achieve their full potential in our community. However, we should not be too negative about what is being achieved. We have Aboriginal students doing medicine at Flinders University and throughout Australia many Aboriginal people undertaking various levels of tertiary study.

I think that sometimes there is a greater focus on where Aboriginal people should be rather than highlighting some of their great achievements. We tend to overlook the Aboriginal people who are successful in business, such as John Moriarty and others. There are many Aboriginal people in our community who do not go around making a big noise, but who are successful in their own right. We need to have a balance without overlooking the need to improve Aboriginal health and educational opportunities. We should not overlook the fact that there have been (and are) great achievements occurring amongst Aboriginal people.

One of the sad things I feel about Aboriginal culture and the various groups that constitute that in Australia is that we have lost many of the traditional Aboriginal languages, and we are have lost or are in danger of losing many of the cultural values that Aboriginal society in its various tribal

expressions had. One thing is for sure: Aboriginal culture could have gone on forever. We cannot say that with certainty about modern technological society, but Aboriginal society could have continued forever because it was essentially in harmony with the environment.

One of their great values, which we have still not recognised, is that they believed that the land owned them. We have the opposite concept, and we can see the consequence of that. They believed that they were part of the land, inseparable from the land, and that is why, when we glibly talk about land rights, we are overlooking the central aspect of their culture, and that is that the land owned them. Nowadays we have this unusual twist of people trying to Europeanise some of these concepts, suggesting that Aboriginal people in their traditional settings had a concept of land ownership that is similar to ours. They did not.

They had some other great ideas or central elements. One of them is that children belong to everyone, and that is a great concept, too, that we all have a responsibility for the welfare of children. That is a fantastic value that Aboriginal people had in their traditional setting. We would benefit if we adopted that value along with some of the others. In their traditional setting, they had a lot of different concepts of time. We are hung up about a linear concept, a very simplistic view of time, whereas Aboriginal culture had many concepts of time. One of their important concepts was 'let the waters meet'. When someone is returning from overseas, we rush down to the airport, we smother them for a half a day or a day, we are all over them telling them how fantastic they are, and then we probably do not see them for a couple of weeks or months. Aboriginal people have the concept of letting the waters meet, that we should not rush into things, that we should let the two levels meet and then go from there. That is a fantastic concept.

The point I am making is that, collectively, we have lost or we are in danger of losing some of these fantastic values, and the greatest tragedy is that many Aboriginal people have little or no understanding of their fantastic heritage, and to see them lost between cultures is very sad. We do not teach enough in our school system about Aboriginal culture and, as I have raised in this house before, we tend to go in for tokenistic rather than fundamental acknowledgment.

As I see it, Aboriginal people in their various locations have to own their own future. What we have today is a different kind of welfare approach, which is just as destructive as the hand-outs of sugar, tea and flour of years ago, which were devastating. We are not allowing Aboriginal people to control their own destiny. They have to own the problems, along with the good aspects, and they have to deal with them and have responsibility for them. I welcome anything that gives authority and greater involvement for the wise women, if I can call them that, of the Aboriginal community. They can provide leadership.

Serious issues such as violence in some Aboriginal communities, petrol sniffing, drug taking and so on have to be dealt with. I am optimistic that we can make great progress. That progress will depend largely on some of the women within the Aboriginal community continuing their leadership, expanding that, and making sure that they save their culture and their people, not only for the benefit of their own people but for the benefit and the enrichment of our whole society. I commend what the minister is doing and applaud the gathering, which took place earlier this year.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I support this motion, and I do so as one of the members of the Aboriginal Lands Standing Committee. I congratulate the member for Giles and the member for Mitchell on their appointment to the committee. It will be a significant step forward for this parliament to have this committee. It will be a wonderful experience not only for me but also I am sure for other members of the committee to be able to interact with the people of the Aboriginal lands, and hopefully move forward; and it will not be a bunch of white fellas telling them what to do, that is, the old tea and sugar style, as the member for Fisher said.

I admit that at the moment my knowledge of Aboriginal culture is limited to a little bit of the Pitjantjatjara language, a very small understanding of some of the family relationships of their Tjukurpa, their dreaming, and how important their communities and families are to the survival of all indigenous peoples.

It is very important that all sections of indigenous communities are supported. When I undertook the Pitjantjatjara language course at the University of South Australia earlier this year, one of the tutors, a Pitjantjatjara lady (actually I think she is a Yunkantjatjara lady) said that one of the things she would love to be, if she could, is a man. This emphasises the frustration that exists in many of the indigenous communities. I certainly know my wife is my best supporter; she is much wiser about many things than I—and I hand it to women, without being at all sexist. I know women think in a different way from men, and I often think in a much better way, whereas the testosterone tends sometimes to rule our thoughts. I understand completely where the Aboriginal women are coming from.

I did notice that the name for the Coober Pedy women's group was the 'Kungka Tjuta'. 'Kungka' in Pitjantjatjara means 'girls'. I should have thought it would be the 'Minya Kungka Tjuta', which is the women's group, because it is the older women who certainly contribute in a big way to the direction in which Aboriginal communities should be heading.

I look forward to visiting all the communities with the rest of the standing committee. In fact, it should be compulsory for every member in this house and the other place to visit the communities. That is something that I will be trying to organise, so that everyone in this place recognises the difficulties that we will have to face if we want to move forward. It might have been Nelson Mandela or Desmond Tutu who, when they were visiting, said that it is not a matter of giving them more money: a different approach has to be taken.

We have to support the communities in deciding their own futures and recognising that their culture is something that is vital to all Australia. It is very different. It is an amazing experience to try to get a grip on how Aboriginal indigenous communities work and fit together.

That presents many problems in trying to solve what white people see as a way forward. I hope that the committee is able to visit the lands and talk to the communities—the women, men and young people—in order to decide in which way we will move forward. The millions and millions of dollars that are poured in every year need to be used for the benefit of all the communities and in a way that will enable indigenous communities to determine their own destiny.

I wholeheartedly support this motion—and the comments made by the member for Fisher and the member for Unley—and I look forward to working with the other members of the

Aboriginal Lands Standing Committee in achieving what the women's gathering at Spear Creek certainly has started.

Ms THOMPSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

HEWITT, Mr L.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland): I move:

That this house congratulates Lleyton Hewitt on his comeback victory against Wimbledon champion Roger Federer in the recent Davis Cup semi-final to advance Australia to the Davis Cup final against Spain in November 2003.

As an avid tennis fan and player, I was astounded at Lleyton's effort to come from two sets down to beat the current Wimbledon champion, Swiss superstar Roger Federer, in the Davis Cup semi-final at Melbourne Park on 1 September in what has been described as one of the greatest comebacks in Australia's long and proud Davis Cup history. Lleyton triumphed 5-7, 2-6, 7-6 (that was a 7-4 tie breaker) 7-5, 6-1 to end Federer's 10-match winning streak in the Davis Cup. The win gave Australia an unbeatable 3-1 lead and a place in a home final against Spain in Melbourne from 28-30 November. Lleyton was down and all but out in the third set, with Federer serving, just two points away from taking the match. It seemed likely that the Swiss player would quickly wrap up the match, leaving the tie at two all, and placing an enormous amount of pressure on either Todd Woodbridge or Wayne Arthurs in the final do or die rubber.

But you can never assume a win against Lleyton Hewitt until you have won the final point. A combination of pure determination and his often stated pride at playing for his country enabled Lleyton to pull the proverbial rabbit out of the hat, break the Swiss serve and force the third set into a tie break. Lleyton won the tie break 7-4, and then went from strength to strength, winning the fourth 7-5, before steamrolling Federer 6-1 in the final set on the way to one of his most important victories since he won Wimbledon last year.

I had previously thought that Lleyton's clay court win against Gustavo Kuerten in Brazil some two years ago would have been a hard effort to top, but I was wrong. The dedication, passion and sheer courage (and do not forget, this was not a simple win against a lowly ranked player but against the world's number three ranked tennis player in a high pressure forum, playing for a place in the Davis Cup final) that Lleyton showed should be a source of pride and inspiration for every single Australian.

Lleyton has often talked about the inspiration he gained from Pat Cash's famous home 'come from behind' win against Swede Mikael Pernfors in the 1986 Davis Cup final at Kooyong. After Lleyton won this match, he said:

I know every single shot in that match. I watched it in the Pat Cash video when I was very young. I looked up to that guy and I looked up to one day being in that situation. I was thinking of that match the whole time I was 2-0 down.

A generation of young tennis players has held that famous Pat Cash win as their Holy Grail for the past 17 years. I am positive that the next generation of young Australian tennis players has found the new Holy Grail in Lleyton Hewitt—the match people will talk about when they talk about courage and determination; when things are tough and they cannot find the way or, indeed, the will to win. Even Davis Cup coach Wally Masur said, in the context of the matches that have been played, 'It's the best one I've seen.'

The actual blow-by-blow description of Lleyton's win has been well documented and will for ever go down as part of

tennis history. However, what struck me more was not how Lleyton won, but why. What got Lleyton through? Roger Federer, who is a very talented individual, was trying just as hard as Lleyton and, after being so far in front, would have been justifiably confident in closing out the match. So, why was Lleyton able to somehow draw down on his well of seemingly endless talent and claw his way back? It was because of his well-documented love for Australia and his desire to win the Davis Cup over every other tennis prize. Simply, Lleyton Hewitt wants to play for his country.

Lleyton is a Wimbledon champion, a US Open winner, a former world No. 1, and yet, at the tender age of 22, he is becoming legendary for his Davis Cup exploits. In an age where many professional sportsmen seem to value the almighty dollar above everything else, it is both refreshing and an everlasting testament to Lleyton Hewitt that he is prepared to sacrifice so much to bring the Davis Cup back home again to Australia. In fact, he has made a multimillion-dollar sacrifice: Lleyton has withdrawn from a string of highly lucrative European events and surrendered any hope of defending the Tennis Masters Cup he has won for the last two years, to ensure that he is at his peak for the Davis Cup final. Even now, he is preparing for the Spanish Armada. Lleyton was quoted in the media as saying:

Davis cup is a huge consideration for me. It has been throughout my career and I said is at the start of the year. I could go over [to Europe] and chase [rankings] points to play for the Masters Cup but, even if I did, that wouldn't give me enough time to get back to Australia and prepare properly for the Davis Cup final.

Media reports said that his management company could not place a dollar figure on Lleyton's commitment to Australia, but victories in Madrid and Paris (where he is automatically entered), Stockholm and Basle could potentially earn him more than \$2.5 million. By opting out of the European tournaments, Lleyton has effectively lost any hope of his third Tennis Masters Cup, where the winner's cheque could be as high as \$2.17 million. That absolutely astounds me; that is more money in a few months than most of us would earn in several lifetimes. However, Lleyton Hewitt has willingly forgone this to instead play his best tennis for his country.

It is disappointing that media reports throughout the years consistently knocked a young man who is arguably South Australia's most famous citizen. It is just another example of the tall poppy syndrome, that unique and frustrating habit people have of knocking anyone who succeeds in this country. Lleyton Hewitt is a unique talent; unique to Australia and especially South Australia. He was raised and learnt his craft in Adelaide and, even after travelling the world, he continues to call South Australia home. His commitment to his home state was never more evident than the support he gave to the newly formed Adelaide United Soccer Club as it prepared for its debut match against the Brisbane Strikers last Friday night, when Lleyton tossed the coin before a sell-out crowd. Adelaide United even adopted Lleyton's trademark 'C'mon!' battle cry as a motivational force in the club's historic 1-nil victory. Speaking about Adelaide United's entry into the National League, Lleyton told the media, 'It's awesome, mate, not only for soccer but for South Australian sport.'

I want to congratulate Lleyton and thank him not only for his commitment to Australia and Australian tennis and for his unwavering commitment to South Australia but also for giving me the rare privilege of witnessing a game of tennis I will never forget. It was one of those iconic moments in Australian sport where, in two or three decades, people will

still be in awe of a sporting performance. I commend this motion to the house, and I urge all members to join me in congratulating Lleyton Hewitt on both his amazing win and his considerable achievements to date, and wishing him the best in his future tennis.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I would like to join the member for Newland in congratulating Mr Hewitt. In so doing, I would like to make a few remarks generally not only about his great performance at Wimbledon but also to set it in a bit of context. This motion appears amongst many motions, actually, which congratulate people for different things they have been doing. In a sense, I am a bit disappointed that we were not able to deal with notice of motion No. 2, although, of course, we will do so eventually. That is really a motion that I think will occupy some time.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr RAU: That motion will mature, like a good wine. The longer we take to get to that motion, the more it will mature and the more piquant and fragrant it will become.

An honourable member: More lees!

Mr RAU: More lees—yes; I think that is the proper expression. However, it strikes me that there are a number of motions here (some of them coming from the member for Newland) that congratulate various people for doing various things. I wonder whether there might be some better way that we can congratulate these folk, such as Mr Hewitt, who obviously deserves commendation, and the honourable member for Schubert who, in due course, will receive a very robust and elaborate form of congratulation. There must be some other way that we can do credit to these outstanding figures in our society.

It seems to me that private members' time is a very valuable part of the parliament. It concerns me a little that, with respect, rather than our spending time on what I call a substantive motion, which addresses an issue of the day that may be of great significance to the current events in South Australia, or an issue of policy or of current concern (one can think any number of these; one only has to look at the newspaper to see issues that are exercising the minds of the public at any one time), we seem to have a fairly unbalanced preference for motions of congratulation.

That is in no way reflecting adversely on those who are to be congratulated. I emphasise again that the honourable member's notice of motion No. 2, which talks about the member for Schubert, is a very meritorious motion. Indeed—

An honourable member: We haven't heard the argument yet!

Mr RAU: No; we have not heard the argument, but I think that I will be persuaded, when the honourable member does bring the motion forward on 27 November, by which time I will have prepared even more carefully than I have already, because I was ready today. By 27 November, I will be very ready, and I can assure the honourable member that other members will be ready, too. If members look at the other notices of motion, they will see that we are congratulating a senior public servant and other individuals. I wonder whether it might be possible—

The Hon. S.W. Key: What about mothers? Why don't we congratulate them?

Mr RAU: The minister makes a very good point. I was so caught up in the spirit of the congratulatory tone of these notices of motion that I took a proposition to my party room that, having regard to the proximity of Christmas, we as members of this parliament would like to congratulate the

mothers and carers of South Australia for all their efforts on behalf of South Australian families. Unfortunately, I was unable to get the approval of my colleagues to bring that motion forward, and I am disappointed that we will not be able to address that issue. Nonetheless, I congratulate all mothers in South Australia. However, I digress.

I will come back to the main point which is, of course, congratulations. It seems to me that there must be a more effective way of both congratulating these individuals and using private members' time in a constructive way to give private members an opportunity say things that are significant both to their electorate and to areas in which they have an interest. With the greatest of respect to all the individuals who are, in due course, to be bestowed with the congratulations of this august chamber, I have to say that surely if there was some method whereby people could ask for notation of particular individuals and a congratulation to appear in *Hansard*, that would save a great deal of time and it would also free up an enormous amount of time for all sorts of other private members' business.

Although these motions are important, I cannot believe that, as members of this parliament representing, as we are supposed to, all the citizens of South Australia, we cannot think of something more topical or more relevant to the business of government and the business of being a legislature than simply telling people what a great job they have done. It does concern me that you have to work out where you draw the line. If we go through the *Notice Paper* and look at all the various people who are being congratulated and the reasons for it, the mind boggles as to where the congratulations would stop. As I said, we will explore this theme more thoroughly when motion No.2 comes up on 27 November.

An honourable member: It will be No.1.

Mr RAU: We hope it will be No.1 on that day. I think it will be, from my understanding of the way the *Notice Paper* works, and that will be very good. However, I return to the main theme of this motion, which is Lleyton Hewitt. Congratulations should go to Lleyton Hewitt, of course. I would like to take an omnibus approach and congratulate all the other people who are listed to be congratulated over the next couple of hours. I do that in an attempt to truncate at least my contribution, which otherwise would have been very lengthy.

An honourable member: Make it en bloc.

Mr RAU: I would like to congratulate as a block all the other people whom we are congratulating. I would also like to say in that context that, were I given leave to do so, I would have been congratulating the mothers of South Australia in more detail than is possible in this motion. However, I return to Lleyton Hewitt. He does have a mother, and she has done a fine job with him. He also has a father, and I notice that the other place has a motion in respect of fathers, which means that we would have had both sides of the equation covered, but that is not the case. I congratulate Lleyton Hewitt and I congratulate all the other people (except the member for Schubert, whom we will specifically congratulate on 27 November), and I commend the motion to the house.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I unreservedly congratulate Lleyton Hewitt. I think it is a fantastic and gutsy effort from a young person, and I wish him all the best. As we know, he has had a few ups and downs, but I think he has shown that he has what it takes, and that is true grit. So, I congratulate him unreservedly. In relation to this issue of congratulating people in this place, I have argued—in fact,

I have written to the Standing Orders Committee—that I believe there is a better way of doing it, and that is at the start of each sitting day, either before or after petitions—

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I did not take a point of order during the contribution of the previous speaker, but at this point there is no-one on the other side who is addressing the substance of this debate. Anyone can move their own motion to bring up the subject that is now under discussion, but I ask that members direct their comments to the substance of the motion.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Williams): I draw the member's attention to the standing orders and ask him to return to the motion before the house.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: Thank you, sir. I am saying that if we want to congratulate Lleyton Hewitt, who is worthy of congratulations, a better way to do it would be before or after the reading of petitions—it could be an uncontested motion, but it is on the record. No-one will get up and oppose these motions of congratulations. I remind members that the cost of running this parliament, which was published this week, I think is in excess of \$30 million a year. So, each minute here is costing thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money, and we should use it in the most efficient and effective way possible. I have made that submission to the Standing Orders Committee. I think we can congratulate people such as Lleyton Hewitt in that way and it does not detract from the importance of the congratulatory message. It will be read out by a member at the start of the daily session and therefore will be on the record, and I think that is the way to go.

I believe that during this limited time we should be focusing in detail on things such as a vision for South Australia, necessary reforms, our ageing population, and technological change; and getting into some of the really gutsy issues that face us in South Australia. So, I congratulate Lleyton Hewitt and all the others who are the subject of a motion in this place, but I point out that I think there is a better way of doing it and, the sooner we address the alternative mechanism, the better off we will be.

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Light): I rise to support the motion of the member for Newland. Before I came into this place I played competitive tennis for 25 years. Now, of course, I do not have time to play. However, I am a keen follower of tennis, and particularly of Lleyton Hewitt. For him to achieve what he has at his age is nothing less than outstanding. He is a young man with incredible determination. In some of the ways in which he goes himself up, so to speak, to rise to another level in a tennis match reminds me of Jimmy Connors. When Connors was playing in the 1970s, he used some of the same arm movements and gestures to get himself to another level in order to defeat his opponent. I see a lot of that in Lleyton, in not a dissimilar game—although Connors had a stronger and more powerful serve.

Lleyton can be compared to John Alexander, who played Davis Cup in the 1970s and 1980s and who had a couple of incredible victories. The victory that the member for Newland mentioned in the latest round of the Davis Cup compares to those of John Alexander when he was in a similar position to Lleyton.

I think that this young fellow is a tremendous ambassador for South Australia. He is a very talented tennis player. Lleyton's critics, I believe, do not understand the game. There are times when you have to psychologically build yourself up to another level in order to defeat your opponent.

Lleyton does not use offensive language: what he does use are a few verbal comments which stimulate him to push harder to raise his game to another level or to increase his concentration even further.

We have, in our state, a very talented young Australian sportsman. He is to be commended for all the work that he puts into his tennis, and he thoroughly deserves every accolade and every tournament that he has won. I am proud to say that he is a South Australian. I sincerely hope that he and the team can steer Australia to a victory in December's Davis Cup tournament. Lleyton has often intimated that one of the great things he enjoys about playing Davis Cup is that it is a team game, whereas the other games played are individual games. For him to be able to participate and be part of a team that delivers another Davis Cup to Australia in December would be a fantastic thing for his performance and indeed for Australia.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): While I accept some of the comments of the previous speakers, I believe it is important to recognise those people in our community who make a contribution and who are excellent role models for our young people. I am pleased to support this motion.

Lleyton Hewitt is a loyal and fiercely proud South Australian. His ability and dedication in the pursuit of excellence in the sport of tennis has been amply demonstrated in his outstanding career. He stunned the tennis world by winning his first major international senior title in Adelaide at the age of 16. We admired his first Grand Slam tournament victory, the US Open, at the tender age of 20. He also achieved number one world ranking at the end of 2001, the youngest ever to do so. Lleyton retained that ranking in 2002 and added the Wimbledon singles crown to his growing list of outstanding achievements.

Throughout his brief but spectacular career, Lleyton has always prioritised his passion in playing for Australia by proudly representing his country in the Davis Cup, sometimes to the detriment of his individual pursuits. Lleyton has been instrumental in Australia's success in many Davis Cup matches, having an outstanding record of 19 singles victories in these matches—a magnificent achievement for one so young. His victory in the recent semifinals in Melbourne in September was, as many media outlets have reported, one of the greatest ever. Lleyton produced an amazing come from behind win over world number three, Roger Federer of Switzerland. He described his semifinal victory over Federer as one of the best of his career. Federer served for the match in the third set before Lleyton responded, winning the rubber in five memorable sets 5-7, 2-6, 7-6, 7-5, 6-1. The win gave Australia a 3-2 victory and the right to host the final.

Lleyton said that the feeling during the final set was even better than his two grand slam tournament victories. He said, 'I think everyone knows how passionate I am about Davis Cup; and even when I won Wimbledon or the US Open, the feeling I had out there on centre court when I was serving for the match—you just want to box that up and keep it forever.' As the member for Newland has said, Lleyton will turn his back on a number of events, and possibly millions of dollars, in his quest to help Australia win the Davis Cup this year, by staying in Australia to ensure that he is at his peak in November. I am sure that we all congratulate Lleyton Hewitt on his magnificent semifinal victory. We acknowledge this proud South Australian's passion for his country and his never-say-die approach to every contest. We wish him and fellow South Australian, Davis Cup team coach, John

Fitzgerald, every success in the November final in the Davis Cup against Spain.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): I was fortunate enough to share Lleyton Hewitt's company from afar at the lunch put on for both teams prior to the Centrals v. West Adelaide football match at AAMI Stadium. While I was sitting there, I cast my mind back to the previous year, when Centrals had been playing Sturt. I reflected on the fact that several weeks after that lunch, a number of members of the Sturt football team lay dead in the ruins of the clubs in Kuta. What Centrals had to do, and I think what all the individuals involved in that particular catastrophe have had to do, is rebuild their lives. It has been a very difficult exercise for all of them, I would imagine, and has required great strength of character to surmount the psychological damage that was inflicted upon them by seeing loved ones blown to smithereens and also to go through the physical process of recovering from serious burns.

I am not a great follower of sport. I am not one of those individuals who will spend countless hours in front of the television set, but when I do watch sport I enjoy it immensely. I enjoy it not only for the athleticism that I see displayed but also for the other attributes of the players, for example, their strength of character. I think we see that in Lleyton Hewitt. We look at him as a young man on a tennis court, seeing the game slipping away from him and having the internal fortitude to actually summon an inner strength and return to the game with a vengeance.

When I look at a game of tennis or football—football particularly—I also look to see the way in which the members of the team are playing. Are they team players? Are they able to subsume their own egos and move the ball around the field rather than hogging it to allow the key players within their forward line to score? I also look to see how the players deal with the rules of the game. Do they play honestly? Do they try to lay out their opponents when the television camera or the referee are not looking at them? What kind of character do these people bring to the game above and beyond their obvious athleticism? When I look at him, I think that Lleyton Hewitt exhibits not only the athleticism that has made him the great player he is, but also the strength of character and his ability to play by the rules.

One of the speakers said he is not a foul-mouthed player; he does not try psychologically to intimidate the opposition: he plays very much within the moral parameters of the game. I also think that he is a great team player because, unlike Phillipoussis, he has committed himself very much to the Australian team. He has got in there with great guts and gusto to ensure that Australia remains one of the paramount tennis nations of the world. Returning to that lunch which Lleyton attended, I would like to reflect on the difficulties of the Sturt football team and how it is coping with its present difficulties. I wish the Sturt football team a strong return to a position of strength within the league.

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland): First, I would like to congratulate members opposite who joined with me in congratulating Lleyton on his remarkable win that enables Australia now to compete in the next round of the Davis Cup. I thank the member for Torrens, the member for Light and the member for Napier. In moving such a motion that congratulates one of our top young sporting people in South Australia, I, too, feel that those who have shown that they are ambassa-

dors for our country and our state should be recognised by other leaders in the community, and I see no better place than this parliament to be able to do that.

As the shadow minister for recreation and sport in this area, under normal circumstances I would send a copy of any congratulatory messages to the person about whom we are speaking. I would also do the parliament the courtesy of sending to them copies of other members' contributions. However, today, I will be sending copies of the contributions of the members for Light, Torrens and Napier only. I would like to use this opportunity to correct an impression that may have been left by the member for Enfield in his quite cynical contribution to this debate. He acknowledged that I was moving this motion and that I had several other motions on the *Notice Paper* of a congratulatory type. That is incorrect. I have three other motions on the *Notice Paper*, one of which is congratulatory. One other member of the Liberal Party is to move another congratulatory motion. However, nine other motions of congratulations appear on the *Notice Paper* from members of the Labor government. I place that correction on the record.

I also support the fact that this is the place and the time to support young people in this state; and I certainly take no backward step in moving a motion such as this to congratulate a young man who has unique talents and an absolutely unique determination. As the member for Torrens said, role models in this time and age and in this state are extremely important to all. We are not to mention the number of people who are in the gallery or who they are, but when there are young people around who can latch onto others in our community who set standards, then I am more than happy to stand in this place and make sure that those standards are noticed by everyone. On that note I conclude my contribution.

Motion carried.

SA AMBULANCE SERVICE FUNDING

Mr CAICA (Colton): I move:

That this house supports the government's funding of the South Australian Ambulance Service to deliver an effective and quality emergency service to the South Australian community.

It gives me much pleasure to rise and speak to the motion in my name. For many years, I personally benefited from the effort and contributions made by the South Australian Ambulance Service in the state. I was fortunate enough to share a fire station with ambulance officers and, more importantly, was able to witness first-hand, at vehicle accidents, house fires, and other emergency situations, the outstanding work and the contribution that ambulance service officers provide to alleviate the pain and suffering of those who were affected by those tragic events that firefighters, ambulance officers, police officers and other emergency services personnel are often called to act upon.

The government has committed more than \$6 million over the next four years to fund 60 new positions in the SA Ambulance Service. This funding will result in three additional metropolitan ambulance transfer service teams, two additional metropolitan medical transfer service teams, increased recruitment and training of staff and the introduction of additional courier teams in regional South Australia. I highlight the benefits that will accrue to the people of regional South Australia through this funding initiative.

These funding initiatives, announced in June 2003 by the minister for Emergency Services, are already being imple-

mented by the SAAS all over the state. For example, in June and July this year, two additional ambulance transfer service vehicles commenced from Fulham, a station in the heart of the electorate of Colton. I am very pleased that they are operating out of that station. These new vehicles are to provide new casual officers with new training vehicles and to help cover afternoon shifts. The third new ATS vehicle will operate five days a week from the Salisbury station. Two additional medical transfer service student training teams have commenced at the Redwood Park and Noarlunga stations.

One of the outstanding facets of the SA Ambulance Service, and the officers who operate on behalf of the people of South Australia under the auspices of that service, is the training regime they undertake. They are continually upgrading their skills on all occasions. They need to do so, but I do not know of too many other organisations that not only have the requirement but also have a staff that is so willing to keep its skills at the cutting edge required to serve people needing those services.

In regional South Australia, Port Lincoln, Angaston and Woodside stations have benefited from the funding with an additional five paramedics at each station. The SAAS intends to upgrade the rostering system of the stations to full 24-hour coverage to bring these teams into line with their counterparts in metropolitan Adelaide. It is easy to understand why, when we look at some of the motor vehicle accidents and the number of motor vehicle accidents that occur within those regions. This will be to the benefit of those people who require services. Like all of us in the house, I hope that there will not be too many people who will require them. But an ambulance service is like the fire service and the police service: you hope you never require them but when you do it is exceptionally good to know that not only are they there but they are able to respond in a very efficient manner in assisting with the difficulties that arise from time to time.

A regional medical transfer service team commenced at Victor Harbor in July, and stations at Murray Bridge, and Port Wakefield are also due to benefit from the new RMTS vehicle. Additional staff have been allocated to the human resources area to assist in the recruiting of new staff, and to the ambulance education workshop to manage the increased enrolments in the certificate and diploma courses, and I did highlight earlier the amount of training and education that is required to enable ambulance officers to fulfil their tasks effectively.

The SAAS also plans to purchase a fatigue management program to address the increasing reports of fatigue amongst paramedics. An interesting aspect of emergency services is that you never know when you will be able to get a proper rest. So, I do understand the fatigue aspect of those occupations, because you might well return to your station after having been to a motor vehicle accident, you might sit down to have a cup of tea or to whack your meal in the microwave to heat it up and, before you have put the fork into the food or your lips to the cup, the bells may go and you might be required to respond immediately to some other incident.

I notice that I still have ample time left, but I do not intend to hold the house any longer. I commend the motion to members. I congratulate the SA Ambulance Service, the personnel employed by that service, and the volunteer component of the service, for the outstanding contribution they make in alleviating the pain and suffering that many South Australians suffer from time to time, under tragic circumstances.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): It is my pleasure to support the motion of the member for Colton. I should indicate that I have a slight bias in relation to this motion, having served for a number of years as a member of the SA Ambulance Board. One of the sadder parts of coming into this place, in fact, was that I had to give up that appointment as a prerequisite to standing for election to this place. Whilst I would not change anything, I do miss serving on that board because it provides such good service. It is one of the best ambulance services in the world, and very few people appreciate that. Certainly, compared with the other Australian states, we come up extremely well. The guidelines aim to have priority one cases in the metropolitan area attended to within 12 minutes of the call being received, and that is extraordinary.

One of the employees of the service won a place to address an international conference in the US some years ago, and the people over there were absolutely stunned when they found out that in this state—which is 1½ times the size of Texas, their biggest state—we have a single ambulance service for the whole state, whereas in a city this size in the average American situation you would have 30 ambulance services operating. They operate very much like tow truck drivers, and we would all be familiar with the system where tow truck drivers all compete to get the work and everybody turns up at the scene of an accident. That is what happens with ambulance services in a number of American states of comparable size to South Australia. So, they were just blown away when they found out that we run a single united ambulance service, and at the level of training and skill that we provide. It is just an extraordinary achievement for a state as small as ours to not only be at the top of the pile compared with other Australian states but to be able to compete on an international level in terms of quality, timeliness and effectiveness—in every aspect, really.

It runs very much on a shoestring budget, and I know that some years ago when I was a member of the board we did get to the point where the board was threatening to resign because of lack of funding. So, I, too, am pleased that we are seeing days when the important role of the Ambulance Service is being recognised and the funding is being put in place, because we have a very low proportion of our population who are prepared to pay out for their ambulance insurance, which is what it is. It is really very small. In fact, my recollection, the last time I calculated it, is that it worked out at something like \$1.50 a week for my entire family, because my children are all still living at home, notwithstanding the fact that they are adults. We are all covered for about \$1.50 a week. For that extraordinarily small amount of money—something like 25 cents a day—the entire family gets the coverage of this fantastic service.

Some years ago the South Australian Ambulance Service also introduced a degree course in ambulance studies, which is now offered at Flinders University. Its head, Dr Hugh Grantham, has an extraordinary knowledge of the issues arising for paramedics which are very different from those which arise when people reach the trauma station at a hospital. It is one of the most popular courses, and it is most difficult to get into. The course has a very high entrance requirement, simply because it is so popular and it is pushed to accommodate the number of students who want to do the course.

I am delighted to support this motion, and I am pleased to hear that we are now getting increased funding into places like Port Augusta, Angaston and Woodside. We looked closely at the issue of having a new ambulance station at

McLaren Vale and, despite some of the political hype surrounding that, I place on record that at the time the minister who asked us to look into it was the member for that area. The board was therefore very conscious of the fact that it did not want to be seen in any way as pork barrelling and went to the trouble of having a complete and comprehensive study done to see whether it was justified. Many of the board members were probably hoping that it would come out not in favour of the establishment of an ambulance station at McLaren Vale, as that would have given us the excuse to say, 'Sorry, minister, we cannot possibly accommodate it.' However, the statistics showed that it is probably the most needy area in the state.

For a long stretch, over a period of years, we in the south had many serious accidents, and we do not have anyone servicing between Christies Beach and Goolwa. In the case of McLaren Vale, we had not only the statistics to justify the station but also the offer from the local hospital to provide the land free (at no cost whatsoever to the ambulance service) to enable the ambulance station to be located adjacent to the hospital. It was entirely justified, simply on independent assessment, that we should go ahead and have that. It is pleasing to see that we are getting some funding. I suspect that we will need even more funding if we are to maintain our position as one of the best ambulance services in the country.

I congratulate the former CEO, Ian Pickering, and the current CEO, Chris Lemmer, who runs a tight ship in ensuring that the funding is spent in the best possible way and who manages a service which has many complexities. It fits under two umbrellas: for the time being, it comes under emergency services, but from time to time there is an argument about whether it should go under health services instead. There is a strong view that it should remain with emergency services, so it will be kept very much in the loop in the event of any major catastrophes.

I congratulate those people and the member for Colton for moving the motion, as it is important in our state that we support such a service. It is a funny situation where it involves not actually a government department or an independent body but one of those funny little institutions that has come up historically in an odd way and has its own separate statutory life. That has been the source of much of its independence but also the source of a failure on the part of successive governments to fund it properly over many years. I support the idea that we should continue to fund and increase the funding for the South Australian Ambulance Service and I congratulate it on the magnificent work it does.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): The member for Colton has adequately and eloquently outlined the contribution that the government is making to keep our ambulance service viable and an exceptional service. Unfortunately, I had the experience of an urgent need for the ambulance service when some years ago my partner collapsed in a very strange and distressed condition, unable to breathe and not fully conscious. We slowly got around to calling the ambulance service, and that was the end of the slowness. They were there in an amazingly short time, and I now know how comforting that siren can sound when it is approaching in the distance.

The professionalism of the paramedics absolutely stunned me. Despite attending a couple of sessions talking about their professional qualifications, I still had no real idea how professional they were. They immediately took action to supply him with oxygen and they carted him off to hospital. That is a mundane way of describing what happened. I was

in the front of the ambulance and able to see the care that he was getting in the back, where reels and reels of tape were coming out. The person who was driving the ambulance was extraordinarily professional in the way he approached my need for care and reassurance. He was busy driving but, at the same time, he was able to offer a couple of words to me that made the trip a little less horrendous.

It was when we arrived at the hospital that I saw how professional these people were. As I got out to greet John at the back, the paramedic who was attending him said, 'He will be all right. It is almost certainly brachycardia. I have been watching his monitoring.' That paramedic stayed with John until he was transferred to the care of staff of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. He was in consultation for some time with the registrar, and the registrar was able to say to us, 'Yes, the paramedics got it sorted out. This is almost certainly what it is. There's an easy solution. It will just be difficult for a while.' In later conversations, I heard that this paramedic, shortly before the incident, had attended a specialist cardiac care training program with the head of cardiac care at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The level of expertise available to us as we drive down the street is really extraordinary.

As I mentioned earlier, I had an opportunity through earlier participation in the Public Service quality improvement programs to hear about the way in which the professional expertise of the paramedics is developed. I heard there about their peer review process, and the way in which they all regularly participate in reviews of their handling of particular incidents; that this is done in a supportive and non-threatening manner; and that people must attend these processes on a regular basis. But, at any time, if they feel they should have handled a situation differently or they were somewhat challenged when they arrived at the incident at the end of that quick drive, they can put forward the situation and it is discussed in the peer review process. It is a remarkable collegiate learning process. It is something from which we all can learn, whatever our disciplines. It demonstrates the value of changing to a professional ambulance service.

I thank the paramedics and all the people who support them within the ambulance service for the work they do. I commend them on their exceptional level of professionalism, and I wish them well when they are needed, as I and my partner needed them on that night. I have one word of caution. Unfortunately, at times I encounter people in the community who seem to see the ambulance service as a taxi service. If they are sick and do not have a car, their response is to call an ambulance. The minimum cost for a call-out is \$300. This is a lot for the taxpayer to pick up. It is also a waste of incredible levels of expertise when people are transporting someone who is not in a critical condition to the hospital because they do not have access to other means of transport.

Perhaps this is a gap in our services that we need to address. The providers of ambulance services are far too well qualified just to be ferrying people around. I say that with respect for the concern, anxiety and desperate position of people who find a household member sick and who have no money. We as a community have to respect the professionalism of the ambulance service and use it for what it was intended. Somewhat in the same way as we are now being educated about when to call 000 and 131444, perhaps we need the same sort of education in relation to the ambulance service. I thank the member for Colton for giving us the opportunity to discuss this important service in the house.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to support this motion. It was good to hear the member for Colton say that the MFS and the South Australian Ambulance Service are working very closely together. Initially, when the collocation of the ambos and the MFS was considered, there were some concerns, but it is my clear understanding that professionalism has shown through and that the collocation is working and working well. There is no way you can separate the services offered by the ambulance service and the skills of metropolitan firefighters and the Country Fire Service. The ambulance officers, whether they are volunteers or full-time, are a vital part of our community. I would like to put on record my congratulations, because I have had to be assisted on a couple of occasions. It is a very nice feeling to hear the siren coming down the road when you know you cannot do anything for yourself and somebody will give you a hand and attend to your needs. I had a horse come down on top of me and break my leg in a couple of places when I was in vet practice. It was very nice to receive very swift attention.

As the member for Heysen said, a response time of 12 minutes anywhere within the metropolitan area is pretty good. When we put on top of that the fantastic relationship with the helicopter service and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, we should be very thankful for the medical care we get in South Australia through all our ambulance services. I was very pleased to see the responses from the ambulance service at Glenelg North on the day of the flooding. I note that a motion is coming up later—again proposed by the member for Colton—to congratulate emergency services workers on the fantastic job they did. I do not want to pre-empt that motion, but I will say that they did a brilliant job under trying and sometimes confused circumstances, with people who were very stressed. They worked in a very professional manner at all times, as I would expect and as I saw.

I am very concerned that members of the ambulance service are being exposed to situations that they should not be exposed to. I recently read in the paper of one of the ambos who received treatment for injuries received after an assault. I was driving home through the back streets of Thebarton a few months ago, and an ambulance was parked on the side of the road, with its lights going. These two ambos were out trying to speak to this person who I assume was a mental health patient. The pressure being put onto not only our police officers—and we hear a lot about that—but also our ambulance officers with having to transport the mental health patients in South Australia is something of which we need to be acutely aware.

I encourage the government to support the funding for not only the South Australian Ambulance Service but also the mental health services. It is something that will not go away. Unfortunately, it is becoming more of a problem with young people. We need to be careful about managing this situation and giving the people on the front line all the support we possibly can. I hope that the government continues to fund the ambulance service and, indeed, all emergency services to the adequate levels required. I support the motion.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): I, too, rise to support this motion. Taking the motion on its face value, I commend the member for Colton for moving it. I am sure that he—like, I hope, every member of this house—is a strong supporter of the South Australian Ambulance Service. I was the first emergency services minister of the Liberal government, and I served in that capacity for three years.

When I came into that portfolio I inherited a very troubled ambulance service. I am sure, Mr Speaker, that you and other members would well recall the trauma to which our ambulance service had been subjected. Australia has always had a variety of ambulance services, but South Australia stood proudly amongst other services in Australia because of its unique volunteer component, which was the envy of many other services.

When I was elected to the parliament in 1989, St John volunteers had prepared their own how-to-vote card advocating that I be elected to the seat of Bright to assist in furthering their volunteer effort and to protect the efforts of volunteers in South Australia. Those volunteers and many others from that era will never forget the atrocious, shabby way in which Labor governments of the past treated volunteers. We saw volunteers in a ferocious union-organised campaign driven out of the volunteer service.

One of the first meetings that I as the emergency services minister had with the ambulance service operatives was with the St John organisation. I put to them a challenge. I said that, as minister, I was prepared to facilitate (through the Liberal government) the reinvolvement of volunteers in metropolitan Adelaide if they thought that was achievable. They had not expected to receive such an offer, so they asked for time to consider it, and I was happy to give them that time. When we met again to further work through the issues, they put to me that it was no longer possible to restore what the service had provided in South Australia but that they wanted to ensure that volunteers could continue to deliver the very fine service that is provided by St John volunteers at a whole variety of sport and community events. Importantly, they felt they would have the ability to continue to deliver the very fine service that is delivered in regional South Australia, but that they would need funding guarantees in order to continue to do that.

I was pleased during my time as minister to preside over some very fundamental changes to the ambulance service. One thing that had to happen was that some members of the board had to go. I did that by highlighting some things about the board which I believed were inappropriate, and the entire board resigned within a few days. I reappointed some members of the board whose experience and skill we needed, and we set about rebuilding the service. I was blessed to have a fine chief executive officer in Ian Pickering. The board that had been imposed upon him allowed him to have a far more meaningful management role, and the changes that occurred under his very capable management brought about a very different ambulance service.

I was pleased to preside over the creation of the Passenger Transport Service (PTS)—which brought in new vehicles and which allowed ambulance equipped emergency vehicles to be used for that purpose—and I was also pleased to preside over the implementation of more professional career structures for ambulance officers and the creation of the ambulance paramedic service. I presented the first graduation certificates to those officers and brought about the creation of a Diploma in Ambulance Studies at Flinders University. Those things do not happen easily or without committed management and dedicated officers.

This professionalisation of the service received the support of the then union, but it was not without its trials and tribulations. As part of that process, funding and other opportunities were provided to volunteers. It was absolutely vital that a person who was treated by an ambulance volunteer would also be treated by someone who had the appropri-

ate skills, training and equipment. We ensured that training—and, therefore, the skills—and equipment (uniforms or vehicles) was provided to those volunteers.

I take the motion of the honourable member for Colton to mean that that funding for volunteer ambulance officers, particularly in rural South Australia, will continue, and I believe that to be a very important inference in the motion. Funding to volunteers must occur and, as the representative of a rural electorate, Mr Acting Speaker, you know how vitally important it is to continue to have volunteers operating in those areas.

I have the highest regard for volunteers, indeed, for all operatives, in ambulance services, especially when one considers what they see. Ambulance officers see the decapitation of children in motor vehicle accidents and other similar horrendous sights, which most people never want to see in their life, yet those officers have to undertake their duties with those images in their mind. That cannot always be an easy thing to do.

I am particularly pleased by the partial success—it is only partial—of collocation. As the member for Colton knows, because he headed the United Firefighters Union at the time, I was and remain a very strong advocate of collocation. I believe that many tasks can be undertaken by our firefighters across the state that they do not yet have the opportunity to do. He knows from discussions with me my view that there is an important first response role that could be undertaken by our fire service in South Australia if those officers were given more appropriate training. They certainly have the equipment and the skills to be at a scene quickly, and, importantly, they already play an increasingly vital role in vehicle accident recovery work.

I sincerely hope that those opportunities will be further explored, because I see the collocations that have occurred to date as being but a small sample of what is possible. As my colleague the member for Morphett indicated, they have not been without their problems, but that is not surprising when one considers that it is a new marriage between two services. Various services operate overseas where the paramedic role is more akin to one taken by fire service operatives with medical first aid training, and I would like to see more of those opportunities employed, particularly in the Adelaide metropolitan area. I believe that it would even further harness the skills and opportunities in the service and, most importantly, deliver South Australians in need an even better opportunity of assistance.

A number of members have recounted that they have experienced the skills of our ambulance officers. It is not widely known in this parliament, although some of my colleagues know, that on two occasions I have been very grateful for the skills of those paramedics, and I expressed my gratitude first-hand to the officers concerned. It is comforting to know that we have a fine service in South Australia, regardless of where a person needs that service, whether it is in a rural region, or even in some of the most remote regions, where volunteers are able to be deployed in an incredibly short time, or in a city area where the tyranny of distance is less and vehicles are able to be deployed very rapidly. We have a service of which we can be proud.

That does not mean to say that we can rest on our laurels. A state of the art service must continue to be funded and upgraded so it can remain state of the art. So I hope that the colleagues of the member for Colton in government will take heed of the words in his motion and ensure that our service

continues to be funded at a high level, be it the paid arm of the Ambulance Service or the volunteer arm.

Mr CAICA (Colton): I thank members for their considered contribution and their support for this very important motion. I know that each and every one of us in this house are equally committed to ensuring that we continue to have a world-class ambulance service and other forms of emergency services in this state.

Motion carried.

ELECTRICITY, INTERCONNECTORS

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): Before moving my motion, I indicate that I wish to move it in an amended form, namely, by adding after the words 'New South Wales' the words 'and demands that the Liberal Party apologise to the South Australian community for causing electricity prices to rise as a result of their support for the Murraylink interconnector'.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Is that amendment in order, in view of the fact that it dramatically changes the original intent of the motion from being one of a congratulatory nature to one of condemnation?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Williams): Member for Napier, I believe that, if you wish to amend the motion on the *Notice Paper*, you will need to seek leave of the house.

Mr O'BRIEN: I seek leave to amend my proposed motion as follows:

After the words 'New South Wales' add 'and demands that the Liberal Party apologise to the South Australian community for causing electricity prices to rise as a result of their support for the Murraylink interconnector'.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There being one dissenting voice, leave is not granted. The member for Napier is therefore able to move the motion only in its original form.

Mr O'BRIEN: I therefore move:

That this house congratulates the government for its tenacity in continuing the fight to get electricity interconnection with New South Wales.

The Liberal Party has often boasted about its support for the entrepreneurial Murraylink interconnector. The key to the Liberal's support for a private market interconnector was that it would deliver more power to South Australians without South Australian consumers having to pay for its construction and operation. The Liberal's support for Murraylink aided Murraylink in delaying the construction of the proposed regulated SNI interconnector, which would provide South Australia with a direct electricity link with New South Wales.

Several weeks ago, on Tuesday 7 October, the ACCC handed down its decision on Murraylink's application to convert to a regulated interconnector. The offer to convert was almost immediately accepted by Murraylink, and as of Thursday 9 October Murraylink became South Australia's second regulated interconnector. Murraylink was given an opening asset value of \$97.33 million. The ACCC has granted Murraylink an operational expenditure of \$3 million real per annum, which is an operating expenditure totalling \$32.71 million over the 10 year regulatory control period. Murraylink will have a revenue cap for the regulatory control period rising from \$8.9 million for 2003-04 to \$12.72 million for the year 2012-13.

The government believes that the ACCC's process for converting Murraylink was seriously flawed. Of particular concern was that it now appears that the right for a market interconnector to convert to regulated status is automatic. As a market interconnector, Murraylink was simply able to be built by its proponents and then bypass the national electricity process that proposed regulated interconnectors are required to pass.

The ACCC has, essentially, allowed a failed commercial enterprise, which was supposed to carry the commercial risk involved in the Murraylink project, now to go, cap in hand, and have consumers in South Australia pay higher electricity prices to pay for its poor commercial decisions. The ACCC's decision was also flawed in that it failed to properly assess the benefits that a converted Murraylink would bring to South Australia. From South Australia's perspective, a new interconnector could only be of benefit if it formed part of a stronger interconnection with New South Wales. Murraylink is now the failed entrepreneurial interconnector that the Liberal Party so strongly supported. We were told that Murraylink would not be paid for by consumers.

What has the Liberal Party achieved? It has prevented South Australians from receiving the benefits of an interconnector with New South Wales, and helped to deliver an interconnector that has brought little benefit to South Australia. In addition, when its private sector project failed, it passively accepted that South Australian consumers will now pay higher electricity prices. Further, the Liberal Party has consistently supported Murraylink as good for South Australians—an interconnector unsubsidised by the South Australian community. It has now been over 18 months since the Liberal Party was in government, and still it is causing electricity prices to rise. On 28 March 2000, the Hon. Rob Lucas argued:

... in this case, we are particularly blessed... we have an unsubsidised, underground interconnector which has been recommended to be wholly private sector funded. . .

Obviously, in the light of the decision of the ACCC, this is not the case, and now taxpayers will be funding the interconnector to the tune of \$97.3 million. This so-called unregulated entrepreneurial interconnector that we were meant to get for free is now regulated at this massive cost to taxpayers.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Sir, I rise on a point of order. My point of order is one of relevance. I have been listening to the honourable member now for several minutes, and the content of his speech does not relate to the motion. His motion is quite specific: it relates to electricity interconnection with New South Wales. He has been going on about the Murraylink interconnector, without relating it back to his motion.

Ms Breuer interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have not been listening to the debate, but all members are aware of the standing orders, which state that remarks have to be relevant to the matter before the house at the time. Obviously, the member has moved the motion, and it does give him a broad range to canvass. I have not heard the comments being made by the member for Napier, so I am afraid I cannot rule that he is out of order. But I ask the member for Napier to be careful how far he strays.

Mr O'BRIEN: I am moving on to the area that the member is so—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Napier has the call.

Mr O'BRIEN: This interconnector does not offer the benefits to South Australia that the direct, regulated interconnection with New South Wales—the SNI—would offer. South Australian consumers have had foisted upon them an interconnector which has failed as a market interconnector and which adds little to the security and affordability of supply for South Australia. South Australia and Victoria have coincident summer peaks in demand. So, further interconnection with Victoria alone is not sufficient to meet our power requirements—and I refer to the NEMMCO Statement of Opportunities 2003, in which it is stated:

Supply-demand balance information for Victoria and South Australia is presented as a combined assessment. This is because the supply-demand balance for the two regions is dependent on the network capability into Victoria from Snowy and because they are subject to similar weather patterns, they generally attain their peak demands at the same time.

NEMMCO goes on to say:

The analysis of supply and demand in Victoria and South Australia indicates that while reserves for the winter will be adequate until the year 2011, summer reserves fall below the minimum requirement in the coming summer. The reserve deficit is forecast to be 69 MW in summer 2003-04, and in summer 2008-09, the demand exceeds the supply side capacity.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

Mr O'BRIEN: I have not come across it, and I have done a recent web search. The Labor Party has long supported direct regulated interconnection with New South Wales as an effective means of tackling the state's problem of peaky summer demand and the resultant pressures put on electricity prices for consumers in South Australia. However, the regulated interconnector project desired by both South Australia and New South Wales has been tied up in regulatory and legal proceedings for years, while the expensive market interconnector, Murraylink, was constructed between South Australia and Victoria.

The main benefit of the New South Wales-South Australia interconnector, according to an environmental impact statement on the project (and I make a direct reference to the EIS) is as follows:

- Introduction of a new, reliable transmission line to SA, alleviating problems associated with inadequate electricity supply during peak periods. This would improve amenity, provide greater certainty for business with potential flow-on effects of greater investment in SA and reliability of electricity supply to other essential services;
- Greater equality in electricity pool prices between SA and the eastern States;

However, the NEMMCO SNI determination was the subject of an appeal by Murraylink, the competing market network service provider, to the National Electricity Tribunal (NET), with hearings held during August 2002. The NET affirmed the NEMMCO decision that the SNI project should have regulated status. Murraylink then appealed the NET decision that SNI should proceed with regulated status to the Supreme Court of Victoria. The South Australian government successfully sought to be party to both the NET and Supreme Court proceedings so as to ensure the SNI project proceeds. At the same time as it was appealing the SNI decision, Murraylink made an application to the ACCC for its status under the code to be changed from a market network service provider funded by arbitrating price differences to become a regulated interconnector and as such it would be funded by electricity consumers through regulated charges.

On 18 July 2003 the Minister for Energy (Hon. Patrick Conlon) made a submission on behalf of the South Australian government to the ACCC in response to its preliminary view on Murraylink's application for conversion to regulated status. The submission highlighted the government's view that South Australian electricity consumers should not be required to provide a safety net for national electricity market participants who have made poor commercial decisions. Murraylink proposed a regulatory asset value of \$176 million. The South Australian government indicated in its submission that the starting asset base should be approximately \$77 million, which was the cost of a cheaper transmission line that could have been built instead of the more expensive Murraylink interconnection. As we know, the ACCC has now approved regulated status for Murraylink and, as of 9 October 2003, South Australia has a second regulated interconnector with Victoria at higher costs to the South Australian consumers.

Mr Hanna: Why would you need three?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order!

Mr O'BRIEN: The member missed the point about the coincidence of climatic factors between Victoria and South Australia. The Liberal Party should indeed apologise to the South Australian community for causing electricity prices to rise as a result of its support for the Murraylink interconnector.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Colton. Sorry; I did not see the member for Waite.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: It has been a longstanding tradition in this house that we alternate, and I will not be the one who breaks that tradition.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise very briefly to speak on this motion—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: —because it represents part of the government's campaign to rewrite history in regard to the privatisation of the state's power assets. I want to make a couple of simple points to the member who has moved the motion, and they are simply these.

Yesterday, the Treasurer got up and tabled a Standard and Poor's report that clearly spelt out that one of the major reasons—in fact, the principal reason—for the state economy being in such robust shape was that the former government sold its power assets and relinquished over \$5 billion worth of debt, thus freeing up the state's books of account and putting paid to a large slice of the \$9½ billion debt that we inherited through the former Labor government's incompetence, when it wrecked the State Bank and ruined the state's finances.

I have just been reading *Hansard* from the other place yesterday, where I see that the shadow treasurer (Hon. Rob Lucas) asked similar questions of the Leader of the Government in the other place. Similar throwaway lines were given back to the Hon. Rob Lucas in response.

I simply make the point to the government that if it was such a terrible decision to sell ETSA and if the increases in power prices that have subsequently occurred all around the country as a result of the deregulated market are all the result of the sale of ETSA, buy it back. It may surprise the government to know that it is actually for sale and that large sections of the sold assets are now on the market.

In fact, we did such a good deal that *The Advertiser* recently reported that I think the Torrens Island Power Station, TXU and the Port Augusta power assets are back on the market and available for sale. Power assets around the country are back on the market. Why are they back on the market? Because the people who bought them are finding that they probably paid a little bit too much. Not only that, they are finding that the risks involved in being in the market are such that perhaps they would rather be out of it and that perhaps they would rather sell it back.

I am just making the point that if the government wants to be believed and wants to be credible, it has spent the last five years arguing that we should not have sold ETSA. Now the argument is that the prices have gone up because the private assets have been sold. I make the simple point: go and borrow the \$5 billion and buy the assets back (you might even get them at a discount), retake ownership of the assets and then you set about managing the risks and you reduce the power prices—unscramble the egg.

Of course, we know that you will not do that, because the Treasurer thinks that selling ETSA was the best thing since sliced bread. We all know that, in the corridors around here during the sale process, the Labor Party was quietly hoping that the sale would go ahead, so that the debt would be remitted and so that the risks associated with ongoing and continued ownership of these assets would no longer be an obligation to the taxpayer. Unscramble the egg: go out and buy the assets, borrow the money, reverse this terrible decision that has been made and all the problems will go away. I simply put that to you.

The point of the motion shows the unpredictability of Paul Keating's federal Labor government driven deregulated market. In establishing interconnectors, to a degree we were roving into a world of the unknown. Four or five years ago, no-one knew exactly what was going to happen with the interconnections. Now the picture is far clearer: there are massive risks associated with this electricity business.

I am reiterating that, if it was such a bad decision, I say to the Labor government and to treasurer Foley: go ahead, rebuy the assets and take control of the power utilities in this state again and cut the prices to consumers. Stand true to your rhetoric and what the Labor Party says it believes. Go ahead and do it.

Mr CAICA (Colton): I support the motion and would like to spend some of my time talking about some of the positive steps taken by the government to improve the affordability of South Australia's electricity supplies.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

Mr CAICA: It will not be a short speech, actually. First, as always, I found the comments of the member for Waite very interesting. I remind the house that, while we were in opposition, we warned the then government and did our best to stop the privatisation of electricity assets, but its uncontrollable ideological urge to privatise has proved, demonstrably, to be against the public interest. Again, with the member for Waite's comments in mind, we look at New South Wales and Queensland, which still control their electricity assets; and I do not understand what risks might be involved in controlling a monopoly, which is what they do and what we sold. So, even in opposition, members opposite are still putting up the price of power. Consumers are now, in effect, paying for the artificially inflated price set by the previous government for our electricity assets, which were once owned by all South Australians. This government has been left with the task of

putting the public interest back into the electricity industry and reversing the failures of privatisation.

While in opposition we also fought Murraylink, which was so ardently supported and fast-tracked by the then government as an unsubsidised risk-taking venture by the private sector to supply us with cheap power. So much for risk taking! It is now regulated and assured of a fixed income out of taxpayers' pockets—and it is so cheap that it is now going to further add to our power bills. Murraylink is another burden inherited from the former Liberal government.

As soon as we could after winning government, we established the Essential Services Commission as a strong regulator to protect consumers' interests and as an advocate for fair pricing. We amended legislation to ensure that electricity retailers justify their price increases to small consumers. We introduced penalties of up to \$1 million for electricity companies that breach their licence conditions. We successfully lobbied for stricter rules and far greater penalties for generators found cheating in the National Energy Market. We are also undoing the shoddy work of the previous government and addressing price issues by ensuring additional electricity supply to South Australia.

I thank and congratulate the Minister for Energy, because South Australia has signed an agreement with New South Wales and Victoria to upgrade the electricity link between the two states and to deliver up to 200 megawatts of extra power to South Australia. This will help to smooth out our peak summer demand, as we are less likely to have summer peaks that coincide with New South Wales than Victoria, as was so ably highlighted by the member for Napier's contribution.

An agreement has been reached by the ministers to fix the transmission regulation rules which have been so frustrating and which led to the protracted legal battles over interstate connection. Again, through the energy minister, the government is playing a leading role through the NEM ministers' forum and the Ministerial Council on Energy in developing reforms for the National Electricity Market's regulatory processes. The model largely agreed by the relevant state ministers will create a clear rule-making body, providing the missing policy direction and ensuring that necessary code changes occur soon.

The government is also very confident that within a short time we will have a single national regulator, which will be clearly a regulator only and not one which mixes regulatory functions with rule-making. We will have a single rule-maker and a single regulator leading to clear policy guidance. This government has initiated competition in our gas supply for the first time through the SEAgas pipeline which will equal the capacity of supply from the Moomba to Adelaide pipeline. This means we will have both greater capacity and assurance of gas supply for our electricity generation.

The government is also working on demand site management to reduce summer demand by levelling out peaks so we are not hit with the costs of over-building generation capacity. We are examining the feasibility of a state domestic energy management strategy to reduce costs through educating consumers to decrease consumption through energy audits, and all members in the house are familiar with those initiatives. We are funding an energy efficiency program for low income households. The South Australian government is taking the lead by setting a target of reducing energy use in government buildings by 15 per cent by 2010. Through the new infrastructure portfolio, the minister is developing a strategic plan which includes the encouragement of private sector investment in our future energy needs.

In summary, we have pulled out all stops to mitigate the damage caused by the inept and disastrous management of our electricity supply by the previous government. I commend the motion to the house.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I rise to speak against this motion. It is interesting that we have just had two members obviously reading speeches prepared in the office of the Minister for Energy, who is very good at self-congratulation. My mother taught me that self praise is no recommendation, and the Minister for Energy would be well advised to take that advice. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. It is time this government took a big mouthful. The pill that it is trying to force onto the people of South Australia is a bitter one.

Let us take half a step back to look at the energy situation in South Australia. Let us bring a few facts to bear. The economic whiz kid—

Members interjecting:

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

Mr WILLIAMS: Thank you for your protection, sir. The economic whiz kid from the government just said, 'You sold ETSA, and the price went up.' Of course, that giant leap of faith connects the two. That is the problem we have on the government benches: that giant leap of faith. This state has suffered long enough because of that simplistic and popular sort of politics espoused by the people on the other side of the house.

If interconnection is the answer to the state's problem, why is Riverlink good and Murraylink bad? Basically, they do the same thing. They ship electricity out of the New South Wales marketplace into South Australia. The big difference between the original proposals is that Murraylink was originally proposed and built by private investment, whereas Riverlink was always going to be subsidised by the South Australian electricity consumer. I believe the Murraylink people have been encouraged by the current Minister for Energy in South Australia, with all of his hype and ridiculous talk about the situation, to go to NEMMCO and seek to become a regulated asset.

The original plan was that Murraylink was not going to be a regulated asset: it was going to be unregulated and it was going to deliver power into the South Australian market at no cost to the consumers. This minister, through all his hype, has convinced them that they would get regulated status. That is exactly what has happened, so I blame this minister for that.

Again, I ask government members why Murraylink is bad and Riverlink good. The big advantage of either of those interconnectors to the South Australian market is that they have overcome a previous problem we had in delivering capacity to supply electricity into the Riverland region. Anyone who has been following this for more than a couple of years will know that we did have capacity problems supplying electricity into the Riverland region. Either Murraylink or Riverlink was going to overcome that. Indeed, that is what has happened with Murraylink.

The problem the government has is that it said so much prior to the last election. It said so much about electricity and what it would do. It promised. It is on the pledge card: 'We will build an interconnector to New South Wales to deliver cheaper power.' Well, they were always going to have great difficulty in delivering on that promise and, ever since day one, they have been attempting to blame-shift to the opposition. Murraylink was already under construction at the time

and it was always going to be difficult to convince NEMMCO that a second interconnector should have been built to do basically the same thing. It was always a race between Murraylink and Riverlink, and Murraylink won. They were clear leaders when the Premier made that announcement, backed up by his senior ministers, that they would build the Riverlink interconnector. Now they are trying to blame-shift. Then we had the simplistic economics by the member for Giles, and the Treasurer, as is his wont, did some selective reading from the Standard and Poor's document here in the house yesterday. I, too, will read from that document. On the front cover it states: 'a state with a very strong credit rating'; inside it says: 'an extremely strong financial position' and 'marked improvement in financial strength'. It goes on:

Two key factors have tamed South Australia's net debt burden, following the spike in debt in the early 1990s associated with the bailout of the troubled state-owned financial institutions.

Now we all know about them; I will not go back to that. In order of importance they are:

'privatisation of the state's electricity assets in 2000 and 2001'...

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order! The member for Bright will not use displays.

Mr WILLIAMS: So, Standard and Poor's have recognised why we have an extremely financial position, why we have a state with a very strong credit rating. It is because we privatised those assets and, as the member for Waite said a few minutes ago, returned \$5 billion. I will repeat the point that the member for Waite made: if you honestly believe that that is the cause of the problem—the money is in the bank, because that is where we put it—go back and buy the assets. NRG Flinders is on the market and it has been on the market for over 12 months. I think you will find that TXU's Torrens Island is—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member will address his remarks through the chair and not directly to the government.

Mr WILLIAMS: I apologise. I believe the government would find that TXU's Torrens Island power station is also available if it wanted to pay for it. I guarantee you would probably buy it for less than what we sold it for. The money is in the bank; that is the beautiful thing. This government has caused this; I said in the grievance debate last week that this government has proved that it wants to rewrite history but it had the opportunity to walk away from the Healthscope contract at Modbury Hospital, which they railed against when they were in opposition. The opportunity presented itself but they did not want to do that because they confirmed that the previous government made a good deal with Healthscope. Only last week, this government had the opportunity to take over the metropolitan bus service.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member will restrict his remarks to the motion at hand.

Mr WILLIAMS: I take your advice, sir. I am just building the case that the problem with this government is that this is not a one-off occurrence. This is happening time and time again. The privatisation bogey that this government talks about—well, they supported it all. They supported it at Modbury Hospital. Last week, they supported it in this very chamber, when I and a couple of my colleagues ensured that the division would be recorded in *Hansard* and every member of the government voted for privatisation of the bus services. Might I just repeat that the money is in the bank and, if the government honestly believes its own rhetoric, and I know that they do not, they know how to overcome the problem.

The money is there, the assets are available, go out and buy it. Problem solved. Of course, they do not want that.

I will just remind the house that, in the last 2½ years when we were in government, we increased the state's generating capacity by 37.5 per cent. Riverlink, if built, would not deliver 10 per cent of the peak load for South Australia. You cannot compare what we did. Not only did we increase that interstate capacity but it was all done with private money. Not one dollar of taxpayers' money was spent. Riverlink was always going to cost taxpayers, the electricity consumers of South Australia, dearly. I defy any member of the government to explain to the house why Riverlink is good and Murraylink is bad. What is the difference?

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I have been quite astounded listening to the member for MacKillop. He does not appear to be very aware of some of the statements made by the Hon. Rob Lucas in the other place when he was in charge of the electricity sale. I will proceed to enlighten the member for MacKillop about some of the statements made by the Hon. Rob Lucas in relation to the sale of electricity, the ETSA assets and, particularly, the issue in relation to the Trans-Energie interconnector. It is disappointing that the member for MacKillop does not know and, apparently, does not want to know what was said by the members of the Liberal Party.

Perhaps that was when he was the fiercely independent and ruggedly handsome member for MacKillop. Well, he is not fiercely independent any more and I will not make any comments on the ruggedly handsome bit: I will stick to the facts instead.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: So, you don't fancy him then?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order!

Ms THOMPSON: The member for Napier said, 'Maybe he's just a bit rugged.' Moving onto some of the serious parts of this issue (because it is a serious topic), I remind members that the decision by the ACCC to grant the Murraylink interconnector regulated status has thrown the spotlight on the Liberal Party's flawed ideology in relation to the privatisation of South Australia's electricity assets.

Mr Hamilton-Smith: What planet are you from?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Ms THOMPSON: Having initially supported the concept of stronger interconnectors with New South Wales in order to put downward pressure on electricity prices on this state—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Ms THOMPSON: —I certainly remember hearing the then premier talking about the importance of Murraylink, but then we had a change of mind. That was when the Liberal Party moved to oppose—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I do not mean to interrupt the member for Reynell, but will the gentleman in the gallery please turn off his mobile phone. Thank you. The member for Reynell.

Ms THOMPSON: As I was saying, first we had a very enthusiastic premier supporting Murraylink, and then someone very much changed their mind, as seems to have been the case with the Liberal Party in relation to the sale of electricity the whole way through. The Liberal Party moved to oppose what is now referred to as the SNI project—a regulated direct electricity link between South Australia and New South Wales. The Liberal Party's main interest in this—which we can see now and which most of us suspected then—was to maximise the sale price for South Australia's electricity assets.

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Ms THOMPSON: Some members opposite think that this was to the benefit of the taxpayer. The taxpayers of this state, mainly, are the people who pay for power, and that seems to have escaped the limited understanding of many members opposite in relation to the hardships faced by our community who have to pay for the incredibly high rates of electricity—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Ms THOMPSON: —brought about by this flawed approach of the Liberal—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Bright.

Ms THOMPSON: —Party to the whole management of the electricity assets. The sale price was maximised, but that means that the companies that bought ETSA must have a return on the sale price, and so people pay for it through power bills. The Liberal Party feared that the promise of lower electricity prices that would have been achieved by the interconnection with New South Wales would help to drive down the price the Liberal Party could get for selling off our essential assets and bring it less glory.

Members opposite still do not seem to have read Blandy's projections, which indicated that if we maintained our assets in our own hands we would have paid off debt to the same level within 10 years and then have the asset in our hands and have the revenue stream. That piece of information seems to have been singularly neglected, ignored, stomped on or turned a blind eye to by members of the Liberal Party. They simply do not understand the ability to balance off revenue streams with debt decrease. South Australians are still living with the impacts resulting from the Liberal Party's obsession with privatising electricity. It was clearly about privatising electricity. The then premier came into this house and said that he had suddenly read the Auditor-General's report and learnt that there were risks associated with holding electricity assets in a modern, competitive environment. If he had read some of the work about competition he would have known that about three years earlier. However, he needed the Auditor-General to tell him. That government was so incompetent it could not work out such an important matter for themselves. The Auditor-General had to tell them.

So here we are, living with the impact. Not only do we no longer have electricity as an essential public utility but, in October 1999, the electricity pricing order was issued, which set in place the formulas for determining electricity distribution tariffs until July 2005. In Victoria, network charges are about 33 percent of the cost of electricity. But in South Australia, consumers pay about 43 percent. So when the member for Bright refers to increases in power prices, that is where they came from. We did not have any choice. The Liberals were the ones who had the choice. They were the ones who set up the increases in power prices, by guaranteeing the purchasers of the formerly government-owned ETSA that they would be able to charge inflated prices for power distribution until 2005.

When last in government, the Liberal Party failed South Australians by not having an effective energy policy. They were all over the place. I have just indicated that they needed the Auditor-General to tell them that there were risks. The Liberal Party's main concern was simply to privatise the state's essential electricity assets. They were not able to think through ways of managing the known risks. In the absence

of any real energy policy, the Liberal Party threw its weight behind the so-called entrepreneurial interconnector, Murraylink, as the answer to satisfying South Australia's energy requirements.

The then treasurer, the Hon Rob Lucas, on several occasions praised the approach taken by TransEnergie, the proponent of Murraylink. The Hon. Rob Lucas stated the Liberal Party's strong support for Murraylink and, in fact, suggested that the Liberal government was fast-tracking the Murraylink interconnector. Murraylink was going to be good for South Australian consumers because it would be a commercially run interconnector. The Liberal Party thought that their interconnector, Murraylink, would not be subsidised by South Australian consumers. This is in contrast to the belief of the member for McKillop.

There is no doubting the extraordinary reach of the previous Liberal government. We live with the impact of their decisions daily, and many people are struggling to do so. Not only did they ensure that South Australian consumers would be paying higher electricity prices under the EPO, but the conversion to regulated status of their interconnector will now require South Australian consumers to pay even more. With the ACCC's recent decision to allow Murraylink to convert, South Australians now find themselves facing electricity price increases to pay for the interconnector, that the Liberal Party wanted. South Australian consumers are being asked to pay for another interconnector with Victoria, that they did not ask for, and one that, in its current form, adds little to satisfying the power needs of South Australia.

The Labor government will remain pragmatic in implementing strategies that will improve the security and affordability of power supplies to South Australian consumers. We examined the real risks and we examined real solutions to those real risks. The government's approach to finding real solutions to our state's energy problems can be starkly contrasted with the failed ideological approach of the Liberal Party, as evidenced by the higher prices we pay for the Liberal Party's electricity privatisation mess, and their support for a failed private sector interconnector.

When will we hear, 'Sorry' and 'Yes, we did it. We did not understand we were going to be penalising every single resident of South Australia. We just panicked. We raced off. We had this idea that privatisation was the way to go. We didn't really understand what we were doing. We didn't mean to penalise everybody in South Australia. But we did and we're sorry'? When will we hear that recognition from members opposite? When will they realise that they must abandon this idiotic approach of just privatising, and ignoring real risks? The Labor Party takes a responsible attitude to these and all problems.

Time expired.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW secured the adjournment of the debate.

FOREMAN, Mr G.

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): I move:

That this house congratulates the recently retired chief executive of DAIS, Mr Graham Foreman, on his distinguished career and his outstanding contribution to the South Australian Public Service.

As members would be aware, the former DAIS chief executive, Graham Foreman, left the public sector in August this year. Over the past 20 years, Graham has held a number of senior positions in government with a focus on central

agency roles, policy, finance and human resources management. His positions included Director, Budgets, in the Treasury Department; Director of the Cabinet Office; and Commissioner of Public Employment. During the 1970s Graham was a member of the ground-breaking policy division in the Dunstan Premier's Department. He was also Assistant Commissioner, Administration and Finance, in the former Highways Department in the 1980s. I think from that list we can see that he was a man of immense ability and was strategically placed throughout the public sector over a number of decades to beef up particular areas.

He has also been a member of many government boards, including the Local Government Grants Commission, the State Transport Authority, the Country Fire Service, and the Forestry Board. Graham was Director of the Cabinet Office during the first years of the Council of Australian Governments, when issues of reform in areas such as transport, water and electricity were first being actively explored. During this time he was also part of the Joint Office of Cabinet and Government Management, which led considerable reform in the public sector. As Commissioner for Public Employment in the 1990s, Graham led the transition to contemporary executive contract arrangements as well as completing an overhaul of and implementing classification arrangements for Public Service departments.

He first joined DAIS in 1998, and I had the opportunity to read the farewell speech that Mr Foreman gave to the Institute of Public Administration. I will not read it into the record, but he quoted extensively from a management academic by the name of Professor Schick, and having done a Master of Business Administration I am always keen to look at management and organisational theories as they relate to both the public and private sectors. What Mr Foreman did was run through Professor Schick's notions of public sector efficiency, and he came to the conclusion that all that the professor was saying amounted to good management practice as applies to the public sector.

Debate adjourned.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

STATUTES AMENDMENT (WORKCOVER GOVERNANCE REFORM) BILL

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

SEXUAL HEALTH AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM

A petition signed by 84 electors of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to immediately withdraw the trial of the Sexual Health and Relationship Education Program, developed by SHINE, from all 14 participating schools, pending professional assessment and endorsement, was presented by the Hon. D.C. Kotz.

Petition received.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

The SPEAKER: I direct that the written answer to question No. 129 on the *Notice Paper* be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Social Justice (Hon. S.W. Key)—

Promoting Independence: Disability Action Plans for South Australia—Progress Report on Implementation September 2001; 2nd Progress Report on Implementation August 2003

By the Minister for Tourism (Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith)—

Adelaide Entertainment Centre—Report 2002-03
South Australian Tourism Commission—Report 2002-03

By the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith)—

Construction Industry Training Board—Report 2002-03.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr CAICA (Colton): I bring up the 192nd report of the committee, on the Upper South-East Dry Land Salinity and Flood Mitigation Program.

Report received and ordered to be published.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw members' attention to a visiting delegation from South Africa led by the Executive Mayor of the Xhariep District Municipality, Councillor T.S. Mofokeng.

QUESTION TIME

PORT RIVER EXPRESSWAY

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Treasurer. What is the latest estimated cost of the Port River Expressway crossing? In reply to a question asked during estimates which we have just received, the Treasurer advised that the total project cost estimate was \$131.3 million. The Treasurer this morning referred to the fact that the project may now be funded 'by a couple of hundred million dollars in debt funding'.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I am happy to get that answer.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Sorry?

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order and responses to them are also out of order.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Members opposite have been telling me to borrow and spend and to cut taxes.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer will not respond to interjections.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Thank you, sir. In respect of the Port River Expressway and the best estimates which are available, I will take the question on notice. I said this morning that the Port River Expressway is not just about bridges but, rather, substantial tens of millions of dollars of expenditure for roadworks leading up to the expressway. It is also about rail work and other complicated infrastructure. I would not be at all surprised if the figure is in excess of \$200 million. I am happy to get the figures and come back to

the house.

ADELAIDE AIRPORT

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): My question is to the Premier. Premier, what action have you taken recently to promote the redevelopment of Adelaide Airport and its precinct?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for West Torrens will need to tell the spin doctor minder that he needs a brain renovation. I have said it so many times: the questions are directed to the chair, not a minister or another member who is accountable for the matter to the chamber. The appropriate procedure, since I note the look of dismay and amazement on the member's face, is to point to the minister to whom the member believes the question is properly addressed, and then ask, through the chair in the third person—the Premier in this case—to provide the information sought.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I rise on a point of order, sir. I do not think we yet have brain transplants practically available.

The SPEAKER: We are getting there. It may be that I will need one before much longer!

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): It is clear that the deputy leader would be a star turn at a future comedy festival! I am delighted today to have participated in two significant events for Adelaide Airport; first, the opening this morning of Harbour Town—in fact, there was a traffic jam down there. I know the member for West Torrens would—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thank you for that compliment. It is a \$9.8 million development, which is not just about retail therapy; 400 construction workers were on site during its development, creating 300 retail jobs. Of course, there was a range of recently announced major developments in the retail industry, which is all about renewed confidence in the state and its economy. We saw the announcement of the massive redevelopment of the Elizabeth Shopping Centre, massive multimillion dollar developments at West Lakes and, of course, today, Harbour Town. It was an interesting signpost at the opening of Harbour Town just a few days before we see Sunday trading starting this Sunday. I have been informed already that Woolworths want to take on an extra 800 workers; Coles Myer, around 500 and Harris Scarfe, 100. After years and years of controversy and a lack of political will and courage, we are delighted that we will see Sunday trading start this weekend.

Following the Harbour Town ceremony, I was pleased to then proceed to a function at Adelaide Airport, with the Managing Director of Adelaide Airport Ltd, Phil Baker, and also a senior executive from Virgin Blue, Mr Deerdich. We saw the announcement today regarding Virgin Blue—in fact, the lawyers were there, delaying the ceremony for 15 or so minutes before the start to settle some of the paperwork. A few weeks ago Qantas signed up on the dotted line the anchor tenants of the new \$240 million terminal. Today, Virgin Blue did likewise. So, the two anchor tenants are in place. I am told that we are talking about an airport terminal that will be about three times the floor area of the Adelaide Oval, and 820 workers will be involved in the construction phase. There will be 14 air bridges, and that will be of great interest to tourists who have been calling for this for years, as well as for locals. It will be able to handle about 27 aircraft simultaneously and 3 000 passengers per hour.

Of course, in addition to that we know that Virgin was important for this because it now has priority access to five gates in the new terminal. Virgin Blue has grown substantially, with Adelaide becoming an important hub. Since commencing flights via Adelaide in December 2000, Virgin's share has grown to 31 per cent of domestic seats offered through Adelaide. That translates to about 200 flights arriving and departing Adelaide each week. I am delighted to be able to inform the house today that, Qantas and Virgin Blue having signed on the dotted line, and after meetings with the banks that we have had, with the Treasurer and with Robert de Crespigny, and on Friday morning with Qantas, with John Borghetti, with Hansen Yuncken and with other key players, and with Adelaide Airport Ltd, construction will start on a new Adelaide Airport terminal next month. As I say, the bulldozers will start work. I expect and hope that the new terminal will be ready for opening and invite all members along to an historic ceremony for our new front door to the world in around about October 2005, which sounds like great timing to me.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

BIKIE GANGS

Mr BROKENSHERE (Mawson): Will the Premier name the security companies he says are connected with bikie gangs? In the Premier's news release of 15 October, he said:

I am appalled by reports I am receiving about the level of involvement of bikie gangs in security firms in our state.

The annual report of the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs shows that there are over 7 000 licensed security and investigation agents in this state.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister for Police): As Minister for Police, I have received some information on this matter, but it is limited, as one would expect, because clearly it is an operational matter. As he said, the Premier has asked both me and the Attorney-General to prepare a package of measures for him—and ultimately for cabinet and obviously the parliament—to provide us with the laws necessary for the police and any other agency of government properly to address the very serious issue of infiltration and the association between bikie gangs, security firms and our licensed hotels and clubs.

Clearly, this is a difficult and very sensitive area, something on which I do not wish to elaborate further without taking advice from the Commissioner of Police, but I assure members that, within the allotted time span (of which there are five weeks remaining) the government will be in a position to announce the most significant crackdown on illegal bikie gang involvement with hotels and security firms that I would suspect any state of Australia has attempted to undertake.

The SPEAKER: Order! For the benefit of the minister and the house, the question sought information about the names of the firms to which the government has alluded in the statements that have been made so that the public may know which firms are known to have been infiltrated by bikie gangs. To have dodged the issue in that manner to my mind is the kind of answer that the house can do without. If the Deputy Premier does not have the information, it seems to me (as the member for Hammond as well as the chair) that it was not appropriate to make the allegation publicly without enabling the public to protect themselves from the possible consequences of hiring a corrupt firm.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I did not dodge the question, Mr Speaker. I should have thought that all members (including yourself) would respect the fact that, regarding operational matters such as this, the appropriate thing for me to do is—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Well, I just say to members that I am happy to provide what information the Commissioner of Police believes will not compromise any police operation. For members opposite to suggest that I do otherwise is reckless. I will not be a reckless police minister; I will seek the advice of the Commissioner of Police and return with a considered answer.

Mr BROKENSHERE: I ask a supplementary question. Does the Premier dispute the statement made by the Attorney-General in a recent radio interview when he said that firms could be named in parliament or under his authority as the Minister for Consumer Affairs?

The SPEAKER: Order! That is exactly the reason why parliament has privilege: to enable the public interest to be protected, but I will leave it to the minister to say what he will about the matter.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: As I said, we are going further in that we are preparing advice for the Premier on what laws are necessary to deal with those groups.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: If the yapping dogs opposite would just listen, I am happy to continue providing what I think is important information to the house. If members do not want to hear it, quite frankly I will not waste my time. Do members want to hear? It is all about caution and due process, and I should have thought that the member for Mawson as a former police minister would understand that it would be reckless for a minister of the Crown to make public—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The chorus of nonsense coming from members opposite is making this difficult. I am trying to be sensitive to the needs of the house—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I understand that there are certain operations under way. I am sure that, at the appropriate time, the naming of such firms would be entirely appropriate and will occur, and will be part of the process, particularly if we have to prescribe organisations and go after those organisations. However, I come back to the point. I do not have all the information, all the names and the detailed knowledge of the police investigations because, if I did, it would compromise the role of police minister and the role of the police commissioner. An opportunistic opposition; a lazy, reckless, foolish opposition, as we have opposite, sir, will not—

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Clearly, the Deputy Premier, whilst floundering for the answer, is simply debating the issue off to a sideline.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I understand what the honourable member is referring to. I do not think the Deputy Premier has further information relevant to the names of the organisations that cannot be trusted, so we will move on. The honourable member for Playford.

POPULATION

Mr SNELLING (Playford): My question is to the Minister for Federal/State Relations. What is the government's approach to population policy?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister for Federal/State Relations): I appreciate the member for Playford asking a question on what is a very substantial policy matter.

The Hon. M.R. Buckby interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: As the member for Light has said, the member for Playford is certainly assisting with the population needs of our state. The Economic Development Board's report, 'A Framework for Economic Development in South Australia', as we know, contained several recommendations regarding population. The report recognised several issues confronting the state, including the issues of declining population growth, the ageing of our population, the large numbers of young skilled South Australians leaving for opportunities elsewhere interstate and overseas, and ultimately one which we have to do the most about, the insufficient number of immigrants choosing to settle in South Australia. As we noticed, these issues have an effect not only on our state's infrastructure and service needs but on our ability to deliver them. An ageing population delivers a declining revenue base and both the Economic Development Board and the state government have recognised that this needs to be addressed.

Recently, Premier Bob Carr of New South Wales has called for a reduction in the number of migrants into Sydney and the Sydney basin, as he believes the city to be reaching the point of overcrowding.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: We'll take them.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: As my colleague said—a former adviser to an immigration minister, from memory—we will take them, absolutely. I think that therein lies the policy challenge for us at a state level and a national level; that is, how do we tailor national policy to provide sufficient incentives to have migrants choose regional Australia and not simply choose the large population bases of Sydney, Melbourne and south-east Queensland? We want more migrants in South Australia. It is a bipartisan issue. It is one with bipartisan support and, indeed, it is an issue for which former premier John Olsen had a passion in wanting to find some policy solutions. Both sides of politics have wanted to find ways of addressing this issue. We need a higher population to secure more investment in this state.

To assist us in endeavouring to get the right policy mix, the Economic Development Board recommended that a separate and discrete population unit within government be established. We have such a unit established now in the Department of Premier and Cabinet and reporting to me as Minister for Federal/State Relations.

The Hon. I.F. Evans: How many people?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am happy to get an answer for the honourable member on the exact number of officers in that section. It was recommended that this population unit would work to achieve specific population and immigrant targets, as well as working with the commonwealth government in developing policies to increase the number of migrants settling in South Australia. The unit is currently developing a state population policy. This policy will address issues of size, composition and distribution of the state's population. However, as I said, many of the policy levers to achieve this do rest with the federal government. I am delighted—and I hope I can speak for all members of this

house—to see that the new minister for immigration, a good friend of many oppose—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Some more than others.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Some more than others—is now the Minister for Immigration, Senator Vanstone from South Australia. She has a unique understanding of the needs of small regional economies and, whilst she must govern for the nation, I am hoping that her experiences with small population bases in South Australia means that we will be able to successfully negotiate some specific options for regional Australia. I am seeking a meeting with the minister to put a paper to her setting out a number of options that we would like to discuss with the federal government.

In conclusion, on Friday 21 November, the government, through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, will be sponsoring the Australian Population Institute's national summit in Adelaide, entitled 'Towards a Greater Australia: Regional Regeneration,' which will be attended by representatives from all states and territories and about 250 delegates—

Ms Chapman: Where's my invitation?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: If the member asks the member for Waite, who is sitting next to her, she will find that I have already told him that I am happy for him to come along. So, if the member for Bragg would like to come as well, I am happy to send her an invitation. I would not like to offend the member for Bragg by not recognising her important status in this parliament.

SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Will the Minister for the Southern Suburbs advise the house whether the report commissioned into southern suburbs infrastructure has been completed and confirm that it is the government's intention to address the recommendations of the report in the 2004-05 budget? The government commissioned a report, to be delivered mid to late September, to formulate a whole of government approach to continuing planning growth in the southern suburbs. The opposition has been contacted by constituents in the area concerned about the lack of consultation undertaken and information available about the review.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for the Southern Suburbs): I thank the member for that question, and I am pleased he is showing an interest in these kinds of issues in the southern suburbs. It is interesting that, on the Liberal Party's web page, the Liberal Party is saying that there should be no further development in the southern suburbs until we get the infrastructure issues correct.

This is a party that was in government for eight years and did very little to address these infrastructure issues in the southern suburbs. They built an expressway, which has put extra pressure on housing blocks in the southern suburbs. There are issues to deal with health, education and, in particular, health services and childcare services. Both of those—

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. My point of order is something about which you have been educating us all over the last year or so, that is, relevance. I asked the minister a specific question, which was not about how well we delivered infrastructure.

The SPEAKER: The minister needs to stick to the question that has been put.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Mr Speaker, I would say that the question was about infrastructure, and I was explaining what

the needs are in the southern suburbs and perhaps alluding to why some of those needs are there and what the pressures are.

Mr Brindal: Short, sharp answers.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Short, sharp and crisp answers; I'll try my very best. When a number of the developments over recent months were proposed—and they are developments that will total about 2 000 extra housing blocks in my electorate alone—I was asked by the city council what the government was planning to do in relation to infrastructure. It was a pertinent question because, in fact, a lot of these developments had been zoned as residential something like 30 or 40 years ago, and no infrastructure plans were in place to take account of these developments: no former government had actually done anything about it. As a result, in liaison with the head of the Department of Transport and Urban Planning, I organised a public meeting in the southern suburbs. I have asked Mr O'Loughlin to develop a process so that those infrastructure needs can be addressed, and he is in the process of doing that.

PRESCHOOLS, LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. How is the government ensuring that all preschool children have suitable access to learning technologies? Some kindergartens in my area have been able to fundraise to give children access to computer-based learning, but others have not been able to do so.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the honourable member for her question. Indeed, she is right, that there are some preschools that have been able to fundraise for that resource, but this will be the first time that all the government's 308 preschools will be issued with computers, and they will be equipped with drives to use both DVDs and CD ROMS. The government recognises that, with young children these days, computers and modern technology are very much a part of their world. In a recent survey, 68 per cent of 3 to 3½ year olds were discovered to have access to a computer in their home. In addition, 86 per cent of 4 and 5 year old children have a computer at home and 60 per cent of those are reasonably computer literate.

Outside the home, of course, children are also exposed, with the most common access point for computers being schools and preschools. This is the first time computers have been provided to preschools for curriculum purposes. The government believes that it is important to give these children a head-start in the world of modern-day technology and into their further development and learning as they progress into school. There will be a range of software provided with the computers that supports learning in the early years. Support will be provided to preschools to assist them in setting up those computers, and preschool directors and teachers will be able to access training to help them utilise those resources for their cohort of children's learning and development.

As I say, it is an important initiative. I note the opposition from the opposition party. They opposed the delivery of this. I would only say, from the phone calls we have had in our office today, that the preschools around the state quite disagree with the Liberal party. They are very happy for this resource, a resource that has not been extended to them before this government came to power.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Light): My question is to the Minister for Urban Development and Planning. Does the minister stand by his comments on development made in *The Advertiser* on 26 August 2003? The minister was quoted on 26 August as saying:

If a proposed development exists in an area not supported by infrastructure, it would be silly to release land. All you are doing is creating the social problems of the future.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Urban Development and Planning): It is an important question because it is directed at the heart of a number of critical urban development issues that are facing the state at the moment. It is worthwhile just sketching the background to this, while we are facing a number of these issues on the fringes of metropolitan Adelaide. In the latter years of the last Labor government a set of institutional arrangements called the Metropolitan Planning Strategy were put into place. They included a program called the Metropolitan Development Program. That was an institutional arrangement which allowed the state government to set in place a sequence for metropolitan development of this state. It was a sensible approach because it tried to send a message to the private sector and also to all of the relevant infrastructure agencies—whether it be health and the other social services infrastructures, such as education—but also to the hard infrastructure areas such as water, electricity and those other areas that establish a framework for future urban development.

Those days of having orderly development meant that there was a sense in which the services were provided when they were needed. The last metropolitan development program that was put in place by the previous government was in 1997, and that program fell by the wayside. Added to that, the commercialisation of a range of government agencies that provided infrastructure, and indeed the privatisation of a number of those agencies, meant that what we effectively have had is an invitation for out of sequence urban development. That is a big challenge with which the incoming government is now having to grapple.

Those opposite are allergic to planning. They are like cats to water in relation to planning—they do not like it—and that is why they never engaged in it. Under the last system, instead of putting in place a strategy and trying to respect it, the culture in the previous regime was—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WILLIAMS: I rise on a point of order, sir. I think the minister is clearly straying into debate and not answering the question.

The SPEAKER: I have to tell the member for McKillop that I am listening carefully.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Sir, I am trying to sketch an important background, because to understand our present problems one needs to understand the history. The important point to realise here is that there was a process in place that allowed for the orderly urban development of Adelaide. We have always had a fine history and culture of orderly planning and development. Unfortunately, what occurred over the last eight years was a culture of the major project, and people worked out that beating a path to the minister's door and asking to jump the queue, and out of sequence and out of plan development was the order—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, the Wine Centre, the soccer stadium—have we got a few others? I am sure there are others around the place. And, there is an expressway where the poor people of the southern suburbs can wave as other people head off into the member for Finnis's electorate. They can wave at the happy commuters on their way down to Victor Harbor, but they get no services. All they get is this very large motorway through their electorate.

There has been no provision for services for people in the southern suburbs. And that is the point. That is the contemporary debate that we are facing in the southern suburbs: no service provision by the previous government over the previous eight years—just a big expressway where they can wave at people as they pass through their electorates.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I rise on a point of order. Mr Speaker, I need clarification from you on what the minister has just said. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent by us in the south—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We are grappling with the very complex issues that are occurring with fringe development on the edges of our suburbs. Tonight, the Onkaparinga council is dealing with a sensitive application for a large subdivision in the southern suburbs. We have attempted to play a role in mediating a dispute which has arisen between the residents of those suburbs and the developers who are seeking to create those subdivisions.

Naturally, the residents of the southern suburbs are concerned that resources and services in those areas are strained, and they are fearful of an additional subdivision placing further strain on those services. We have attempted to play a constructive role in gaining concessions from the developer that will make contributions to those services, and we expect to be in a position to make some important announcements about those matters shortly.

SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): My question is to the Minister for the Southern Suburbs. Will the minister take immediate action to secure the purchase of community land within the proposed Aldinga subdivision for facilities such as a new school, health services and community services, all of which will be required as part of the government's responsibilities to this new development?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for the Southern Suburbs): I understand the great excitement the member for Mawson has in my electorate and what happens in it: pity he did not have such interest when he was in a position to deliver some of these services. Nonetheless, I acknowledge his great interest and, as my colleague the Minister for Administrative Affairs has just said, announcements will be made shortly to address some of those issues.

ROCKY RIVER DEVELOPMENT

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): My question is to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. Will the minister now apologise to the house for again giving an inaccurate answer to the house? Yesterday I asked the minister a question regarding the accuracy of his answer to a question about the Rocky River development. In his original answer to the house the minister said he was not aware of the

views of certain organisations. He gave this answer approximately 12 weeks after he received and signed a minute that made him aware of the views of those organisations. The minister made a ministerial statement to the house yesterday claiming that the original answer, that he was unaware of the organisations' views, was accurate because he had forgotten that he was aware of the organisations' views at the time of giving the answer. The minister has previously apologised to the house for misleading the house for his failure to read documents. The minister has now provided another inaccurate answer to the house because he has failed to remember he read a document he signed just 12 weeks earlier. Will the minister now apologise to the house?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I apologise to the house for having to waste its time with an answer to that pathetic question raised by the member for Davenport. He is referring to questions he asked of me in August last year and yesterday, after 14 months, having sat on this amazing mistake on my behalf, he decides to ask me a question on it. I checked my files last night. I gave an account to the house about the details of the issue and I leave it at that.

SMOKING BANS

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): My question is to the Treasurer. In the light of the Treasurer's admission yesterday that he has expressed his view about the timing of implementation of smoking bans in licensed premises to the AHA, will the Treasurer now reveal what he said to the AHA about his position and the government's likely position?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his interest in this. The member for Mitchell's long-held views on gaming venues are well known, as also are mine, which one would probably suggest are at opposite ends of the spectrum. I have never walked away from the government's taxing of gaming venues, and that was good public policy. Members opposite disagree, but they are the some people who want me to spend money and the same people who want me to cut taxes.

My views on the smoking bans are simply this: that one must weigh up all factors when one decides on a particular course of action. I do not think that is any different from many of my colleagues, and I suspect that the Leader of the Opposition himself is having the same dilemma as to how one balances the social impact of smoking together with the obvious economic impact.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No, I withdrew and apologised to the Leader of the Opposition. At some point he will have to come out and say what is his position on smoking. I have discussed with the Hotels Association, as I have with a number of organisations and people, various aspects of my views and they are that I am concerned about getting the balance right between economic impact, the economic shock of such an action, the job impact, together with the social impact. All of us need to consider all of those factors. I conclude by making a general appeal to all in the house that we need to weigh up the issues and, hopefully, collectively come to the right decision.

CHILD ABUSE

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): My question is to the Premier. Is the Premier's refusal to allow a royal commission into paedophilia influenced by errors made by government employees responsible for wards of the state prior to 1982 who were abused by paedophiles? I am aware of at least one case in 1978 where a 13 year old boy domiciled in an institution was collected from staff and abducted interstate for three months. Upon his return he told staff his story of abuse and the name of his abusers. The boy agreed to speak to the police, and I am advised that they sought to interview him. However, the boy was placed in the Gilles Plains Child Reality Therapy Centre. Contact with police was denied because departmental policy at the time declared it to be detrimental to the rehabilitation of the child. I ask this question with the victim's consent.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): There is nothing more sickening—and I am sure every single member of this house and this parliament agrees—than child sexual abuse, the abuse of authority, the abuse of power and abuse of trust. It does damage for the rest of a person's life. One thing of which we can be proud as a parliament is that we have now passed legislation that removes the iniquitous immunity that applied to alleged offences against young people prior to 1982.

I do not have the figures in front of me, but I am told that about 220 cases are being pursued by the police. I am told that the police are not only reopening old files but are also pursuing new inquiries. People are coming forward and telling the police about offences that occurred prior to 1982. This should have been done years ago.

It took this government to have the guts and the decency to remove an iniquitous provision in law that prevented inquiries relating to offences that occurred before 1982. That was not done by the previous government. They sat on their hands year after year and ignored the calls from those victims who wanted the law changed. With my support, we have changed the law, and now the police are investigating dozens of preying paedophiles. And let us hope they get locked up for a long time and the keys are thrown away!

SOUTHERN CROSS REPLICAS AIRCRAFT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): My question is to the Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts. Has any tenderer for the Southern Cross aircraft project been directly or indirectly provided with any information contained in the tender document of a competing party?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts): I am not aware of a situation such as that described by the honourable member. If he has any evidence along those lines, I would be interested to receive it and would have it investigated. The member is good at coming in here and asking questions of that kind, but the evidence is not always forthcoming.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Were each of the four tenders for the sale of the Southern Cross aircraft submitted by the set deadline?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I understand the processes followed were done appropriately. I will have both those matters which the honourable member has raised checked.

MINISTERS, REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): My question is to the Premier. Has any minister had to amend their ministerial register of interests recently to correct an earlier omission?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I quite often have ministers come to tell me about things that should be added to the register—as I am sure the honourable member has added to the register. To my knowledge that has not happened, but I am happy to check and get back to the member. I think that is fantastic; if that has happened, that is good. It is about being honest and accountable—not like the litany of deceit and the farrago of lies that occurred during the former government, when we saw all those inquiries, even finding the former premier to be dishonest.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. Sir, in your opinion as chair, does the expression ‘farrago of lies’ constitute an incitement of the opposition and debate?

The SPEAKER: Order! Yes, the word ‘lie’ with respect to a member is unparliamentary. However, ‘a farrago of lies’ does not necessarily apply to any particular member or, indeed, necessarily a member of this place.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr BROKESHIRE (Mawson): Will the Minister for Emergency Services rule out transferring the management of the South Australian Ambulance Service to the Department of Human Services, as recommended in the consultant’s report commissioned by the government?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services): No; why would I?

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

Mr BROKESHIRE (Mawson): Will the Minister for Emergency Services rule out assigning Country Fire Service brigades located within the greater Adelaide district to auxiliary status the Adelaide Metropolitan Fire Service?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services): The previous question had some basis to it. There is a report out there. It was done independently of government and lots of people are commenting on it. We hope that that report will help the services themselves decide the future. The proposition just put to me by the member for Mawson is an entirely new one to me.

Mr Brokenshire: Rule it out.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is a very good approach, is it not: ‘Will you rule out cutting the budget by \$100 million?’ What is occurring at the moment, you would hope with bipartisan support, in emergency services in the Country Fire Service and Metropolitan Fire Service is the most significant and positive reform in their history. Being abolished is the disastrous experiment of the previous government with the emergency services admin unit. What will come about from that is that the services themselves, under the former head of the Country Fire Service, Vince Monterolla, are now plotting their own future, to a great extent designing their own service. I have no idea where the proposition of the member for Mawson has come from. I strongly suspect that it is merely yet another piece of idle scaremongering. I have never heard of the proposition put to me from anyone except the member for Mawson. Perhaps it is his proposition, for I have heard it

nowhere else. The future of the MFS and CFS is now more firmly in the hands of those volunteers and workers who perform those vital services than it has ever been in the past, and they are the people we will be listening to.

ELECTRICITY PRICES

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): My question is to the Minister for Energy. In view of that fact that electricity prices have gone up by 32 per cent for household electricity consumption, does the minister now concede that the election promise made before the election has been broken, or does he seek also in this house to rewrite the promise publicly in the same way that he did recently in the media? On the first day of the last election campaign the Treasurer promised that:

If you want cheaper power, you vote for a Mike Rann Labor government.

On ABC Radio on 29 September this year, the energy minister claimed that what the now Treasurer actually meant by his promise was that Labor would provide cheaper electricity than the Liberals otherwise would.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): In recent weeks, question time from the opposition seems to have devolved into one or other of them standing up and saying, ‘Why haven’t you fixed all the problems we created?’ I mean—please!

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I know. If they are going to quote from the media, which is an unusual approach, there are a few I would like to offer on this very important issue. The honourable member’s explanation is plainly wrong because the price increase was not 32 per cent. That is simply wrong. The explanation for why that was offered by the shadow minister is, first, that he does not understand and he has not read anything about it—and I can believe that; and, secondly, it is another piece of, shall we say, misrepresentation of the facts in order to inflame the debate. It is very provocative and very likely to inflame the debate when that sort of thing is said.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I take offence at the implication by the minister. He has accused me of misrepresenting the facts. The facts are as I quoted: from 1 January this year the increase was 32 per cent.

The SPEAKER: Order! The remarks made by the minister, as far as I heard them, were not offensive or against the standing orders. There is no point of order.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is tiresome to have to say this over and over for the member for Bright. Let me make this point: under the previous government, at the previous round of contestability before 1 January, the average price increase which they imposed on South Australian businesses was 45 per cent. That is what they had lined up for the people of South Australia. Let me explain why. If we are going to refer to the media, let me refer to Professor Blandy’s statement today where he explains it all. He said—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: That’s absolute nonsense.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: They say that it’s nonsense—that they didn’t impose a 45 per cent increase—but they did: OneSteel, a 65 per cent increase in its power costs under the Liberals after their privatisation. Everyone on this side regrets the disaster that we inherited and that prices are not lower. There is no joy for any government in the disastrous, abhorrent situation that we inherited in the wake of privatisation.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Waite!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: If the opposition wants to refer to the media, let me refer to the comments today of Dick Blandy, who said that everyone is pretty disappointed in the result of the price increases for a couple of major reasons. The first is that the privatisation of ETSA, particularly the network assets, resulted in something like a 2 per cent per kilowatt hour rise in the retail price of electricity. Everyone knows this. The regulator said it; Professor Blandy said it; the people out there know it; everyone knows it except the former government. All that we have seen in recent days is members opposite crowing about their privatisation. Well, I defend our record, and I invite the shadow minister for energy to get out there on the radio, on the television, and in the papers and keep talking about how good his privatisation was.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): I ask a supplementary question. Does the Minister for Energy disagree with the Standard and Poor's report released yesterday, which states:

Two key factors have tamed South Australia's net debt burden, following the spike in debt in the early 1990s associated with the bailout of the troubled state-owned financial institutions. In order of importance, they are: privatisation of the state's electricity assets in 2000 and 2001, which reaped almost A\$5 billion, most of which was used to pay down debt, and was a key factor in the December 1999 rating upgrade to 'AA-plus' from 'AA'.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: There is absolutely no doubt that the privatisation of ETSA and the way in which it was done by the previous government did reduce debt. Today Professor Blandy talked about how it was achieved. They trebled the asset value of the—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Sir, if I might. I agree; they did. They trebled the value of both the transmission network and the distribution network and made sure that electricity consumers would be paying for that big price. They can take pride in removing—

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I thought the question was perfectly simple: do you or do you not agree?

The SPEAKER: Order! The question asked is not an orderly question. It is not appropriate for a member to seek an opinion from a minister by asking whether or not the minister agrees with something. It is appropriate for the member to ask the minister his opinion of a matter of policy and then by way of explanation point out that an opinion has been proffered by some authority on behalf of the public interest and leave it at that. It is not appropriate and it is not orderly—and it never has been—for a questioner to ask whether a minister agrees or disagrees with something to be found in a publication or in the media. Whilst the question was straightforward enough, it was not what the chair knows to be orderly, and notwithstanding that fact, in thinking that through, I allowed the minister to respond. What the minister needs to do in the circumstances is either state the government's position or simply say no and sit down.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Being a generous soul, I interpreted the question in the most orderly fashion. I assumed that they were asking for my opinion and it is something that I am always happy to give, sir.

The SPEAKER: I have noticed.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: What I have said, sir, is that there is no doubt that the privatisation of ETSA dramatically

reduced state government debt, and I am attempting to explain why. A key component was the trebling of the value (as identified by Dick Blandy) of the transmission and distribution network, which locked in higher prices to be paid by electricity consumers. When the previous government was intent on reducing debt through a sale with which we never agreed and never will, in case they are wondering, what they did was actively, with a plan, transfer the debt burden to electricity consumers. So, electricity consumers in South Australia are now paying a higher price because of the debt reduction strategy of the previous government. We have all said it, and I have said it over and over: it was their decision but you would think they would stop asking me why the prices are supposed to be our fault. That is what they did; that is what occurred.

SCHOOLS, AFTER HOURS CARE

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What is the government doing to ensure the safety of children in after school care facilities; and has an investigation into the recent incidents involving young children in after school care been instigated to ensure such incidents do not recur? On Wednesday last week, a five-year-old boy walked out of his after school care facility following his first day at school at Belair Primary School, sparking a wide ranging two-hour police search. The following day, a father told ABC Radio that his eldest daughter collected her sister, who had already signed into after school care, and walked home together. The man said that, when he rang after school care, 'they were not even aware they were missing.' On Friday, Channel 9 broadcast yet another case in which a child disappeared from after school care.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): This is an important question and I thank the honourable member for it. Before answering the question in full, I must say that I believe that part of the question is a little wrong. I understand—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Yes, it is an important question because the first incident to which she referred should not have happened. As a minister and a mother, I expect all facilities to know where children are at all times and to ensure that they are properly supervised. So, the member is quite right to raise that matter, and, of course, it has been raised in the public domain.

The part of the question that I think has some wrong information about it is the reference to a Channel 9 report. If it is the report with which I am familiar, that was not an after-hours school facility at all but a primary school where a new reception child left the school.

Ms Chapman: Does that make a difference?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Well, there is a difference, because the first incident at Belair was not a government service but a private service, whereas the second incident was a public school. The out-of-hours care incident, where the operator was a private provider, according to the information given to me, involved a service that was appropriately licensed and accredited. Immediately upon hearing of the incident, which should not have occurred, I ordered an investigation by my department. My department went immediately to the service to investigate, and I am expecting a response on that matter, and I can provide the member with details once I have that information.

SCHOOLS, CRAIGMORE HIGH

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What is the cost to date of the education department's action to remove five teachers at Craigmores High School in terms of legal costs, the cost of salaries of the teachers who are still being paid but not working, the cost of salaries and payments to relief teachers and other teaching and support staff who are filling in for the absent teachers, and the cost in time of departmental and school staff spent dealing with the issues associated with the removal of the Craigmores teachers?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I am happy to provide details to the house. As the member would appreciate, this matter is currently sub judice, given that this matter is before the Supreme Court. Once that matter is resolved, I will make a statement to the house.

The member talks about costs. I say that the cost of failing to educate a child well is a huge cost. Urgent action needed to be taken. The culture and situation at that school, which drastically needs to improve its performance in terms of the service (and I can see a few heads nodding opposite, but I will not identify them out of respect to the members), had been poor for many years. I think it is fairly cheeky of the honourable member to stand up in this house with criticism of the government's action on this matter, given that her government made absolutely no—

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister has suggested that I have made a criticism of her. I raise this with the chair, because my question was very simply in relation to a question of costs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's point of order, if it relates to the observation of the minister is, in some measure, justified. It is better to address the nature and substance of the inquiry than the personalities of the people making it.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The cost of failing to act in this matter would have been great, both in personal cost to the students currently at the school and future students and indeed to that whole school community. I make absolutely no apology for the government's action in this matter. This school needs drastically to improve its performance, and the government will ensure that that is done. I make absolutely no apologies for having high expectations of all our schools, for the benefit of South Australian children.

HOUSING, DISABLED

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Social Justice): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: Yesterday, the member for Hartley asked a question concerning the daughter of a constituent who he said had been forced to abandon their child in order that the child was deemed homeless and would be placed in permanent accommodation. He said that her mother hopes that this will lead to her soon being placed in permanent accommodation in Minda Home.

I indicated that I would look into the matter and can now advise that the young woman concerned was left in respite

care at Minda on 1 September, and on 8 September Minda was advised that the parents would not be coming back to collect the child. The child has subsequently been accommodated in a nursing home whilst Minda identifies a comparable placement within Minda. It is anticipated that a permanent placement will be made very shortly.

The member for Hartley raises a broader issue about accommodation for disabled people. I am pleased to say that this is part of the new Commonwealth State and Territory's Disability Agreement, and this government has committed an average increase of 5.14 per cent per year to fund disability services over the life of the agreement. Amongst the higher priority areas will be the provision of additional accommodation for people with a disability and also improvements to respite services.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

CHILD ABUSE

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): The abuse of our children is inexcusable in any shape, at any time, in any form. When the Premier, in answer to a question which I asked today, said that much had happened that was wrong in the past but that no government had redressed that matter, he was quite right. I am ashamed that as a member of this place for 15 years it has taken us all this time to be aware of that matter and to do something about it.

Successive governments in the past have failed to address what is now emerging as a very serious issue. But, that does not excuse the fact that it now needs to be addressed and squarely looked at by every adult in South Australia and every member of this place.

To say in answer to the question, 'Do we need a Royal Commission?', that you did nothing about it is simply not good enough. It is not a good enough answer to the people of South Australia, and it is not good enough for those children—now adults—who were victims of a system that let them down. I remind this house, and I see that the member for Florey is present, that it took us generations to acknowledge the wrong done to the stolen generation. But we have done it and we have faced it, and we will continue to face it.

It took us years, decades, to talk about the plight of the Barnardo boys who were brought out from the UK under very questionable circumstances into what was tantamount to servitude in Australia. We have not talked much about the plight of our orphans in the 1950s and 1960s who were often abused in institutionalised care, nor of the plight of single, pregnant women, and the way in which they were treated in those days.

None of that excuses the fact that we now need to face up to a few things, unpalatable as they are. There is no excuse for the Somerton Park Surf Life Saving Club, the Anglican archdiocese, the Catholic archdiocese, or any institutional organisation which takes and abuses the trust of our children and lets those children be abused. There is even less excuse when the people responsible for the abuse, or the hiding of it, are the people of South Australia, are the government of South Australia, and the minister to whom these children were committed.

I am talking about people who were in the care, custody and control of whomever sat along the front bench at the time. They were wards of the state. We, the people of South Australia, were their parents and we let them down. I see no

excuse for that. *The Advertiser* and the media can have a feeding frenzy about magistrate Liddy, about Bob Brandenburg and about various other people, but seems intent on being quiet when it comes to the most heinous abuse of all—the abuse of our kids while in the care of this state.

I intend to speak about this and keep speaking about it until something is done, because I am ashamed—and I think every person in this chamber should be ashamed—that we have done nothing about it. And we should be doing something about it. I do not believe in witch-hunts, but I do believe in justice, and I do believe in justice for people who have been victims, especially when their victimisation was compounded by the fact that, having revealed what happened to them, the state of South Australia—through its various employees—said, ‘No, it is our policy that you cannot go to the police. Because we need to rehabilitate you and nurture you; for your future growth, we will cover up for paedophiles.’ And that is what the state of South Australia did—cover up for paedophiles.

And it is not only in our orphanages: it was also in our schools. I believe a little scratching of the surface will reveal cases where people accused of molesting students in the past—I am not talking about now—were simply encouraged to resign or often, perhaps, shift into the private school system. Because no-one really wanted to know. If you abused a kid, you basically got away with it and you could go and abuse the next one until finally it became so embarrassing, or you got so old, that you did not do it any more. I actually do not know how anyone got out of the network. This is not acceptable. It is not acceptable to the people of South Australia, it is not acceptable to the victims, it should not be acceptable to anyone in this house, and the sooner the Premier of South Australia actually answers the question and admits that there should be a royal commission, or the sooner this house takes it out of his hands and sets up a royal commission, the better.

BREAST CANCER DAY

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I rise today to acknowledge that next Monday 22 October is Australia’s Breast Cancer Day. I think there is probably no-one in this house who has not been affected in some way by breast cancer. All cancer is traumatic, but cancers of the reproductive organs are particularly traumatic for a variety of reasons. This applies particularly for women with breast cancer, when women’s breasts have been made an object of fashion, sexuality, and derision as well as admiration for too many years.

Breast cancer has an impact on people’s lives in many ways: it has the physical impact; it has severe emotional impacts; and it impacts on their families, both from their concern about the health and longevity of the sufferer and in terms of having to deal with all the societal baggage that is put on women’s breasts.

But there is hope in terms of dealing with breast cancer. The South Australian BreastScreen figures show that for the 2001-02 year 68 106 mammograms were conducted. Of those, 1 898 had to come back for a reassessment, and I can only imagine the fear and the sick feeling that those women and their families experienced when they were recalled for further examination. But the good news is that only 421 of those women recalled did experience breast cancer.

There is other good news in terms of the fact that longevity for people suffering with breast cancer is improving greatly. Only about a fifth of women now diagnosed with

breast cancer die in a five-year period, and this is great news in terms of the ability to live with breast cancer.

The Hon. Dean Brown: Do you realise that South Australia has the highest survival rate of—

Ms THOMPSON: I do realise that South Australia has the highest survival rate of breast cancer in the world, Deputy Leader. I know that this is particularly thanks to innovative work done at Flinders Medical Centre. I am sure it involves the whole of the South Australian medical community, but I recently had to counsel my sister-in-law about the fact that, if you are to have breast cancer, South Australia is the best place in the world to have it. I commend all those working cooperatively to solve this problem. We can all contribute to the prevention and treatment of breast cancer. There are lifestyle options we can make that minimise our risk of breast cancer. Further research is needed to get a better understanding of this, but so far we have good a understanding of indications that a reduced fat intake, not having alcohol every day, not smoking and taking exercise—things that produce good health overall—are particularly important in relation to breast cancer.

We also find that there are new and innovative treatments all the time, particularly in terms of combination therapies. I am certainly glad that the federal government recently extended the PBS facilities to some important new drugs in relation to breast cancer treatment. It is regrettable that it took a big campaign from a number of sufferers and their families to have the PBS extended, but it has happened. The current indications seem to be that there will not be an overnight cure to breast cancer, but there will be improved treatments so that people live longer with breast cancer and that produces its own challenges. It takes a lot to be disciplined in terms of good eating, meditation and good exercise to go through the many bouts of sickness that come with breast cancer treatment in order to survive, but we are seeing increasing quality of life for those who are living with breast cancer, even on quite a long-term basis. Some women are undertaking an amazing amount of treatment and still surviving and contributing to their families and the community, even working, despite long periods of treatment. All these new ways of approaching breast cancer need our support and I look forward to the support of all members.

Time expired.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN SPORTS INSTITUTE

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland): Again this Labor government has resorted to secrecy and stalling tactics in what seems to be a planned and sustained campaign against sport in South Australia. This government plans to evict the public from the South Australian Sports Institute gymnasium on 24 December this year, cut back opening hours and restrict the ability of elite athletes to train and maintain standards commensurate with the international standards this state has set for many years.

An ill-prepared and ill-advertised public forum last Monday night was the latest in a series of stealth and stalling tactics employed in the past 12 months to force through what seems an already adopted proposal to exclude the public from the SASI gymnasium. Not only was the meeting called with just two working days notice, but no-one outside the gym was told and there was no agenda, no formal structure and no minutes taken. The forum was more of a stage to advise what decisions have already been made rather than a genuine attempt to gauge public feeling over this controversial action.

Members of the public who utilise the gymnasium have been trying to get their opinions heard and questions answered to no avail for more than 12 months. It seems the decision has been made, but no-one at SASI or in this Labor government is yet sure how to force through these cuts without having to answer embarrassing and quite legitimate questions over their conduct on this issue. I have raised this issue in the house on a number of occasions with the Minister for Recreation and Sport. However, the minister has so far not been able to provide any information on the future of the SASI gymnasium.

Plans to allow elite athletes to train only while supervised by their coach may, because of the shorter opening hours and the inability to train at specific times because of work and other commitments, leave these elite athletes unable to train at all. For all the rhetoric from this government on the importance of sport in this state, one would think the government would be doing all it could to widen access for the general public to quality training facilities and to encourage participation rather than closing facilities in what can only be a cost cutting measure.

I say to the minister: how much more cost do you need to cut? You have lost the Centre of Cricket Excellence because you were too busy penny pinching; cycling is under threat because the Cricket Centre had been the major source of rental funds as a tenant at the Australian Institute of Sport headquarters; you dropped the Adelaide horse trials and were forced into an embarrassing backflip because of public pressure; you refused to support the Inter Dominion Racing Carnival; Adelaide City Force folded after this government ignored the need for a long-term workable agreement on Hindmarsh Stadium; and, the Adelaide Ravens Netball, despite the Premier being its No. 1 ticket holder, was lost to the state because this government would not provide \$50 000 in matching funds to enable the club to stay in the national competition.

I am absolutely astounded by the mentality of a government whose members constantly turn up to any sporting event where media cameras are present, while at the same time secretly cutting vital sporting expenditure throughout the entire state.

Ms Bedford interjecting:

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ: But it had nothing to do with this government's support. On Tuesday 27 May 2003, answering a question from a Labor member, the minister said:

SASI has developed and maintained a strong and successful reputation and history in the support and development of sporting talent in this state.

On Wednesday 25 June, again in answer to a Labor question, the minister said:

SASI provides the coaching staff, management, resources, facilities, programs and the initiatives to provide every possible opportunity for the talented athletes in South Australia to achieve at the highest level possible.

Well, minister, I am afraid you cannot have it both ways and the minister cannot claim on the one hand that the government is, through SASI, doing everything it can to provide our future sporting stars with every opportunity and facility while on the other hand continually taking away facilities from these athletes and kicking taxpayers out of facilities they actually paid for. If money is required from somewhere, why, minister, do we need a Minister for Recreation and Sport in this state? I suggest that clearly we have a Clayton's minister: the minister you have when you are not actually having a minister.

South Australia obviously gains little benefit from funding a Minister for Recreation and Sport. The future of sport in South Australia will be much better off if this government were to scrap the portfolio and channel this waste back into sporting infrastructure, where it could be of some benefit.

Time expired.

PRESIDENT OF THE USA

Mr CAICA (Colton): With the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger to the position of Californian Governor, the melding of conservative politics and the cinema seems to be unfolding with the unity and credibility of a B-grade movie. This disconcerting reality puts me in mind of Mr Bush's visit to Australia, where Mr Howard will renew our betrothal to our imperialist ally. In a true marriage of like minds, it began with 'All the way with LBJ' and it appears we will now celebrate 'Free to play the George Dubbya way', in recognition of our common strategic and security interests. This connection resonates even deeper in history, according to US Ambassador, His Excellency J. Thomas Schieffer, in his address to the federal parliament on the subject of national security, where His Excellency implied parallels between the Howard and Menzies eras in times of crisis.

To capture this duality of appearance and reality, I was wondering what films would best analogue the two eras that His Excellency referred to. The waning days of blind fidelity to the British Empire, as captured in the pathos of *The Remains of the Day*, grasp the essence of the Menzies era, while *The Green Berets* catches the Howard government's fawning veneration for the Bush administration.

John 'Duke' Howard, the self-appointed Deputy sheriff (although recently promoted to sheriff), the future hero of many *Sands of Iwo Jima*, and, if I can mix metaphors, stands ready in the wings. *Howard's End*, though, is the title that Mark Latham would probably prefer in regard to the true bathos of the latter.

The wash up in regard to Iraq is whether or not the unfolding story in that country rejects the joint western governments stated noble intentions, or whether the comparisons between intentions and outcomes is about as accurate as a bad analogy. To appreciate this we need to remind ourselves that two major goals of the invasion were the liberation of Iraq and the return of Iraq and its assets to the people. Behind the public statements, however, there are further mounting concerns that the coalition of the willing is still the coalition of the fibbing. This opinion arises out of the way the US administration and military establishment are enthusiastically carving up the country, and what this will mean for Iraqi ownership.

Current estimates of rebuilding Iraq are put around \$US120 billion, paid for by money which will be securitised against Iraq's oil reserves, as authorised by the US administration through the coalition provisional authority in Baghdad. The story gets worse. From this money, for example, USA deals worth about \$80 million have been made to a US firm BearingPoint (formerly called KPMG Consultants), which will oversee the establishment of a legal framework to rewrite Iraqi law, restructure and privatise government industries, regulatory and economic bodies, while international banks, Credit Lyonnais and JP Morgan have won the bid to establish and manage a trade bank for Iraq. The foundation for free enterprise and privatisation requires sound economic and judicial support.

As reported in the *Observer* newspaper, the invasion is full-on commercial. George Bush has stated that he wants a 'US-Middle East free area' within a decade. Donald Rumsfeld, in an article in *Wall Street Journal*, spoke of politics in Iraq that would encourage privatisation and free markets. Michael Bleyzer, a former Enron executive, published his manifesto for Iraq in the same publication—its title being, 'Taking Iraq private'. Richard Perle, ex-chairman of the US administration's defence policy board speaks of 'a responsibility, a stewardship not to turn [Iraq] over to institutions incapable of seeing this through to a successful conclusion'. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, is on the record as saying, 'We're going to use the assets of the people of Iraq, especially their oil assets, to benefit their people.'

According to further reports in the *Observer*, US insurance companies, construction firms, banks, business consortia, telecommunications companies, and so on, scrambling for the business and profits which will flow from the appropriation of Iraqi oil, the oil private dash for cash has seen contracts awarded without tender and contracts awarded to companies with present and past ties to the US administration and military complex. What else will come of this legacy?

Critics have pointed out that unless Iraqis are involved in both decision making and the goal of restoring ownership to Iraq the path of cultural and economic imperialism will see the undying hatred of Arab nations and the creation of 100 bin Ladens. Is this not what we set out to stop? This is the reality of what we are being asked to celebrate today.

Just to show my balance, I conclude by suggesting to President Hu, who is in Australia today and whom I do not expect to be listening, that the colonial militaristic driven greater co-prosperity sphere imposed by Japan on China and other Asian nations during the 1930s did not work—in fact, it was a precursor to the war—just as the arrangements imposed on Tibet by China shall not work. Mr Hu: free Tibet!

ELDER ABUSE

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): In the time I have been in this house, our attention and that of the community has turned significantly towards the pervading menace of child abuse, particularly institutional child abuse. While this is a scourge that we must continue to combat, I draw to the house's attention the growing problem of elder abuse. Elder abuse can take many forms—physical, emotional, psychological, financial or sexual. While the media is rightly outraged when we hear tales of home invasion against our frail aged, I am equally concerned at the insidious nature of some other forms of elder abuse that go less well publicised. Similarly, neglect by a carer, whether paid or family, can be devastating to someone who is partly or wholly reliant on that care.

I do not wish in any way to reflect on the many thousands of people who undertake the important role of carer to a member of their family, most often, the incredible amount of work they do and the saving in cost to the community generally in the work they do, but there is, in the minority, circumstances where this elder abuse does occur between that relationship of carer and the person being cared for.

In an unattributed article on the web site, the Elder Abuse Prevention Association states:

Societal attitudes make it easier for abuse to continue without detection or intervention. These attitudes include the devaluation and lack of respect for older adults and society's belief that what goes on in the home is a private 'family matter'. Shame and embarrassment often make it difficult for any person to reveal abuse. People don't want other people to know that such events occur in their family.

Lack of respect for the elderly may also contribute to violence against older people. When older people are regarded as disposable, society fails to recognise the importance of assuring dignified, supportive and non-abusive life circumstances for every older person.

The Elder Abuse Prevention Association is made up of professionals in the field, and I appreciate the work they are doing to raise awareness of this problem. The Executive Director of the association, Lillian Jeter, has written about some of the shortfalls in the way in which we deal with elder abuse in an article titled, 'Elder abuse is a hidden crime'. The article states:

Statistics could possibly reveal parts of the story, but there is no central database throughout Australia in which to collect any reports. Reporting of these events should possibly offer an insight into the number of cases and those who are the offenders, but there are no mandatory reporting laws. Even in other countries where there are mandatory reporting laws experts estimate that there may be as many as five times the cases that have not been reported. Even if cases are reported there are no adult protective services case workers in any state or territory to specifically handle these intricate and shocking incidents, requiring specially trained investigators. And, finally, if there were specially trained adult protective services case workers, enforcement would be impossible due to no specific laws for elder abuse and neglect.

The new challenges that are presented are not exclusive to us. I note the French President, Jacques Chirac, recently placed responsibility for the high mortality rate among the elderly during recent European heatwaves to a lack of care and attention from younger family members. Increase in neglect is a broad cultural issue as traditional family support systems break down. Our community and our parliaments must turn their minds to how we will compensate.

Our population in South Australia is rapidly ageing. This is particularly the case in an electorate such as Bragg, where 22.1 per cent of women are over the age of 60 or men over the age of 65, which is 5 per cent over the state average. While this issue potentially will be a particular concern to many in Bragg, it is a growing problem across the whole state, and this trend will increase in coming years as we live longer. I raise this issue in the house with the goal of putting the problem of elder abuse firmly onto the agenda. As a higher proportion of our community becomes aged, there is a potential for incidents to increase, and government departments, ranging from the police to social security services, will need to develop new means to deal with the issues raised. It is time for us to begin tackling these issues.

RAILWAYS, LEVEL CROSSINGS

Ms RANKINE (Wright): Twelve months ago tomorrow at 3.37 p.m. the Alice Springs bound Ghan hit a bus which was crossing the rail line on Park Terrace, Salisbury. Twelve months ago tomorrow, four very loved members of our community lost their lives and 26 people were injured. Their families were devastated and our community bore immeasurable grief. Twelve months on, there could be no greater tribute to those who lost their lives, those who were injured and those who worked so hard during the long and arduous rescue than to ensure that this type of accident does not occur again. In that we all have a role to play. We all must be aware and take care when using rail crossings. Sadly, we know too well the consequences if we do not.

The government and transport authorities have a role to play to ensure that our rail crossings are as safe as we can reasonably make them. I thank the Minister for Transport for his clear and immediate action in relation to the safety of the

Salisbury rail crossing and for his ongoing commitment to rail crossing safety in this state. A traffic management trial was instigated and a range of recommendations put to the minister—all of which have been accepted by him. The government is doing what it can, but, importantly, in his interim report on the accident, Vince Graham said that the breach of road rules was the most significant contributing factor to rail level crossing fatalities. This is a very sobering message. We—all of us: motorists, passengers, cyclists and pedestrians—have a real and significant responsibility.

It has been clear from the graphic television footage shown recently of the behaviour by some motorists at the Salisbury crossing since the tragedy that they have not learnt the lesson of the disaster. On 24 October last year, our community swung into action. Our magnificent emergency services, our police, our ambulance service, MFS, SES, and my beloved Salisbury CFS worked throughout the most distressing of situations, in appalling weather conditions, rescuing people, providing aid, extending care and calming those in distress. I know those services very much appreciated the presence of our Premier and their local member, who literally had just put his feet on the ground, returning from a national memorial service for the Bali victims. Our Minister for Education, also a local member, our Minister for Emergency Services and Minister for Transport were all on hand, lending a hand, providing support where they could. The Premier and the Minister for Education knew many of the children who were on the bus, and were literally sitting on the footpath, talking with our young ones until their parents could arrive.

There were many acts of bravery on this day, and I would like to make special mention of Mark Gurd, who was at that time a student of the Salisbury East High School. Mark found himself in a situation that not one of us would ever hope to be in—he was there, on the scene, before any emergency services arrived. Mark displayed a maturity that belied his age. He responded to a very traumatic situation in a calm and sensible manner, and our community is much the richer for having young people like Mark amongst us.

I would also like to pay tribute to all those who helped during this crisis, and I want to thank those who helped those involved in this tragedy deal with the very significant emotional after effects. I would like to thank the Salisbury council for establishing the relief disaster fund which helped so many families in so many ways, and thank those individuals and organisations who so generously donated. In conclusion, I would like to repeat my plea: let us ensure the lasting legacy of this accident is greater care on our roads, most particularly greater care when using our rail crossings.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Infrastructure): I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Monday 10 November at 2 p.m.

Motion carried.

URANIUM MINING

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism): I table a ministerial statement from the Hon. Paul Holloway in another place relating to uranium mining.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

A quorum having been formed:

ABORIGINAL LANDS TRUST

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport): I move:

That this house, pursuant to section 16(1) of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1966, recommends that allotment 21 in the plan deposited in the Lands Titles Registration Office No. DP 58704 (being a portion of the land comprised in Crown record volume 5407 folio 615) be transferred to the Aboriginal Lands Trust (subject to an easement to the South Australian Water Corporation marked A in the deposited plan and to an easement to ETSA Transmission Corporation marked B in the deposited plan).

I lay on the table the relevant plan.

Motion carried.

NATIONAL ELECTRICITY (SOUTH AUSTRALIA) (NEW PENALTY) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 16 October. Page 511.)

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): I rise as the lead speaker for the opposition on this bill to indicate that the opposition will be supporting this bill. In doing so, I point out that the bill has been a very long time—indeed, an unacceptably long time—in finally coming to this parliament. It is for this reason, because of this length of time, that the opposition has agreed to dispense with the usual agreed courtesies of allowing a bill to lie on the table for a full week without being debated, so we can just get on with it. We wish to emphasise that, just because we have agreed to do so in relation to this bill, does not mean that the observed practices of the parliament that have been occurring since its establishment in relation to this will be so easily given way to for future bills.

Mr Speaker, you would full well be aware that it has long been the accepted practice of this parliament that a bill is left on the table for a full week. I note that this was one of as many as five bills originally scheduled for debate this week that were in the same position. It is nothing other than sheer laziness by a government not to be able to get its bill in within the established time frames. We want to make that point very firmly and strongly.

In the case of the bill now before us, we are being asked to dispense with those protocols so that the bill can get through the parliament obviously in time for the summer peak electricity. We appreciate the need for that to occur, because we see this bill as an important bill. This bill effectively introduces a new D class penalty provision into the National Electricity (South Australia) Act 1996, and it essentially provides for a higher penalty, in this case a penalty not exceeding \$1 million for breaches of the National Electricity Code, and for \$50 000 for each day the breach continues.

This bill has a long history associated with it. I intend to share with the house just how long is the history of this bill. It goes right back to June 2001, because it was at the June 2001 meeting of COAG that the then South Australian

Liberal government requested that NECA undertake a review of the rebidding for electricity and the 'value of lost load' (VOLL) in the national electricity market. We brought that up for a very good reason. We saw significant problems starting to occur. At that stage, we had businesses moving into the national market, and we saw 1 January 2003 looming some time thereafter as a further problem for householders if this problem was not tackled.

Following their review of the bidding and rebidding practices of generators (which included an issues paper, a draft report and a public forum), NECA forwarded proposed code changes to the ACCC for consideration in mid-September. I am not exactly the greatest fan of the ACCC that has ever stood on the floor of this parliament—and the minister has made it clear that he is not, either—but the ACCC did have for consideration in mid-September 2001 a final report and proposed code changes referred to it by NECA. It effectively proposed to work with the national electricity market company to improve the dispatch process so as to minimise short-term price spikes; that generator bids and rebids be required to be made in good faith; that the onus of proof be reversed so that generators had to demonstrate that they were operating in good faith; and a prohibition on bids or rebids which materially prejudiced the efficient, competitive and reliable operation of the market.

At that time, the ACCC indicated their acknowledgment of receipt of the code changes, and they sought comments from interested parties, with consultation effectively closing in about mid-November 2001. It is interesting to note that the ACCC received a number of submissions, many of which highlighted concerns. Not surprisingly, some of those concerns were put forward by the participants in the market: the generators who did not really want a stronger regime in place.

The sorts of concerns that the parties claimed included: a lack of justification for the required change; a fundamental objection to the transfer of the onus of proof to the generators to justify their bids, as they claimed that was inconsistent with common law principles; the lack of definition of what is meant by good faith; guidelines were not included as part of the then code; NECA did not have a role under the code to act as a price or competition regulator; there would be a significant compliance burden associated with the changes; and proposed wording for the changes required subjective rather than objective assessment.

So, there was a fair range of submissions, but I found it of particular interest that included amongst those submissions was one from the New South Wales Treasury. That submission was consistent with those things that I have just put forward. The New South Wales Treasury made those submissions (I suspect) because—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: They owned the generators.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:—the state of New South Wales, as the minister indicates, owned generators. Of course, the state of New South Wales is not the only state involved in the market; so, too, is Queensland. I will come back to that point. This matter also went before the National Electricity Ministers Forum, which was held on 26 June 2001. On that date, the NEM ministers received a presentation from NECA on potential options for addressing inappropriate bidding and rebidding. That was almost 2½ years ago.

The NECA issues paper of May 2001 on bidding and rebidding practices of generators highlighted a number of specific examples for ministers when generators across jurisdictions had utilised the rebidding provisions under the

code effectively to artificially increase prices in the pool. These examples have now been well-publicised, but I think it is important to put them on the record to indicate the sort of behaviour that had been occurring at that time.

I repeat: this is almost 2½ years ago. They highlighted behaviour by, for example, Loy Yang over the summer of 2000-01 where large amounts of capacity (approximately 600 megawatts) were rebid to very high prices. Those prices could now be higher, but at that time it was \$4 500 from 8.30 a.m. to 10 p.m. compared to bids of under \$1 000 for the remaining 1 400 megawatts of capacity.

So, NECA's market analysis reports highlighted bidding and rebidding and, interestingly, activity by New South Wales generators. As we have indicated, the New South Wales government owns generators. They highlighted Macquarie Generation and Eraring, which resulted in a large spike on 27 August 2001, as significant amounts of capacity were shifted to prices in excess of \$4 000 per megawatt hour to coincide with the evening peak.

There was also the South Australian analysis. That issues paper highlighted that NRG Flinders had rebid its prices typically to above \$4 000 very close to dispatch on at least 12 locations, mostly when the capacity of interconnectors was reduced due to lightning. Those examples were disconcerting. A range of other examples was also put forward. As I have indicated, these examples have been talked about publicly and highlighted through the media. I repeat: this goes back to some time ago. This was a meeting on 26 June 2001. The minister has had the opportunity to be aware of that.

Members will recall that I became the minister responsible for electricity in November 2001. The first forum that I attended was on 7 December 2001. To that forum I took a plea on behalf of South Australia. I asked the then ministers, first, to note that NECA had forwarded proposed changes to the National Electricity Code to the ACCC that would have the effect of banning inappropriate bidding and rebidding practices that had been used by participants to artificially raise wholesale pool prices in the national electricity market; secondly, to note that the maximum penalty that can be imposed by the National Electricity Tribunal for breaching the national electricity code is a maximum of \$100 000 and \$10 000 for each day on which the breach continues.

I asked the ministers to agree that the South Australian jurisdiction develop changes to the national electricity law to increase the level of penalty for inappropriate bidding and rebidding to a maximum of \$1 million per event to provide a level of penalty that would more closely reflect the potential financial benefit to be gained from inappropriate bidding and rebidding practices. I asked that at the NEM ministers forum on 7 December 2001, and here we are now in October 2003 with legislation on those very aspects. Because there was a change in government, there was no opportunity for the Liberal government to be able to deliver on that.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister interjects. He knows full well that one of the reasons there were objections was because those objections came from the Labor states of New South Wales and Queensland which had a vested interest, because they are there in the market. This was then to go to the next minister's forum, and the next minister's forum attended by a minister was attended in 2002 by the current minister. It has taken from then until now for this bill to come forward. This agreement should have occurred in the early part of last year; at the worst in the middle of last year.

This agreement should have been in place well over a year ago.

We now have in 2003, just before the summer electricity peak is about to hit us, this minister introducing this bill to the parliament, golly gosh; it has to be debated in a hurry to get it through; so we would like it brought on straightaway so that we can have it debated. This bill should have been debated in time for the summer peak 2002-03, not 2003-04. This is one of the many examples of the tardiness that has occurred within this government over delivery of legislation to this house for electricity. Time and again, we see this minister, this government, trying to blame their woes with electricity on the privatisation process. That is what they would have us believe and South Australians believe. Increasingly, we are now starting to see mounting evidence of tardiness over the introduction of legislation into this house. We saw tardiness over the introduction of legislation in this house to facilitate the entrance into the electricity retail market of householders in the first place.

I have commented many times in this house and publicly about the tardiness of this government in not bringing to this house until August 2002 the facilitating legislation to set the rules in place for the entrance into the market in January of this year. The fact is we had companies such as Origin Energy and TXU (which are now starting to gather some momentum in the market—and I emphasise, only starting to gather some momentum in the market) saying to me as soon as I became responsible for electricity that they had to have the market rules in place by 30 June 2002 to have any hope whatsoever of being ready. They also indicated that, obviously if the rules could be ready before June 2002, they would be very grateful.

I gave them my commitment that, if our government was returned, we would deliver on that but, if our government was not returned, obviously all I could do was continually bring it to the attention of the government in place. Because the Liberal Party was not able to negotiate a continuation of its government, we were left in the position of simply being able to highlight the tardiness of that legislation coming into this house. As I flagged during that debate, there would not be companies other than AGL ready to retail to South Australian households. Had the minister brought the legislation to the house in a timely manner, we would have had Origin, AGL and TXU potentially in place.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister interjects, 'This is so sad.' It is very sad. It is very sad that South Australians have had to pay through the nose as a result of the incompetence, the laziness and the tardiness of this government. That is what has occurred. From 1 January of this year, we saw electricity for summer peak for South Australian householders increase by 32 per cent. That is what happened and it happened largely through the tardiness of this government. That is not an increase that occurred as a result of privatisation or the previous Liberal government. That is an increase that occurred at the hands of a Labor government. No ifs, no buts, it occurred at the hands of a Labor government. Now we find ourselves in this place yet again debating legislation that should have been in this place more than one year ago. As I indicated, it has been introduced at the eleventh hour, with a special plea from the government that we debate it as a matter of urgency.

As I indicated when I was briefed, I would have loved to have been debating this bill a year ago, and equally a year ago, I would have supported the legislation because it is

entirely consistent with what we were suggesting and what was being called for. I have to say, though, in view of the march of time, one has to wonder whether \$1 million will be sufficient penalty. Of course, the proof of the pudding is always in the eating, and I offer to the minister the following. If it is proven that, after this act comes into being, the penalty is not enough, the opposition will happily facilitate rapidly any increase that might be deemed necessary.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister indicates that he would have to get the other state ministers to agree. They are Labor state ministers, perhaps they would be prepared to help out their Labor mate in South Australia. There is no doubt the states of New South Wales and Queensland have a vested interest in this matter. There is no doubt that, on a regular basis, the states of New South Wales and Queensland are dabbling in the electricity market and causing fluctuations in price. There is no doubt at all that they are dabbling in the market—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister indicates the cheapest prices in Australia. I would love to see a pure price from those jurisdictions. The minister knows full well that the dabbling includes quite a lot of manipulation of price. He is well aware of that. If the minister wants to stand up in this house and say that those states are not playing with the prices, by all means, I welcome him, but I suspect he will not be denying that those states are indeed playing with prices. Indeed, Premier Carr in New South Wales wanted to be able to enter the market in the same way that South Australia and Victoria have. Had he had his way, we would have had a much more sensible electricity market than the one we are dealing with today. Premier Carr showed the courage of his convictions in endeavouring to take that forward, but regrettably, as I understand it, his state Labor conference would not allow him to carry that policy through.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The member for Torrens consistently has a difficulty with the privatisation of electricity. I know that a number of other members of the Labor Party at least claim to have as well. I refer them to the Standard & Poors report—I am sure that they have all received a copy from the Treasurer. I refer the member for Torrens and any other of her colleagues who share her views to reflect very carefully upon the words of Standard & Poors in relation to the privatisation of South Australia's electricity assets. I ask the member for Torrens and her colleagues whether they would still like to have the Labor State Bank debt and be struggling with that, or whether they agree with Standard & Poors that what we have done is dispose of a significant proportion of Labor's debt through that sale. A significant proportion of Labor's mess was cleaned up as a result of that sale.

The member for Torrens might have a short memory, but I have a pretty good memory, and I well remember the \$9.4 billion of debt left to us by Labor. I well remember the consequences of Labor's mismanagement of the State Bank. I well remember the consequences of Labor's mismanagement of SGIC. I well remember their unbelievable financial ventures in buying up laundries in London, investing with Belgium dentists and a whole range of bizarre activities; and 333 Collins Street in Melbourne stands as a monument to their maladministration. The final cost of the Myer-Remm Centre in Adelaide also stands as testimony to their maladministration. The privatisation of the state's electricity

infrastructure was necessary not only to ensure that we did not become part of an electricity stock market gambling with taxpayers' money but also to pay off some of the dreadful mess that they left.

Regrettably, at the time we left government, as the Treasurer has indicated, the job was not completed, and the job was not completed because we still had in excess of \$3 billion—in fact, some \$3.4 billion—of its mess left. We would have liked to clean it up as well and, had we continued in government, we would have kept cleaning up their mess. My biggest fear is that, now the wreckers are back in town, they will now start wreaking havoc again.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member needs to come back to the bill.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Yes, sir, indeed, and that is where the very point comes about. Now that the wreckers are back in town, they are already starting to delay bringing forward important legislation. We are seeing a last-minute rush of legislation into the house; we are seeing ministers in absolute chaos; we are seeing—

The SPEAKER: Order! I invite the member to either sit down or debate the substance of the bill.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: Well, Mr Speaker, I come back to the point. As I have been saying, this bill should have been here in this place well over a year ago. It has not been here well over a year ago, because we are seeing the same chaos of the past. I am flagging that on the record as a point of serious concern. We would have supported this legislation going through the house a year ago; we would have supported this legislation going to the house 1½ years ago; and we were very much ready to debate it then. One has to wonder just how vigorously this government pursued these matters through the National Electricity Minister's forum for it to take this long.

It may be that I am being harsh on the Minister for Energy, and it may be that the states of New South Wales and Queensland had such vested interests in the outcome of the South Australian resolution that they had been resisting the minister's vigorous pursuit of the issue for the entire time this government has been office. It may be that the minister has been there ferociously fighting this issue for South Australia, and the vested interests of New South Wales and Queensland was just so strong that it has taken him until now to be able to win the day. That could well be the case.

I think it is important that this house can be assured that the minister has been pursuing this issue vigorously for South Australia, and that is his reason for taking so long to bring this bill to the house. In the minister's wrapping up of his address on this bill, I would welcome hearing from him how many times he has taken this issue to the NEM forum; how many times he has spoken about this issue outside the forum; and how hard it has been—and the reasons why—to get agreement. I suggest to the house that this is an issue about which the minister was made aware immediately upon his coming into the job. I believe it is important that he explain to the house why it took so long for—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: We pointed it out to you when we were in opposition.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister indicates that he pointed it out whilst he was in opposition.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: We pointed it out to you in the Economic and Finance Committee, while you sat on your hands and the price went up by 45 per cent.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I am not sure what the minister did in the Economic and Finance Committee. It may

come as a disappointment to him that I did not sit down and read the minutes of the committee or his words of wisdom. I am simply highlighting to this house that, within a matter of a few days of becoming responsible for electricity, I took this issue immediately to the first forum (that is, the National Electricity Market) to which I had the opportunity to take it. That is in contrast with this minister, who has now been in the job for around 20 months and taken that time to get this issue to this house. I believe the minister owes this house an explanation as to why it has taken him so long to perform this very important duty. Regrettably, as I indicated, the forum did not go forward on that day and agree—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The minister indicates that it did not take any notice; that is not correct. That is the next point. The ministerial forum agreed that all jurisdictions would go back to their respective places and assess the impact of bidding for the summer of 2001-02, and the next available NEM forum would then consider the matter.

Assuming that the minister had then continued through with the wish of the forum, I would expect he would have taken to the first forum he attended the results of that South Australian analysis, and I expect that all the other ministers would have done likewise. But, the question remains: why has it taken us so long for us to get to the stage where this bill is being debated? Why was this bill not before this parliament before summer 2002-03? Importantly, that would have meant that this bill would have then been before the parliament before the important date of 1 January 2003, when South Australian householders entered the national electricity market.

Of course, there are people who would argue that, regardless of the passage of this bill, it may not make any difference. I have certainly heard those arguments, and I know that companies indicate that they are purer than driven snow and are not involved in these practices and, therefore, it will have zero effect.

Well, it would be nice if there is, in fact, no manipulation of the market occurring at this time. However, the opposition will be monitoring with interest the effect of this legislation. I would expect that it is likely to also have rapid passage in the other place and that we should be in a position to see this bill proclaimed before the summer peak hits. If it happens that these practices continue, because the quantum of \$1 million becomes inadequate, it may be that the figure needs to be lifted. I make the point that, at the time that the \$1 million was proposed, the maximum amount able to be charged by companies was \$5 000 per megawatt hour; that has now been lifted to \$10 000, although the \$1 million was proposed with the knowledge of the likely increase to \$10 000.

So, I am a little concerned as to whether \$1 million will be enough. However, as I have said, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The offer is there, made on the public record to the minister that, if he wants to increase the penalty, we would certainly be more than prepared to facilitate that occurring. I will be listening with interest to the minister's response to my questions.

I advise the minister that, if he responds fully to my questions, in a way that answers them all, there will be no need to go the committee stage on this bill. However, if I am left with questions after the minister's response, the opposition will have no choice but to go to committee. However, we trust that the minister will fully answer our concerns, and that

will enable us, if he does so, to move straight to the third reading.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): I move:

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

Motion carried.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to contribute to this debate, first, to say that I will be supporting the bill. I think it is a necessary measure and that the introduction of a new D class penalty provision in the National Electricity Act is needed, and this problem of rebidding and the abuse of market power by certain players in the electricity industry is one that needs to be addressed.

The minister and I have been engaged in discussing this matter since 1997, through the Economic and Finance Committee. We have been through hell together on this matter, hearing evidence from a range of parties. I want to draw a few matters to the attention of the house to illustrate why I believe we are at this point, why this Bill has come before the house, and why we are at the point we are in regard to the national electricity market and the electricity market in South Australia.

I want to start at the very beginning, by reminding the house that when the then Labor federal government, under the Prime Minister of the time, Paul Keating, established the national electricity market, a die was cast. A decision was made by the states and by the commonwealth that the electricity arrangements as they were were unsustainable. Very simply, it was an inefficient industry that had to change; it had to become more competitive; and it had become more efficient. It was costing taxpayers—state and federal—billions of dollars to generate electricity in a completely unconnected and, frankly, dysfunctional market. There had to be change. The federal Labor government could see that, and state governments—both Labor and Liberal—recognised the need for change. We went into this together.

Once that national electricity market was established, as I said, a die was cast: the electricity market had to become more efficient, interconnectors had to be established and things had to be done differently. In essence, the electricity production process in this country had to become more competitive and more efficient. Different states approached this in different ways.

In Victoria, the electricity assets were quickly privatised under then Premier Kennett. In South Australia, after 1997, we went down a similar road. Frankly, I think we were a bit indecisive in the period 1993-97. I think we could have acted more quickly, as did the Victorians. But, we moved down the road of privatisation.

Simply, we realised that, once this competitive national electricity market that Paul Keating had established was in place, this industry was going to be hammered. There was now a high level of risk involved in this national electricity market, because electricity was traded across borders. The question was, 'Were these risks appropriate for state governments to take?' The Victorian and South Australian governments decided that they were not. The New South Wales Labor government was under the then Treasurer Egan, who tried his heart out to sell the New South Wales government's electricity assets. But, the Labor Party in New South Wales held true to what it believed.

The ACTING SPEAKER: (Mr Koutsantonis): I am sorry to interrupt the member. I understand what you are trying to do, but the bill before us has no relevance to other state governments, and whether they privatise or do not privatise their assets. This has been introduced to address the National Electricity Amendment Bill, and I would like the honourable member to focus his arguments on that. I understand that he has some background points to make and that is a fair point, but I think that canvassing other ideas is not relevant to the debate.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: That is fine, Mr Acting Speaker, and I thank you for your advice. I am discussing background to the bill, and it is customary in a second reading address to give speakers a little bit of latitude.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I do not want the honourable member to reflect on the chair's ruling.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I am not reflecting on the chair's ruling, Mr Acting Speaker, but I would urge that I be allowed to continue in explaining that, in New South Wales, Labor held true to its beliefs. The Labor Party, as a party, decided not to sell its electricity assets. That was their decision to make. The value of those assets plummeted by tens of millions of dollars as a consequence. In Queensland the assets were corporatised. They operated as a business unit separate within this market. In essence, the governments ceased being sole traders, owners and operators of these assets.

The point I am making is that we have this bill before us today because of a sequence of events that were set in train by a Labor federal government, with the full consent and cooperation of the states. It is a complete inaccuracy to say that the sale of ETSA has led, on its own account, to the rapid increase in electricity prices that has occurred in this state. It is correct to say that the arrival of the national electricity market, set up by the Keating Labor government, has delivered a market which, for us, means increased prices.

The line that the government is running, namely, that the Liberals sold ETSA so we have increased power prices, is simply not a sustainable line of argument. It sounds sweet, and I must say that the government has been very good at selling the message but, it is, essentially, incorrect. It is, essentially, a bit of a con—if I may use that term. It is the national electricity market that changed the landscape. He knows it, we know it, and the governments of each state in Australia know it. The question now is: how do we go forward from here?

South Australia had two choices with the arrival of the market. On the one hand, it could retain ownership of the electricity assets in toto and continue to run the system. That would involve an element of risk in this tradeable national market; that would involve hundreds of millions of dollars in new infrastructure needing to be built; and that would involve the building of new power stations, new poles and wires, the upgrading of the existing stock. It would also involve cost management, and having to face the users of electricity—the ordinary men and women of South Australia—and justify price increases.

The other alternative was to privatise: sell those assets; escape the risk; get the private sector involved in building the infrastructure; and use the regulatory process to ensure that market abuse was contained. It is that which this bill seeks to entertain. We have gone down the road of private ownership of the assets, and this bill is another step in the regulatory process that seeks to ensure that market power is not abused.

The worst possible place to be, in between this public ownership and private ownership of ETSA, is stuck in the middle—to somehow have half public ownership and control, and half have it privatised—and I have great fears that this government is intending to go down that road. While fully supporting this bill, because I think this particular abuse of rebidding needs to be contained, I have noticed that some of the public pronouncements from the minister and from the government are along the lines of ‘We’ll take the bat to the power generators; we’ll introduce new regulations; we’ll interfere with the marketplace through regulation; and we will take whatever steps are necessary in order to ensure that prices come down and that power is cheaper.’

The danger with that excessive regulation approach is the Californian approach: if you regulate to contain the costs to the point where the generators and the transmission companies cannot make a profit, you get into a death spiral—the death spiral we saw in California—and the net result is a multibillion-dollar catastrophe. You cannot escape that risk.

So, while supporting this bill, I urge the minister and the government not to get carried away with regulations, because if you regulate a business out of existence you will finish up with the biggest mess on your hands that you have ever entertained. I would call that a ‘stuck in the middle’ approach, and I would urge the minister not to go there.

The bottom line is that the minister and the government promised and pledged in the election that if you wanted cheaper power prices elect Labor, and if you wanted more expensive power prices elect Liberal. And they have not delivered. We now have more expensive power prices than we had. They have been unable to deliver. They also promised an interconnector to New South Wales, and now that has been scuttled. They are trying to blame us, but the ACCC and the other states and the commonwealth are all involved in the national market. The reality is that they have been unable to deliver on two of their key promises in regard to electricity.

I urge the minister to note very carefully—if he has not already—some of the developments that have emerged in the national electricity marketplace in the 18 months since this government has been in office. In particular, I would ask him to note what is touted as the \$10 billion energy sell-off that is gathering momentum around the country, as those who bought some of these power assets—having now entertained the risk and having now looked at the regulatory landscape—are seeking to sell those assets. Power stations, including our own Torrens Island power station, gas pipelines and electricity retail businesses in this state could soon have new owners.

US companies that bought heavily into the Australian energy market in the 1990s are now bailing out, sparking fears of a collapse in values of those assets and uncertainty about the future direction of the electricity business in this country. That should be sounding a very cautious note of warning to this government. The US-owned pipeline company EPIC Energy has said that it was going to put the ‘For sale’ sign on its \$2 billion-plus Australian assets after a battle with Western Australian regulators. EPIC also owns the Moomba to Adelaide pipeline, and other pipelines in WA and Queensland. It bought the MAP—and other pipelines in Western Australia and Queensland. It bought the MAP from the South Australian government for \$304 million in 1995. The sale process now being undertaken is expected to go on until the end of next year. Adelaide based Investra is one of several potential bidders for the MAP and that is just one part of the jigsaw.

Other SA assets expected to be on the market soon include TXU, Australia’s Torrens Island power station and electricity retail businesses, and the embattled US group NRG Energy’s two Port Augusta power stations and its Leigh Creek coal operations. TXU announced a month and a half ago that it was considering a float of up to 49 per cent of its Australian business, which could raise \$2 billion for its US parent. NRG Energy entered into chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in the US in May and is believed to be looking to off load its Australian assets. Another big US player, Duke Energy, is reviewing its \$2 billion assets across five states.

There is a simple conclusion one can make. If there is uncertainty about ownership it will cause problems and where you have unstable ownership structures you will get a reluctance to invest. I note the bill and see that it will contain the process of rebidding and impose penalties, but I ask the minister whether it will add or detract from the market and investment environments within the country.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: There are bigger issues.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: There are bigger issues and I am addressing those very issues because I have a serious concern that we are heading for another electricity crisis. If the Labor Party in South Australia—the party bringing forward this bill to the house—is truly genuine and honest with itself, having opposed the sale of ETSA so vehemently in this house, having fought tooth and nail and having sacrificed two of its own members who crossed the floor to support the move, if it was really serious and was really being truthful when it says that electricity prices have gone up because we sold ETSA, then given that these assets are back on the market, it would take the \$5 billion we got for the sale of those assets and rebuy them.

If all the problems could be solved by waiving a magic wand, repurchasing ETSA and the power stations and all the problems would go away, then go and buy it back—unscramble the egg. That is not the Liberal Party’s policy. We believe privatising the assets was the right thing to do and we know that, quietly, a lot of the government do as well. I ask the minister whether, if he could turn back the clock, he would really still love to have the \$9.5 billion worth of debt and the electricity assets on his books of account. I ask the minister: who would the people of South Australia be going to in anger now about their power prices in the national electricity market if the minister was the owner of all the assets? I know where they would be going: they would be beating a path to his door. The obvious question would be: ‘Well, minister, you own the assets; can’t you reduce the price of electricity?’ That is exactly what has been going on through complicated arrangements in Queensland and New South Wales, at the expense of hundreds of millions of dollars to the state taxpayer.

The minister understands the logic of my argument very well and so does the Treasurer. He has to balance the books. Here we are playing a silly little game, and it is that the Labor government is trying to pretend to the people of South Australia that all the woes of the electricity market in Australia and South Australia are because the Liberals sold ETSA, while fully knowing that to be utter and total nonsense, while knowing that the national electricity market is what changed the die, in knowing that these problems are not South Australia’s alone but are present in all states.

The reality is that this bill we are discussing today is one step in the right direction. I take the point of the shadow minister—my friend and colleague the member for Bright—that the hastiness of this legislation and the way it has been

presented to the house is totally inappropriate and very bad practice and we should have had more time to debate it. I take his point that the government should have acted sooner.

The real issue is that the Labor government has choices. It can stick with the arrangements the former Liberal government created by selling or leasing ETSA or it could go out there now and borrow back the money or take it out of the bank and repurchase some of the power assets it sold. It could build new generation and new transmission capacity and set up public and private partnerships or by other means intervene in the market and create a far more competitive marketplace. That would cost hundreds of millions of the taxpayers' dollars. The Treasurer and the minister know it. They do not want to do that because in their hearts they know that what we did was right. The fact that the assets are back on the market tends to show that even the private companies who purchased those assets know it to be true as well.

It is fine for Professor Blandy to sit there and say that in 10 years we would have paid off the whole show. Anybody who can look forward in any market and predict what will happen over the next 10 years I take my hat off to. A lot of those people are in the bankruptcy court right now. You simply do not know. This is nothing but a big PR exercise and a sham. The government strategy towards selling the problems and explaining the problems of electricity to the people of South Australia is nothing but a sham. The government knows that what we did is right. The government would not want to have that \$9.5 billion of debt back. It created it, we fixed it, we had to sell ETSA in order to do it, but not only did we help remit the debt but helped South Australia engage with the national electricity market more effectively.

The minister knows that we enjoyed subsidised electricity provision over the interconnector with Victoria over many years and knows we had the lowest electricity prices in the OECD and knows that there needed to be some change to the pricing structure for electricity in this state no matter what, and he knows that would have occurred whether or not we sold ETSA. Now he dodges the problem by trying to blame others instead of having to wear it himself as owner of the assets.

I support the bill. The rebidding rort needs to stop, but, in summary, I urge the government to be very cautious about going down the road to further regulatory intervention in this market. The signals are there in the marketplace that companies will leave the state and country if the regulatory powers that be kill their marketplace. The result will be chaos and if Labor creates chaos the opposition will ensure that it wears responsibility for the chaos it has created. It is standing at a very important cross road and the path it takes over the next few years will be vital to the state and to the survival of this government and to the future wellbeing of the people of this state.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): I thank the opposition for its support for the bill, but for very little else. The only gratitude I have is that the member for Waite made some sense in his contribution, although not a great deal of sense. He certainly made far more sense than did the shadow minister for energy. I wish the opposition would do me a favour and swap the jobs so that there is someone with whom I can have a rational debate on this very important matter.

Let me address some of the points that have been made. The member for Bright was made minister and he was on the

verge of fixing all these problems. He was going to fix the 45 per cent increase; he was going to fix all that; he was going to fix everything and we were too slow. And, of course, privatisation had nothing to do with the price increase. Who believes these things? Apart from the member for Bright, not many! I wonder whether I should take the honourable member seriously. He looked serious enough when he said it, but I do not know whether I should take him seriously because I have a track record. He approached me in the members' bar last year when we were talking to Independents. He appeared to be serious and he said, 'Don't think your only options are the three Independents.' I chose not to take him seriously, even though he had a very serious look on his face, because it was too horrible to contemplate. I am not sure what he was offering us; all I knew was that I did not want any of it!

Ms Thompson interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It did seem to me that he was suggesting that he was an option beyond the three Independents but, as I said, it was something too horrible to contemplate.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, sir. I object to the insinuation that the minister is placing before me. I constantly jibe the minister both—

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

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: He had a very serious look on his face—that is all I can say.

Mr SCALZI: I rise on a point of order, sir. I believe it is a tradition of the Westminster system that what is said in the refreshment room and in the corridors of this place is not repeated in this chamber.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. You are being disorderly.

Mr Scalzi: Some of us—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member will resume his seat. I warn the member for Hartley: one more outburst and he will be named.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: There is a kind of great interwoven fantasy that exists in the mind of the opposition about electricity and electricity prices. One of the great tales of the member for Bright is that there was no competition in South Australia on 1 January because we were slow in bringing a bill to parliament. I say, 'What utter rot!' Let me say that other people have a view on this matter as well, and I am talking not about Professor Dick Blandy, the Essential Services Commissioner or other commentators out there but, rather, about some of our respected media observers.

Jeremy Cordeaux, in his program, talked to Mel Mansell, the editor of the *Advertiser*. The transcript is as follows:

Jeremy Cordeaux: Isn't it so much that the previous government needs its bottom kicked because it actually wrote into the sale document sweeteners to try to lift the price?

Mel Mansell: Quite right. It makes me laugh when I hear the opposition attacking the government this morning. Wayne Matthew and the previous Liberal government were going through the sale of ETSA. They made very sure that there was going to be no competition in the short term. This is part of the deal. You are not going to have competition. For them to stand up and say to this Labor government they failed to bring competition here, I just think it's a bit rich. Perhaps it is time they desisted.

No-one believes them: Jeremy Cordeaux does not believe them; Dick Blandy does not believe them; and Mel Mansell does not believe them. No-one except the member for Bright believes them and, as I said, who knows whether he is serious. We know he likes to resort to many types of artifices.

The member for Bright also goes on to suggest that, of course, if he were still the minister—God forbid!—he would have achieved this outcome more quickly. He has illustrated how he was going to do that. In a very confused way he managed to identify that two issues need to be addressed, that is, the code and changes to the national electricity law. The changes we bring here today to the national electricity law require the agreement of not a majority but, rather, every minister involved in the national electricity law.

The member for Bright pointed out that two of those ministers have the great good fortune still to own their generators so may have concerns about fines imposed on generators that we in the privatised states do not have. He indicated how he was going to achieve it. He was going to abuse them. He was going to abuse them for not having privatised—the mugs! He was going to abuse them because they were not smart enough to privatise like he did, and he was going to abuse them because they would not agree with him.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, sir. The minister is attributing to me things that I have in no way put to this house. Frankly, what he is putting to the house is fiction and fantasy. He knows what I said to the house: he heard it.

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

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I thought I heard in his contribution his abusing the New South Wales Labor government. I thought I heard him saying that they made a mistake and that they did not privatise. Perhaps I am mistaken: perhaps I will check *Hansard* later. The truth is that I took a different approach, first, on the code change—

The Hon. W.A. Matthew: You took 20 months!

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bright has had his chance.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I did not take 20 months. I will tell the honourable member something about the national electricity market which I have been fighting very hard to reform. Some 20 months to make a change is a break-neck pace, frankly, because, as I have pointed out time and again, everything else works glacially. The code change, which undoubtedly is the slowest, is this endless conversation between NECA and the ACCC. He wants to know whether we fought for it. It was on the agenda the first time I went.

I am the first South Australian minister ever to attend a pre-determination conference of the ACCC—and it was on this very matter. I made very forceful representations and was subjected to violent abuse from generators—but I can indicate to the house that in my usual fashion I gave as good as I got on that day. The truth is that what we needed to do was not abuse them and tell them they had it wrong and we had it right. What we did was, first, address the code change and then talk them around.

I went to my Labor colleagues over a period of time and convinced them that their interests were not prejudiced and, in fact, the national electricity market would benefit from it. I do not regret that I did not try the option of abusing them and abusing their approach to privatisation. I understand that the member for Bright thinks that it may have got the result more quickly, but, somehow, I suspect that would not have been the case.

I take seriously the comments of the member for Waite about the regulatory approach. I am certainly of the belief that in doing something like this and imposing a penalty we have to make a careful balance between a proper regulation of the

market and a lighthanded regulatory approach that does not impose greater costs on the market. We have made that analysis. The opposition agrees with that analysis. The analysis is that this is an appropriate step. I agree with him, and I have said it over and over; I have said it when the shadow spokesperson was saying that I should intervene to bring down the retail price of electricity. I said that we do not want to get into a California situation. Now, I will not go over it again. The truth is that Dick Blandy has recognised it; the Essential Services Commissioner has recognised it; and Mel Mansell and Jeremy Cordeaux have recognised it.

The decision to maximise the price of the assets imposed cost burdens that are hard to address. The extra costs are locked in. As I said today in question time, the effect was to remove \$5 million of debt and to transfer the burden of repaying the debt directly to electricity consumers on their bills. That was a deliberate strategy: it was not an accident—although most of the things they did were unfortunate accidents. It was a deliberate strategy. I know that because in about 1999 they were stuck up on their privatisation, and they wanted to get the equal amount to address the debt.

Do you know what they did? They had a draft cabinet submission to put up electricity tariffs by 25 per cent—exactly the amount that we have seen after their privatisation which is the debt burden imposed on South Australians. When they could not impose it through privatisation, they were proposing to impose it merely by increasing the tariff by 25 per cent. What occurred and why prices have gone up is absolutely transparent. In the meantime, I take seriously some of the comments of the member for Waite.

There are flaws in the market that need to be addressed, with a view not to imposing a heavier regulatory burden in a difficult market but by creating a better regulatory system. We are working very hard to do that. We approach that role with a great sense of care and responsibility. I am pleased to say that the relationship between the state ministers is excellent. The ambition to achieve a better regulatory system is one that we share. We all share a passion for it, and I am confident we will achieve that next year. That better regulatory system will assist in some of the issues we addressed. I will say no more than that at this point. I appreciate the support of the opposition, even if I find it very difficult to agree with the empty rhetoric that goes along with its support.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

EMERGENCY SERVICES FUNDING (VALIDATION OF LEVY ON VEHICLES AND VESSELS) BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without any amendment.

EDUCATION (MATERIALS AND SERVICES CHARGES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 22 October. Page 613.)

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I will make a brief contribution on this bill. I am concerned that this bill has been brought to the house at this stage, when we knew that on 1 December it would expire and something had to be done. It is a bit much for the government to give education and health priority, and then not deal with the issues concerned with education and

health as a priority. To give it a priority, you have to do two things. Firstly, you have to make sure that, as a percentage of the budget, education and health would have a greater share of the overall budget than was the case under the previous government. As I and many members on this side of the house have pointed out, the Labor budgets last year and this year are still, as a percentage, less than the last Liberal budget 2001-02, when the actual spending was much greater. If you make promises to do so, you have to deliver. This government certainly has not delivered on keeping its promise to give education a priority. The last two budgets have been less than 25 per cent of the overall state budget. So, I cannot see how that is a priority.

The second way to give priority and to give credence to that priority is to address the issues of health and education. In this case, education has not been given a priority when it comes to addressing the issue of education materials and service charges. We all know that over the years whilst we were in government the Labor opposition made much of the fact that it did not believe in these compulsory charges, because it went against its philosophy for free education. When we look at it historically, we know that there is no such thing as free education when it comes to providing these services. It is very much separate from teacher tuition and those things we all regard as having to be provided to students and schools.

Even after much discussion, we are not in a much different position from that of the former government. One would have thought that, if it was given a priority, that issue would have to be addressed, and it has not. As I said, it has come in at the last minute. It is a little like putting the kettle on when somebody has already sat down for tea and finished the biscuits. There is no question what we had to deal with this issue before December.

Mr Hanna: I want free tea and biscuits.

Mr SCALZI: The member for Mitchell says that he wants free tea and biscuits. But he would know that that is not the case. In one of the first economics lectures I had I learned that there is no such thing as a free lunch.

Mr Hanna: You could share the cost of the lunch though.

Mr SCALZI: That is true. You could share, and make sure that those who could not afford lunch would be provided for. Both the government and opposition would agree with the School Card system, that those who cannot afford that are provided with it. No-one is in disagreement with that. We have to bear that in mind, as well, when we know that about 40 per cent of students are on School Card, and they do not pay these service charges. This is the first time that it will be indexed and ongoing. Anybody who has been to school councils would know that this is a contentious issue, and it is raised time and again. I must agree with the shadow minister, the member for Bragg, that we have to do something about making sure that there is some sensitivity and commonsense in the way these charges are recovered. I think the member for Bragg's foreshadowed amendment is a sensible amendment, that the Director-General must make services available free of charge to school councils for recovery of outstanding materials and service charges. I know that not all members agree with that, but if we—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order! Will the members congregating around the member for Bragg please pay due respect to the member for Hartley while he is on his feet, because he cannot see the chair.

Mr SCALZI: Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting Speaker. Maybe they did not see me, but I would have

thought that they would hear me. The member for Bragg's foreshadowed amendments, as well as the provisions expiring on 1 December 2005, are sensible. We have had only a little time to discuss this measure, but these amendments are sensible, and I think members should give them consideration in committee.

Think about small schools trying to recover these charges. I have seen it as a teacher as well as a member of the school council. You are asking parents to chase up other parents, and I do not think that is the way to go. In a small school of, say, 50 students, most will pay their fees but a small percentage may not. To make that the responsibility of that school community I think is a bit much. Making the department responsible at no charge to the school is a very sensible suggestion. After all, the department does that for many thousands of overseas and fee-paying students. So, it makes sense, as there is a precedent, to take it out of the hands of the school community.

Not everyone will agree with the provisions of this bill. As the member for Fisher said, some schools would like to have the ability to set their own fees, because they feel they are at a disadvantage and because that is what the parents want. All of those issues have not been properly canvassed, as the member for Bragg clearly outlined yesterday. At the end of the day, I believe the status quo has been maintained and that we have not moved much beyond the provisions legislated by the previous government. It has been suggested that some of the provisions make it clear what the charges are and what the compulsory section of education is, but I would have thought that that was already clear.

I support the bill, but I hope that the government considers the member for Bragg's amendments, because they are sensible, and it would take away the potential for conflict through putting the responsibility on the school community to collect these charges. As a former teacher, a member of the school council and a parent, I feel it would be much better if debt collection was removed from schools at no cost to the school. That would make sense, and it would make even more sense in respect of smaller schools where the community is small and everyone knows everyone else.

I think we should look at the privacy of such individuals. Of course, school principals should be given the ability to be sensitive about people who are not able to pay their fees, but ultimately it is not fair to the rest of the school community if some people do not pay their share. This problem should be tackled in a sensible and effective way, and I believe the member for Bragg's amendment does that. As I said, I will be brief and I will not go through all the provisions of this bill, but I look forward to debating the amendments in committee. We had hoped that, after 18 months, the government would have come up with something a little more comprehensive to deal with this issue, which has been ongoing for a long time, and not just wait until the last minute to come up with a bill such as this. So, I believe we should revisit this legislation in the future, and I hope the government and other members will look at our amendments favourably.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I speak in relation to the bill introduced by the Minister for Education concerning charges for materials and services. In a way, the starting point is the Education Act 1972, section 9 of which provides an obligation on the part of the minister to establish and maintain such government schools as may be necessary for the provision of primary and secondary education for children whose parents

desire that they should receive education at government schools. The same applies to preschools.

It has been a basic principle of education in South Australia for a very long time that free education should be available to young people. Essentially, no child should be prevented from receiving a decent education in our schools because of the want of money. When I was young, the contribution to schools was truly voluntary. I used to take along two-bob to the school I think about once a term. It was a very small amount, and it was clearly intended to provide for extracurricular activities (not the core elements of education) and perhaps to go towards special equipment that the school might wish to acquire.

These days, the notion of a voluntary contribution has been superseded by the legislation brought in by the previous Liberal government, and now by this proposed measure of this Labor government. I do not mind if parents and students are charged for materials which they would have to buy anyway, such as pens and pencils. If they can be bought in bulk by schools and passed on to students at a cheaper rate than they could get them in a supermarket, that has to be a good thing. However, there remains a vexed and unsettling question of the point where a charge for materials and services impinges on the right to a free education. We call it 'a right to a free education' because of section 9 of the Education Act, to which I have referred. So, it will be interesting to see if the compulsory fees provided for in the legislation currently are properly tested before a higher court, because there is some ground for arguing whether such fees are inconsistent with the minister's obligation to maintain schools.

Regarding the bill before us, it can be seen that the government seeks certainty in relation to school fees from school councils, on which I have sat as a member. This has been a continuing issue of difficulty, because schools need money additional to that which comes from the central funds to offer all the services that they wish to offer to students. On the other hand, schools are reluctant to chase some of the less fortunate families who are part of the school community for money. There is less sympathy for those who can well afford to pay, yet choose not to for some reason.

It is because of this mixture of motives in relation to non-payment of fees that we have this bill before us. The ideal situation, as I have said, is that no child is disadvantaged because they come from a family which does not have the money to pay for school fees. I realise that there is a School Card system and that helps but, of course, in many schools, substantial voluntary charges are expected beyond the School Card minimum and beyond the compulsory fee amount set out in the legislation. That is all I will say at this stage because I am speaking only to the principles of the bill.

I would be very concerned if the bill were subverting the principle of free education. As I have said, I suspect that there is a legal argument that this may be the case if schools are charging for items which are essential for the carrying on of education in the school, but that is untested. All I can do is make the general point about preserving a right to free education. In due course, I will move an amendment to ensure that, where a school wishes to charge higher fees than the standard level of compulsory fees, this could only be achieved through democratic means, and by that I mean a poll of the families concerned.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): I rise to support this bill and, in doing so, I am reminded that South Aust-

ralians, from time immemorial, have expected to pay something towards their education. I listened with interest to the member for Mitchell's recollections of his school days and contributions. I am a few years older than the member for Mitchell and, as a consequence, I was at secondary school prior to the bill of 1972 coming into effect. Indeed, I commenced year 8 (in those days first year high school) in 1970. Certainly for the first two years of my schooling, we had a situation whereby parents were responsible for the purchase of text books. I can well recall my first couple of weeks in first year high—in fact Henley High School, the same school the member for Mitchell attended—and the fact that we had a student bartering system under way for school books. Students from second year would visit first year classrooms and offer various text books at reduced prices because they were secondhand.

Effectively, my introduction to high school was to buy as many secondhand books as possible to assist my household. I was one of four children and was the first to go to high school. Certainly they were tough days to have to buy one's books in that way. The changes that came about were welcome but still required service and fee contributions. I dare say that when one looks at the income levels of today compared to 1970 and the amount that is being proposed, it is actually far cheaper proportionately for a student to be at school today because, if they are attending a state secondary school, they are not having to make the same purchases as we did. I believe that has gone a long way towards delivering what the member for Mitchell seeks, that is, that every child will have an opportunity to have an education and an opportunity to have access to the resources that they need to complete their education successfully.

Clearly it is important that we as members of parliament are ever vigilant to ensure that we do not return to an era where there is a need to pay a disproportionately large amount. My concern about this would not come as a surprise to many of my colleagues. I went through university during the time when fees were not levelled on students as they are now. My federal colleagues know that I have some guarded concern about the amount that is charged for federal education fees. I would hate Australia to become a nation, like some, where education, particularly at tertiary level, becomes accessible only to those who can afford it. I do not want that kind of Australia and I would be surprised if anyone in this chamber did either. There certainly is an obligation on members of parliament in this state, as we have responsibility legislatively over the primary and secondary systems, to ensure that there is a fair opportunity for all to have access to education.

I know that some members of the house do not believe that anything should be paid at all. I have a firm view that, if you give people something for nothing, they are not likely to regard it as highly. That argument has been applied to a range of things. For example, over the years it has been advocated by some that there should be free access to public transport, but, in the end, the wisdom that has prevailed is that there should at least be a charge: a charge that does not fully recover costs, but at least a charge so that people appreciate that they have a responsibility to contribute and they value the service they are receiving. Most parents to whom I speak believe that they have an obligation to contribute towards their children's education but within their financial means, and recognise that they get good value from our state's education system. Indeed, we do have a fine education system and long may it remain so.

I have to say that I am surprised at this bill, in view of a number of comments of government members. Many members who have contributed to this debate have commented that this bill has taken a long time to get here. I have some sympathy for the minister on this occasion. I know the views of some of her colleagues, and I dare say that she has had to fight one heck of a battle behind the scenes to reach a consensus on this bill, because I can—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: My learned colleague indicates except for the Treasurer, and I dare say the Treasurer might have wanted the fee level to be even higher. I can appreciate that this has probably been a very difficult balancing act for the minister, on the one hand to appease the Treasurer who wants high charges and fees imposed on South Australians and, on the other hand, to appease those of her colleagues who believe that every aspect of education should be free for all. Of course—

Ms Breuer: Name them.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The member has asked me to name various members and indicate their view. I do not see it as my role to give the views of all other members before this chamber. They are all capable of doing so and have an equal opportunity to do so. However, if the member for Giles wishes to avail herself of the opportunity to contribute to the debate, I am sure members would be interested to hear her view. It is important that people do make some contribution towards the education of their children, but that they are able to contribute within their means. The bill has been a long time getting here. I indicated in an earlier debate today that that bill had taken 20 months to get here. This bill has taken a long time to be developed—again the full 20 months of the government.

Indeed, its history goes back some time. In fact, the previous Liberal government, if my memory serves me correctly, introduced the Education (Councils and Charges) Amendment Bill in October 2000. That provided authority for the charging of fees to students attending government schools. A sunset clause was introduced into that bill, which effectively ensured that the fee-charging provisions would expire on 1 December 2002. If my memory serves me correctly, it was my learned colleague in another place the Hon. Nick Xenophon who ensured that that sunset clause was in place, and he has been very public about his advocacy of ensuring that such fees and charges are revisited. Obviously the election intervened in February 2002, which meant that the sunset clause could not be fully addressed until a little later than would have been desirable but, even so, I would have thought that there was sufficient time to address the matter.

In late November last year, the minister brought a bill through parliament to extend the sunset clause to 1 December 2003. Being the generous souls that we are, members, in their wisdom, elected to grant the minister the 12 month extension so that she could undertake that work. On that basis, I thought the bill would have been with us about the middle of this year so that there would be plenty of time for it to go through.

I can only assess from the situation we have before us that the minister has been given a very torrid time by her own government members in bringing some sort of consensus forward to be debated in the parliament. I extend my sympathy to the minister, if that has been the case, because I know she has had an incredible diversity of views to tackle. Nevertheless, the bill is now before us, and there is an opportunity to work through it.

When these sorts of bills are brought forward, it is absolutely critical that there be an opportunity for the community to be involved and for community feedback, and I am concerned that the chance for community consultation has been very limited on this. The bill was tabled in the parliament last week and, because we are now debating it this week, I have been unable to take it to my school councils. However, I am basing my understanding of their viewpoint from previous discussions as to what they would like to see occur, and it is my view that they would be supportive of this bill going forward. It is certainly consistent with the pleas they have had before me in the past, but I would have liked to have the opportunity to let them see the bill before it was debated here in this place.

I know that the South Australian Association of State Schools was not able to give its view on the matter until 14 October (only a few days ago) in a telephone conversation with the minister; that the Primary Principals Association also had a telephone discussion with the minister this month; and that the South Australian Secondary and Primary Principals Association was involved in a meeting on the issue last Friday, and that they had spoken to the minister on the telephone about a month ago.

The AEU has advised the opposition that it was not consulted, and that is of concern. Over the years, I might have had a few clashes with the AEU or some of its members but, that aside, I believe that, as the representative body of school teachers, that union deserved the right to be consulted. I know that the government's Social Inclusion Unit made its written comment on 29 September this year.

Another important group is the South Australian Association of School Parent Clubs, and it responded by way of a three page letter to a working party which met in May last year. However, the association has had no contact from the government this year with respect to the issue. Again, I am disappointed that that group was not consulted.

As I indicated, I do not hold the minister personally responsible, because I know she has had a lot of problems with the backbench of the Labor Party and, indeed, with some of her cabinet colleagues because of the diversity of views. However, I can only assume that, as this bill has now come before the house, at least we have a common viewpoint from members of the Labor Party, and that common viewpoint is that material and service charges should be charged at all schools. I believe I can take that as now being the viewpoint of every member of the Labor Party, because the Labor government, through its minister, has introduced this bill and, further, that the payment of those fees should be compulsory.

So, I want every member of this parliament to be absolutely sure about this: we have a bill introduced by a Labor government advocating that materials and services charges should be levied, and that they should be paid as a matter of compulsion. Further, if they are not paid, there are appropriate powers to ensure they are paid. So, the bill goes that one step further.

If there are any Labor members of parliament who are not clear about this, they should obviously speak now or forever hold their peace. What this bill does is show that the Labor Party is supporting it. I congratulate the minister on being able to get that sort of consensus out of her party, because I know that was not an easy task. She has achieved consensus and ensured that every member of this Labor government now supports materials and services charges as a matter of compulsion and that, if they are not paid, powers are there for those moneys to be recovered; for the people who do not pay

them to be pursued; and for the money to be extracted from them, using the full force of the law, through the courts, as it is available. I think that is a significant concession.

I have a pretty good memory, as my colleagues know, and I can well recall a number of members of parliament in both this chamber and the other place who vociferously opposed the introduction of the things being facilitated by this bill. They were absolutely adamant that, under any Labor government, such fees and charges would not be introduced. Clearly, those members—those who remain in the Labor caucus—got rolled and, as I have indicated, for that I congratulate the minister. However, it took the minister a good year longer than we would have liked. Perhaps that indicates that all is not well in the Labor camp: for them to move through these issues for so long, and to come in with results that are so diametrically opposed to what was intended is an indication that all is not happy in the Labor camp.

Ms Breuer: Name them.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: The member for Giles knows very well which of her colleagues I am talking about: the ones who were so vocal outside this chamber about what they described as the right wing attitude of some members of the cabinet. Frankly, I do not have a problem with what is being suggested here. If there are any Labor members remaining who do have a problem, let them come into this chamber and put their viewpoint on the record, as, indeed, they have done previously.

Whilst the opposition supports the bill—and I am very proud to support the bill as part of the Liberal Party opposition—there is the issue about the way in which the recovery action is undertaken that could become problematical. I know from my own school councils that it is a real problem for schools in having to get debt recovery agencies to pursue the parents of children at the school. It is a problem for school principals and administration staff that the parents whom they have to face and deal with in their schools on a regular basis are being pursued by debt collectors set in place by the school to recover moneys. For that reason, the opposition will be proposing amendments to assist schools to overcome that difficulty and embarrassment.

My learned colleague, the member for Bragg, will be proposing, effectively, that the Director-General must make available, free of charge to school councils, services for the recovery of outstanding materials and services charge; and that will have a number of benefits. It will ensure that there is a central way of going about collecting these fees and charges, and it will mean that schools do not have to spend their time finding appropriate debt collecting agencies, giving the task to those debt collecting agencies, getting the regular feedback, and having the upset parents come to them. It will mean that it is all handled centrally, and it takes that difficulty away from the school and lets the schools get on with what they do best, that is, setting about the task of providing a good education for our children. I believe that is an important amendment to this bill to ensure that schools are freed from that embarrassment. I am very pleased to support the passage of this bill. I would have liked to give it my support a year ago but, regrettably, it was not ready to be debated then.

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I am bemused by this bill in that it contains so little. The previous minister was minded to reform the entire Education Act and, indeed, for a number of years embarked on that fairly formidable undertaking. Yet, two years into a Labor government, we have the government, as the member for Bright has eloquently said, ‘buckling

under’ and basically implementing what has always been Liberal policy. I, for one, want to stand and say how deplorable, inadequate and how totally much of a sell-out that is to the young people of South Australia.

Members interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I would invite those who are clucking like chooks opposite to observe and perhaps open their minds a bit and, with due deference, read the act. The act is one of the most quaint pieces of nineteenth century sophistry I have ever seen. There is very little in it about education. It is, in fact, an act about directors-general, how you appoint the teaching service, who can charge who for what, and a whole heap of things. The object of the act is quite clearly set out, and that is: ‘to provide proper provision for primary and secondary education in this state’. You can look in the definitions, you can look in the clauses, you can look everywhere, to find some attempt to actually describe what education actually is in South Australia, let alone relative education. It is so quaint, it still talks about head teachers and courses of instruction.

I would like the AEU to take notice of that, because it is an eighteenth and nineteenth century concept that children are like empty vessels and that that pedagogue, the teacher, stands in front of those children and pours knowledge into them. When they are filled up, they become knowledgeable and educated individuals. It is not like that. Learning is a shared experience and teachers expose children to experiences. They do not fill them with instruction. There is not a prescribed course like there was when I was young, when, so long as you knew in year 7 A, B and C, so long as you could multiply and divide and read and do this and something else, you would pass year 7. There was a set of hurdles to get through at year 8 and year 9 and, when you got to about year 11, you were therefore educated, because all of us knew the same things about everything. And that was called an education.

There has actually been a bit of enlightenment since then. We realise that every child is different, that every child has different gifts and abilities, and what teachers have tried to do, in spite of this quaint old act, is to provide instruction for children that is relevant and enjoyable and is relevant to them and their needs.

I acknowledge that we have one of the finest education systems in the world, but I would look around and say that there are not many education systems that are anywhere near up to a twentieth century standard. If ours is one of the best in the world, and I am absolutely confident that it is, the whole world needs to hang its head in shame. Most of the education systems are abysmal and fail abysmally. I am shocked and dismayed that a Labor government should come in here and pass a tokenistic Liberal measure, when the whole of the Education Act needs reforming. I say that, in particular, to the Labor party of this state, because they are the people who are supposed to champion the disadvantaged and those who do not get a fair deal.

If there was one reason, one predominant reason, that in the United Kingdom and spreading from there to other European countries and other places, schools took to providing universal education for all of the citizens, it was to provide a fairer, less class-ridden society. It was to give our able, young people equal opportunities to participate in the fruits of our society. That is what education is about. If you measure even this successful system by those standards, the member for Giles, who has suddenly gone quiet—

Ms BREUER: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The member opposite is talking drivell and I see no relevance to this matter. He is standing up there and he is giving his opinions on education, which is totally irrelevant to the subject in question.

The SPEAKER: I had not come to that conclusion myself, but I will listen carefully to what it is the member for Giles complains of to see if that is the case.

Mr BRINDAL: Thank you, sir. I hope you will guide me if I stray off the fact that we are discussing the Education Act and provisions under the Education Act and that is what I thought I was talking about. But if I err, sir, I rely on your good judgment to tell me so. As you know, sir, there have been some very real problems with what has been described as educational disadvantage in the northern suburbs of South Australia and, although not so isolated as other places, in the country areas of South Australia—some of which you represent: the Murray-Mallee area, which I think you still represent; areas that the member for Giles represents, and places like Mansfield Park and the northern suburbs, the western suburbs, and the southern suburbs, which so many of those on that side represent.

The measure of educational advantage set not by a Liberal but by Gough Whitlam's government was that equality of educational outcomes would be achieved when people from all levels and stratas of our society were equally present in those professions that our society holds to be the preferred professions. When people from Mansfield Park, in their right numbers, were represented in medicine, in law, in politics, and in all the positions to which people aspire, then education would have achieved some measure of equality.

But, try as we might over the last three or four decades, there has been little, if any, change. Our universities are still filled with children from—thankfully for me and for the member for Bragg—our suburbs, and those children often get in at the expense of the children of Elizabeth, of Noarlunga, of the Murray-Mallee, and certainly of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands. So, in that measure, if ours is one of the best education systems in the world, it has failed. It is time that we, as a parliament, and as a community, looked at what it is that we are giving our children and making sure that we do better.

Sir, I know you read the papers, so you will be aware that an extraordinary article appeared at Craigmores High School, written by one of the students, who explained that not many kids went to Craigmores High School because they had much more interesting things to do than to go to school. They were the young 13, 14 and 15-year-olds who are compelled to go to school, but they did not go because there was a wider world out there, and there were better things to do.

I ask the minister what that says about the relevance of our current education system for the children growing up today at Craigmores: that they would rather be, perhaps, hanging around the Elizabeth Shopping Centre, if not committing petty crime and doing all sorts of things because they are not fully occupied, than be in school. We compel them to go, but do we offer them anything that is relevant, let alone enjoyable? And what is the measure of success, when there are huge numbers of unemployed out there? By those measures our system is not succeeding: it is failing.

Sir, you would remember, as I do, that when we were younger the great trumpet of this state was that we provided free secular and compulsory education—it was one of the great pillars of this state. Well, it has long since ceased to be free. It certainly is secular. It is secular to the point of

abandoning, in my opinion, pretty well all values and leaving kids to pick what they can get along the way. And I note, as an aside, that we are now having to teach law and order. It has to be introduced as some sort of subject within the curriculum whereas once it was quite—

The Hon. P.L. White interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: No, I support teachers providing relevant education whereby students grow up to be honourable and decent human beings who have a respect for law and for others. All the time that I was teaching that was achieved by teaching children what I think you call the core values: the core values of being an adult human being, growing up to be an adult and being responsible. I deplore the fact that we have to teach protective behaviours in our schools to protect young people from the fact that older people appear to have every right to run around molesting them.

I think it would be much better to teach our young people that, as they grow, they have a responsibility each to the other, so that they will not predate, they will not molest, and so that they will act in a way that makes them exercise responsibility rather than foisting on others the responsibility that they have to exercise to keep the predators at bay. No, I do not support those things. I think our education is skewed, wasted and badly timed. That is the point. Do we have to charge fees? Yes, we do. That is deplorable. It is deplorable when we wanted, and promised, to give children a free education. We can no longer afford it. One of the reasons we cannot afford it any longer is that—not only this government nor this minister—a succession of governments over the last 30 or 40 years has promised and given more than can be given in the allowable budget.

When I was growing up, if you wanted to learn a musical instrument—I am not knocking, but in the examples I give I am trying to point out where the education budget is over stretched—you went on Friday or Saturday morning or the school arranged it for after school and you paid a fee. If you wanted to learn abseiling, kayaking and canoeing, you went to the boy scouts or the local youth club. If you wanted to do gymnastics you went to the YMCA.

Gradually, through accumulation, our schools picked up, at the cost of some of these great community organisations, the gymnasium, the kayaking and the abseiling. Guess what? You can now learn abseiling in school. You get one hour in year nine and that is your abseiling experience. You can learn canoeing and get one or two hours in year 10 and that is your canoeing experience. Once these kids went somewhere to do activities and develop expertise. Now they get a taste in school and so many of them do not go on to pursue the sport to any great degree. That is about a succession of governments promising more and more in schools when the resources have not increased. Yet, we continue. Every year, effectively, the minister has less money to spend. I would bet that no-one in your department has come to you and said, 'Minister, let us cut this area of the curriculum; we really do not need it any more—it is not relevant.' We will add on another five or six areas but we will never chop one.

It is no wonder that kids suffer a bit under the yoke, because they are expected to learn more and more. There is more and more put on them. They get an ever wider variety of experiences but they are not expert at anything. I will try to talk softly in case I disturb some of those in the chamber. I support the member for Bragg in the proposition. I was interested in what the member for Mitchell said, because it is a tenet of our whole democratic system. Our Australian society would fall apart if we did not continue to provide the

best we could in terms of educational opportunity for our kids. It is a cornerstone of our democracy. Every child, no matter what circumstance they are born into, should have an equal right of access.

If there is one thing that is key to children breaking free from where they are and giving them some opportunity, it is education. I found it interesting, because some of his propositions work towards schools that might be very 'clubby' but could, in fact, then work. He is proposing a parent poll. I would put to him that Highgate Primary School—a very special and good school—is a school which I do not think is noted for its numbers of free books. I will probably have the principal of Highgate Primary School ringing me tomorrow and saying that they have 10 per cent of their population on free books. It might even be more but I would say that, compared with many other schools, Highgate Primary School is a privileged school. Certainly, the parents there are very educated and savvy; they know what they are doing.

That school could well make a decision that the fees have to be compulsory yet there could be one or two children there whose parents simply cannot afford it. The minister might say, 'They will get free books.' Well, we hope they would but sometimes there are circumstances where the kids arrive late and the parents do not know that free books are available. There are a number of ways whereby people can fall through the net. In those circumstances I wonder whether the democratic rule of the school community would serve the interests of all the children. I think that is what we have to try to protect in this education act. No matter what we do, while we try to protect the interests of the whole all the time, we should not trample on the interests of any particular individual. At the same time we are nurturing the group, we must try to nurture the individual good.

I will support this, because it is a measure that in the past I have supported and I must continue to support, but I do so with some aggravation and reticence. Frankly, I think that, as good as it is, our education system is antiquated and out of date and that it no longer serves the relevant needs of young people growing up in the 21st century. Rather than support a small bandaïd measure such as this, which is basically the measure that enables the government to spread its money further and collect in a strange way an indirect tax from those people who are part of the education sector, I would hope that when our shadow minister becomes the minister she takes a couple of years to consult with all the community of South Australia—its professors, academics, parents, students, the people who had kids in school and grandparents. It should take a couple of years. Let us become the first community that discusses what education actually is and what we want our schools to do and then sits down and rebuilds or refashions an education system which is relevant and more enjoyable, which does not pretend to be a Rolls Royce when in reality it is a dressed-up Volkswagen, but which is seen for what it is.

We have excellent teachers and wonderful facilities and many things going for us. We should stop pretending that we can do more than we can actually do. In fact, if the minister was allowed to run the department she can afford to run and to do it properly, instead of trying to do everything that everyone wants her to do but no-one gives her the money to do, we might truly have an education system. I say that with some conviction, because the minister and I have something in common in many ways: the minister's children will soon be of school age. I say to the minister: you wait; two winks

and three sleeps and they will be there; four sleeps and they will have left school—believe me, I am older than you!

Mr Caica interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: I don't think I would talk if I were you; you didn't polish your head today, did you? The minister's children are about to start school. I am at the stage where my grandchildren are at school, and I think the member for Colton's great grandchildren are at school. Seriously, this is a relevant point for us all. This is not about party politics but, rather, providing the best education we can for our children. I support what the shadow minister supports, but I do so with some reticence. I think if we were the government we could do much better than this. I hope the minister takes the time to reconsider this education act, so when the member for Bragg becomes the minister she does not have to go back to square one and reinvent the wheel. But, if we have to, we will.

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

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

Motion carried.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank members for their contributions. Given the hour, I will speak only briefly and pick up any points that cannot be covered tonight in the committee stage of the bill. I will indicate the government's position on some of the amendments that have been foreshadowed. The amendments suggested by the member for Fisher and the member for Mitchell, acting in concert, are worthy propositions which the government will support. In light of those amendments and from conversations with members, I foreshadow that I will move an amendment of my own to include reporting on the substance of this bill in the department's annual report.

The position of the opposition in this debate is very interesting. The Liberal opposition issued press statements in May claiming that a foreshadowed 3.9 per cent CPI increase in school fees would not be a good thing. On 5 October the shadow spokesperson put out a press release saying that she suspected fees would go up, and she did not think that was a good thing. Then, 10 days later, on 15 October, she issued another press release saying that the CPI increase that is proposed in this bill was inadequate. To quote the member, 'The increases are inadequate for today's costs.' Also in that press release she stated, 'I advocated a number of options, including abolishing fees.' So, in the one press release there is the claim that the fees are not high enough and also the claim that they are too high.

The honourable member took great delight in rounding off her speech by quoting from my contribution in 2000 to the Education (Councils and Charges) Amendment Bill. I want to correct the record with regard to her contribution because she selectively quoted in order to give an impression that I had complained on that occasion about the timing of the introduction of the bill by the then Liberal government. That bill was introduced on 12 October, in exactly the same week of the year that this bill was introduced. In confirming her position, the member quoted me, as follows:

Why rush to implement these changes on the say-so of a minister who says 'Trust me'? These changes, once they pass through this parliament, become law. . . and all on the basis of some vacuous argument about the need to rush these through.

She then quoted another paragraph about the amendments in the bill and the complaint about rushing them through. They are accurate quotations from my contribution to that debate, but I point out to the house that, while that bill did cover the issue of school fees, it was predominantly about significant changes to the Education Act, changes which introduced the Partnerships 21 scheme. I want to put on the record the rest of that quote because, very interestingly, the member did not continue it. If she had, it would have made clear that those comments were about the amendments to the Partnerships 21 arrangements. She should have continued on and quoted me as saying:

Let me spend a moment talking about that argument. The minister says that we need to get these changes through quickly otherwise Partnerships 21 cannot operate. Partnerships 21 has been operating in our public schools for the past 12 months under the current legislation. Indeed, last year the minister told parliament that there were no necessary legislative changes. Perhaps that was not a correct statement, but I did not hear him come back to parliament to correct that, so let us get rid of that argument. These are fundamental changes, and they deserve the full scrutiny of this parliament.

I pick on that one example to say to the house: be careful about how you read the member for Bragg's speech, because quoting people out of context on a bill that deals with other matters and trying to give an impression that they pertain to this debate is not an accurate representation of what happens.

The Member for Bragg has said that there is no urgency about this bill. That is not correct. Schools want to finalise their charging arrangements for next year. This is the time when they wish to do that. So, attempts to delay this bill, as we have seen this week, impact on schools. By the member's own admission, she recognised that there was that expiry clause and that necessitated a prompt passage through the house.

The member's representation regarding consultation should also be clarified. I will not go through all the points, other than to say that, after the member's conversations with various associations to which she referred in the house, I received a number of phone calls signalling displeasure about that contact. As a result of those conversations, though I do not wish to elaborate and put the spotlight on any of those individuals, I say to the house: be very careful about the member for Bragg's portrayal of what she was told.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Much of what was said was not true; for example, there was a suggestion that the AEU was not consulted on that. That is not true. In fact, the AEU has submitted a document of several pages to the government on this issue, as have a number of other organisations. If you read the member's contribution, you will note that there is support for many of those organisations for the government's proposal, and even some of the organisations that the honourable member says were not consulted did make the point to her—and she reiterates it in her statement—that the government was quite clear on its position. So, the whole concentration on the consultation issue has been a little biased.

There has been misunderstanding by the member regarding the operation of this. The compulsory and voluntary invoicing arrangements in place will not be continued, so there is a difference. Perhaps I can further aid the member in her understanding of that. There will be administrative guidelines once the form of this bill has been dealt with. Administrative guidelines and instructions will be circulated to schools, with the information that is always circulated to schools in around November each year on school fees for the

following year. For the first time, the department will be issuing a debt recovery policy that will clarify matters and assist schools. Also for the first time, the government will be moving to have a panel contract arrangement to assist schools in those collection services.

Given the time, and the pressure to complete this debate, I will take up other issues during the committee stage. I point out to the house that, for the first time in six years, the government is increasing School Card payments along with the school fee regime for next year with respect to our government schools, and these will be indexed. A new social inclusion payment will be paid directly to schools for their School Card students, and that will also be indexed. I thank all members for their contribution and for their support of this bill, and I look forward to furthering this bill during the committee stage.

Bill read a second time.

The SPEAKER: I wish to make a brief contribution about my own personal experiences of the education system and the benefits which I have always believed were introduced as a direct consequence of the representations my mother made to the then premier, Sir Thomas Playford, who was our local member, when the innovation of free books was introduced. It thereby enabled some of my older brothers to attend school, when they had otherwise been doing correspondence school at home. There were five of them as well as, at that point, four younger siblings, including me. I believe that the government is acting responsibly, and I support the proposition, and the fact that those people (like the Lewis family, as I recall it at that time) who cannot afford the cost are catered for, and quite properly so. Otherwise, it would simply not be possible for some children to go to school.

I conclude my remarks by making the observation that I am quite sure that, these days, those people who provide residency to children (and I have chosen those words carefully—in other words, their parents) too often regard the cost of education in every particular as being something that should be met at taxpayers' expense—in other words, entirely socialised, and not an obligation that they have as parents. Hence the remark that I have made on more than one occasion that I believe it is not necessary for people to have a licence to marry but, rather, given the lengths to which two married adults (married in law) must go to to obtain approval from the system to adopt, to my mind, it seems more sensible that there ought to be a licence to provide residency to children, regardless of whether or not they are the natural offspring.

Some people, in my judgment, are clearly unfit to be parents, and accept no responsibility whatever towards their children, expecting that the rest of the community will pick up the cost. Amongst that group of people, I find those very few (in percentage terms) who simply have the funds but will not allocate them for the purpose to which responsible parents, in the real tradition of Australian families and Australian life, would otherwise do. The sad thing in all that is that those children are extremely disadvantaged, just because their parents are not prepared to accept that part of parenting that goes with ensuring that the child is properly provided for.

In committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

ABORIGINAL LANDS TRUST

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the moving of a motion forthwith for the rescission of the vote on Notice of Motion: Government Business No. 1.

The SPEAKER: There not being a quorum present, ring the bells.

A quorum having been formed:

The SPEAKER: There being an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the house present, I accept the motion. Is it seconded?

An honourable member: Yes, sir.

Motion carried.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I move:

That the vote on Notice of Motion: Government Business No. 1, taken in the house today, be rescinded.

Motion carried.

Ms CHAPMAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

SURVEY (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill with the amendments indicated by the following schedule, to which amendments the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

No. 1. Clause 12, page 7, lines 8 to 12—Delete subclause (1) and substitute:

(1) The Council may, by instrument in writing, delegate any of its powers or functions under this Act to the holder of a particular office or position in the University.

No. 2. Clause 12, page 7, line 13—After 'delegated' (first occurring) insert:

to the Vice-Chancellor

No. 3. Clause 12, page 7, lines 15 to 19—Delete subclause (3)

No. 4. Clause 14, page 8, after line 11—Insert:

(1a) Section 12(1)(b)—delete 'appointed by the Chancellor' and insert:

, three of whom are appointed by the Chancellor and three by the presiding member of the Graduate Association (but at least three members of the selection committee must be graduates of the University),

No. 5. Clause 17, page 9, lines 14 to 19—Delete subclauses (2) and (3)

No. 6. Clause 17, page 9, line 23—Delete 'Maximum penalty: \$20 000 or imprisonment for 4 years.'

No. 7. Clause 17, page 9, line 36—Delete 'Maximum penalty: \$20 000.'

No. 8. Clause 17, page 10, line 22—Delete 'Maximum penalty: \$20 000.'

No. 9. Clause 17, page 10, lines 25 and 26—Delete 'an associate of the member' and insert:

the member's spouse, or a relative of the member,

No. 10. Clause 17, page 10, line 32 to page 11, line 15—Delete subclauses (10) and (11) and insert:

10 In this section—

relative of a person means the spouse, parent or remoter linear ancestor, son, daughter or remoter issue or brother or sister of the person;

spouse includes a putative spouse (whether or not a declaration of the relationship has been made under the Family Relationships Act 1975).

No. 11. Clause 17, page 11, lines 20 to 27—Delete subclause (1)

No. 12. Clause 17, page 11, lines 29 and 30—Delete '(whether or not proceedings have been brought for the offence)'

No. 13. Clause 18, page 11, line 37—After 'sections' insert: and substitute

18—Annual meeting

(1) The Council must, within two months of the commencement of each financial year, convene and attend an annual meeting of the University community.

(2) The Vice-Chancellor, or in the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, a member of the Council chosen by the Council, must preside at a meeting convened under subsection (1).

(3) At least 28 days notice of a meeting under subsection (1) must be given in a manner determined by the Council.

(4) The business and procedures of a meeting under subsection (1) will be determined by the Council.

(5) In this section—

University community means the Council, members of the academic staff, members of the general staff, graduates and students.

No. 14. Schedule, clause 4, page 14, lines 12 to 15—Delete clause 4 and substitute:

4 On the commencement of section 14(4) of this Act, a member of the Council holding office under section 12(1)(g) of the principal Act will vacate his or her office, and the Council may, in a manner determined by the Council after consultation with the presiding member of the Students Association of the University, appoint 1 postgraduate student and 1 undergraduate student to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.12 p.m. the house adjourned until Monday 10 November at 2 p.m.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 20 October 2003

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

JACOBS CREEK GOLF OPEN

1. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What were the results of the South Australian Tourism Commission's survey of the recent Jacobs Creek Golf Open and how much Government funding will be allocated to future events?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Australian Major Events (AME) and the Jacob's Creek Open Championship promoter, Tuohy Associates have a three year sponsorship agreement which was signed in 2001.

2002	\$500 000
2003	\$475 000
2004	\$450 000

A survey of attendees at the 2003 Jacob's Creek Open Championship indicated approximately 280 visitors from interstate and overseas came to Adelaide specifically for the event. These visitors stayed approximately 6 nights each and injected approximately \$250 000 into the State economy.

ADELAIDE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE

12. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** How many permanent, casual and contract staff, respectively, are employed at the Adelaide Entertainment Centre?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As at 30 September 2003, the Adelaide Entertainment Centre employed 27 permanent staff, 373 casual staff and four contract staff.

JACOBS CREEK GOLF OPEN

17. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Has funding to the Jacobs Creek Golf Open been reduced and if so, on what basis and what were the results of any survey of the last event?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Australian Major Events (AME) and the Jacob's Creek Open Championship promoter, Tuohy Associates have a three year sponsorship agreement which was signed in 2001.

2002	\$500 000
2003	\$475 000
2004	\$450 000

A survey of attendees at the 2003 Jacob's Creek Open Championship indicated approximately 280 visitors from interstate and overseas came to Adelaide specifically for the event. These visitors stayed approximately 6 nights each and injected approximately \$250 000 into the State economy.

JACOBS CREEK TOUR DOWN UNDER

22. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What was the financial

	2000-01	2001-02	Increase (Decrease)	CPI (a)	2002-03	Increase (Decrease)	CPI (a)
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	%	\$'000	\$'000	%
State Library of South Australia	2 441	2 128	313	13	2 497	369	17
Art Gallery of South Australia	840	1 010	170	20	1 039	29	3
South Australian Museum	1 366	1 455	89	6.5	1 361	(94)	(6)
Adelaide Festival Centre	21 180	18 278	(2 902)	(14.0)	21 774	3 496	19

(a) The Consumer Price Index is extracted from the Australian Bureau of Statistics All Groups Index March 2003 Quarter (Cat. No. 6401.0).

(b) Salaries have been calculated as 80% fixed and 20% variable costs.

Additional information

- State Library non-fixed operating expenditure decreased in 2001-02 due to redevelopment activity. This expenditure has subsequently increased in 2002-03 as the Library geared up for reopening.
- Art Gallery non-fixed operating expenditure increased in 2001-02

benefit to each tourism region during the "Tour Down Under" in 2003 and what were the funding arrangements?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The 2003 Jacob's Creek Tour Down Under generated an estimated net economic benefit for the State of \$12.5 million and supported the equivalent of 207 full-time jobs, according to the economic impact study conducted by Economic Research Consultants.

In terms of funding arrangements for the 2003 event, councils who hosted a stage start or finish each contributed \$15 000 towards the overall costs of staging the event. This is a common international practice for most staged cycle races and an arrangement that the participating councils in South Australia have accepted as a reasonable cost in return for the benefits generated within their community.

AUSTRALIAN MAJOR EVENTS

23. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What were the attendances of each Australian Major Events sponsored event in 2002-03 and what was the level of support on each occasion?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Details are as listed:

	Sponsorship Allocation \$	Estimated Attendance
Australian Duathlon Championship (July 2002)	25 000	500
WOMAD Warm Up (Sept 2002)	50 000	1 000
Australian University Games (Sept/Oct 2002)	25 000	6 000
Sensational Adelaide Classic Adelaide Rally (Oct 2002)	175 000	100 000
Bartercard Glenelg Jazz Festival (Oct 2002)	100 000	10 800
Fleurieu Biennale (Nov 2002)	50 000	3 000
AAPT Tennis Championships (Dec 2002/Jan 2003)	235 000	17 200
Australian Junior Sailing Regatta (Jan 2003)	10 000	1 000
Jacob's Creek Open Championship (Mar 2003)	475 000	29 000
Vintage Cricket Carnival (Mar 2003)	30 000	300
WOMADelaide (Mar 2003)	100 000	67 000
Australian BMX Championships (April 2003)	35 000	3 000
Oceania Duathlon Championships (May 2003)	30 000	500
	1 340 000	239 300

ARTS, EXPENDITURE

50. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** For each of the following institutions—Adelaide Festival Centre, State Library of South Australia, Art Gallery of South Australia and the South Australian Museum—(a) what has been the dollar and percentage increase in non-fixed operating costs during 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03; and (b) how has this compared with the CPI for the same period?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have been advised that:

mainly due to additional insurance contributions to cover the cost of touring exhibitions and increased expenditure in general administration.

- SA Museum non-fixed operating expenditure decreased in 2002-03 due to a corresponding increase in fixed costs for the same period.

Adelaide Festival Centre non-fixed operating expenditure decreased in 2001-02 primarily as a result of reduced activity in programming and theatre activity associated with the biennial WOMAD festival. Expenditure relating to this festival was incurred principally in 2000-01 and 2002-03.

ARTS FUNDING

60. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** How much does the government spend on Arts funding compared to other states and territories?

The Hon M.D. RANN: I have been advised:

The ABS produces an annual publication entitled Cultural Funding by Government, Australia. This publication provides data on State and Territory funding for culture. The funding data are divided into two main categories, each of which contains several activities. The main categories are:

- Heritage, which includes art museums, other museums, nature parks and reserves, zoological parks, aquaria, botanic gardens, libraries and archives
- Arts, which includes literature and print media, music, drama, dance, music theatre and opera, other performing arts, performing arts venues, public halls and civic centres, visual arts and crafts, radio and television services, film and video, multimedia, community cultural activities, administration of culture, arts education, and other arts not elsewhere classified.
- The latest ABS figures show that cultural funding per capita by the South Australian Government in 2001-02 was higher than that of any other State Government. Only the Northern Territory, where the small population influences the figures, recorded higher expenditure per person.
- The South Australian government spent \$144.88 per capita, which compared to an average of \$113.02 per capita by state and territory governments nationally.
- The ABS figures for the amount spent by individual state and territory governments on culture in 2001-02 were as follows:

State/territory government	Total amount spent (\$m.)	Per capita funding (\$)
NSW	787.2	118.50
Vic	495.2	102.02
Qld	326.5	88.96
SA	220.1	144.88
WA	224.7	117.09
Tas	48.8	103.14
NT	76.2	381.37
ACT	36.5	113.21
Australia	2215.2	113.02

- Of the \$220.1 million invested by the SA Government in culture in 2001-02, the largest amounts were directed to nature parks and reserves (\$83.8 million), libraries (\$38.9 million), performing arts venues (\$20.5 million), and other (i.e. other than art) museums (\$19.2 million). The Government's support for libraries and performing arts venues included funding for major capital works.

BACKING AUSTRALIA'S ABILITY PROGRAM

67. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What is the level of funding sought from the 'Backing Australia's Ability' program in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 and how does this compare with other states?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Hon J Lomax-Smith: The total amount of funding available through the commonwealth's Backing Australia's Ability Program over the three financial years in question, is as follows:

2003-04	\$618.6 million
2004-05	\$757.5 million
2005-06	\$946.6 million

Backing Australia's Ability includes a broad range of programs and initiatives coordinated by the commonwealth. The majority of funding allocated in these programs and initiatives is done so on a competitive basis and it is therefore not possible to determine how South Australia will perform compared to other States.

Backing Australia's Ability also incorporates programs that are operated at a national level, where funding is not allocated on a state-by-state basis (such as the Pre-Seed Fund and the R&D Start Program).

Funding is often awarded to collaborative projects across a number of states and territories, where specific allocation of funding is difficult to determine. This is particularly the case where bids are made by any number and combination of government agencies, businesses, research organisations and universities.

SUBMARINE CORPORATION

71. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** What are schedule details of any meeting with Northrop Grumman in relation to the proposed extension to the Australian Submarine Corporation and will other political leaders be invited?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The chairman of the Defence Industry Advisory Board, Vice Admiral (Rtd) David Shackleton, and the executive director, Strategic Initiatives, Office of Economic Development met with the president Ship Systems, Northrop Grumman, in April 2003, and the chairman and I met with the President Ship Systems again in June 2003.

There are no future meetings planned with Northrop Grumman in relation to the Australian Submarine Corporation at this stage.

FUEL, OUTLETS

77. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:**

1. On average how many fuel outlets are inspected for compliance by the Trade Measurement Section each financial year?

2. If inspection fees are charged, how are they applied, how much does it cost to conduct each type of inspection and the basis of that calculation, including differential charges based on the size of the outlet?

3. What infringements and scale of penalties apply for non-compliance or breach?

4. Were any of the following outlets—

(a) Bartlett's Auto Centre—46 Angas Road Hawthorn;

(b) BP Express—427 Goodwood Road, Westbourne Park;

(c) BP—1 Main Road, Belair;

(d) Kingswood Motor Garage—53 Belair Road, Kingswood; and

(e) Liberty Oil—51 Princess Street, Kingswood

inspected between 2000-01 and 2003-04, and if so, when did this occur, what inspection charges applied and what were the inspection costs on each occasion?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The Minister for Consumer Affairs has received this advice:

The Trade Measurement Section maintains records of the number of premises inspected each financial year. The type and number of trade instruments on each premise varies, with the emphasis of the data collected on compliance (metrological requirements of the instrument). Data is available on the number of fuel instruments inspected each financial year.

The records maintained by the Trade Measurement Section identify:

- In the financial year 2000-01 a total of 3 180 fuel outlet instruments were inspected within South Australia.

- In the financial year 2001-02 a total of 3 161 fuel outlet instruments were inspected within South Australia.

- In the financial year 2002-03 a total of 2 936 fuel outlet instruments were inspected within South Australia.

- In the current financial year to 22 August 2003, a total of 891 fuel outlet instruments have been inspected within South Australia.

2. The *Trade Measurement Administration Act* 1993 under Part 3 specifies that fees and charges may be prescribed. The Act says:

9. (1) Regulations may be made for and with respect to the imposition, collection and recovery of fees and charges for the purposes of this Act and the principal Act,

The fees applied to the testing of trade measurement instruments by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs—Trade Measurement Section are set forth in the *Trade Measurement (Administration) Regulations* 1993.

The *Trade Measurement Administration Act* 1993 at Section 15 identifies the frequency of testing of trade measurement instruments. The Act says:

Responsibilities of administering authority concerning verification and re-verification

15. (1) It is the responsibility of the administering authority—
(a) to provide the means by which measuring instruments may be verified; and

(b) to arrange for the re-verification of measuring instruments that are in use for trade.

(2) Arrangements under subsection (1)(b) must provide for the re-verification of a measuring instrument as often as the administering authority determines is necessary or desirable in relation to the class of measuring instrument concerned but need not be made in any cases or circumstances for which the regulations provide re-verification is not required.

(3) This section does not affect the power of the administering authority to charge amounts in accordance with the regulations for or in connection with the verification and re-verification of measuring instruments.

The fee applicable to the individual instrument used for trade is based on the capacity of the instrument.

The testing frequency is based upon the age of the instrument (in the case of fuel instruments, testing is generally every 2 years), the instrument's test history, and the maintenance regime adopted by the instrument's owner.

3. The *Trade Measurement Act 1993* and the *Trade Measurement (Measuring Instruments) Regulations 1993* specify the scale of penalties for non-compliance or breaches of trade measurement legislation.

Section 69 of the *Trade Measurement Act 1993* makes provision for a larger fine for a body corporate. This section says:

Increased penalty for body corporate

69. The maximum penalty for an offence under a provision of this Act committed by a body corporate is a fine that is 5 times the fine provided for in the provision as the penalty.

The *Trade Measurement (Administration) Regulations 1993* Section 4(3) also makes allowance for a premium of 10 p.c. for non-payment of the scheduled charge for amounts outstanding for 28 days after the administering authority requires payment.

4. All the sites were inspected for compliance with the legislation administered by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs, and this includes compliance with the Fair Trading Act and trade measurement legislation. With the exception of (d) Kingswood Motor Garage—53 Belair Road, Kingswood, SA 5062.

This site does not have instruments for trade use. Although this site was one of the few remaining multi-brand sites, it ceased trading as a fuel outlet in 1975. No charges have been made.

In regard to the other sites:

(a) Bartlett's Auto Centre, of 46 Angas Road, Hawthorn, SA 5062, was inspected in financial year 2000-01 and 2002-03, for which scheduled fees applied (\$655.50).

There were follow up visits in 2000-01 and also 2003-04 for instruments that were found not to comply with the National Standards Commission Certificate of approval granted to the instrument. These tests were gratis.

(b) BP Express, 427 Goodwood Road, Westbourne Park, SA 5041, was inspected in the financial year 2001-02 and also 2003-04 for which scheduled fees applied (\$3 562.00).

There were also follow up visits in 2001-02 and also 2003-04 for instruments that were found not to comply with the National Standards Commission Certificate of approval granted to the instrument. These tests were gratis.

(c) BP, 1 Main Road, Belair, SA 5052, was inspected in the financial year 2000-01 and also 2002-03, for which scheduled fees applied (\$2 462.10).

There were also follow up visits in 2002-03 for instruments that were found not to comply with the National Standards Commission Certificate of approval granted to the instrument. These tests were gratis.

(e) Mitcham Service Station (Liberty Oil), 51 Princess Road, Mitcham, SA 5062, was inspected in the financial year 2000-01 and also 2002-03, for which scheduled fees applied (\$1 247.90).

There were also follow up visits in 2000-01, 2002-03 and also 2003-04 for instruments that were found not to comply with the National Standards Commission Certificate of approval granted to the instrument. These were gratis.

The scheduled fee applicable for each driveway flowmeter in the financial years:

2000-01 was \$63.10
2001-02 was \$65
2002-03 was \$68
2003-04 is \$72.

The inspection of instruments, for which a scheduled fee was applied, resulted in the imposition of \$7 927.50 in fees.

Of the total 170 instrument inspections conducted at these sites for the period financial year 2000-01 to 22 August 2003, a total of 118 had a fee applied to the instrument, with the scheduled fees levied being returned to general revenue.

Of the sites inspected in the period 2000-01 to 22 August 2003, a total of 52 trade instruments required follow up visits by trade measurement inspectors to ensure compliance with the Certificate of approval, granted to the instrument by the National Standards Commission.

It should be noted that the emphasis of inspections by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs, Trade Measurement Section, is to ensure that traders and consumers can expect that the goods that they purchase by weight, measure or number have been accurately weighed and measured.

PENSIONER CONCESSIONS

123. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** Do pensioner concessions apply to National Parks and Wildlife Service licence holders, and if not, why not?

The Hon J.D. HILL: An extensive review of the fauna permit system was conducted in 1999 by the former Liberal government in order to streamline the system, promote the keeping and sustainable use of wildlife and to protect wild populations from being impacted by trade. The concession for minors and pensioners hunting permit was retained, but the concession for a "keep and sell" fauna permit was abolished for several reasons:

- many species previously requiring a permit became exempt, allowing those who could not previously afford a permit to keep a wide range of animals; and
- there were a large number of permit holders that were claiming unwarranted concessions.

Whilst I recognise that the changes may have affected some people, it is important that those who derive personal and/or financial benefit from the taking or keeping of protected animals contribute to their conservation.

PALLIATIVE CARE

129. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** What action has the Minister taken in relation to palliative care since 2002?

The Hon. L. STEVENS: Since 2002 SA has worked collaboratively with the commonwealth to advance the National Palliative Care Strategy and implement a number of new funding initiatives.

The National Palliative Care Strategy was endorsed by Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) in October 2000. The strategy represents the commitment of the commonwealth, state and territory governments, in conjunction with other key stakeholders, to the development and implementation of palliative care policies, strategies and services that are consistent across Australia, and to the delivery of quality palliative care that is accessible to all people who are dying.

To support the national strategy, the commonwealth government made available a total of \$201.2 million for palliative care throughout the five years of the Australian Health Care Agreements (2003-08). Of this, \$188 million is broadly allocated on a per capita basis to states and territories for continued service provision, from which SA will receive approximately \$13.5 million. \$13.2 million has been allocated to the commonwealth to implement national initiatives.

In addition to the \$13.2 million for the National Palliative Care Program, the commonwealth also committed \$55 million over four years in the 2002 federal budget for national activities to support improvements in the standard of palliative care offered in local communities.

The National Palliative Care Program is funding a range of projects and research activities aimed at extending the reach of palliative care programs, supporting people if they wish to die at home and developing the palliative care skills of a broad range of clinicians and carers. South Australia has received approximately \$3 million under this program to undertake a range of project and research initiatives aimed at improving the standard of palliative care offered in local communities.

Activities include a major workforce education program providing primary health care providers working in community settings (for example community nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers) with an opportunity to develop skills in the palliative approach by undertaking a workforce placement with a palliative care specialist service within a metropolitan or larger peri-urban service.

Over the next year we will be developing a stronger evidence base for palliative care in South Australia by pulling together the outcomes of the many national projects and research being under-

taken as part of the National Palliative Care Program and incorporating the key learnings into the development of directions for palliative care provision in SA.

The Palliative Care Council of SA has been able to work with Metropolitan Domiciliary Care to develop a palliative care equipment store to make it easier for people dying at home to access equipment, such as portable electric beds. Much needed equipment has also been purchased for palliative care services in rural areas.

Carer respite centres across the state have received increased funds to provide respite care for the carers of people dying in the home.

The direction being promoted through the National Palliative Care Strategy is congruent with the South Australian reform agenda. We are committed to South Australia getting maximum benefit from the current national focus on palliative care.

A priority in palliative care has been strengthening community based support for people with palliative care needs to remain in their homes for as long as possible and also support these people in their decision to die at home whenever possible.

In 2002-03, additional funding for community based palliative care was provided to the Southern Adelaide Palliative Service, the Women's and Children's Hospital, and the Central and Eastern Palliative Care Service.

- The Southern Adelaide Palliative Service received funds to work with Noarlunga Health Service to develop a palliative care community outreach program.
- Funding to the Women's and Children's Hospital for the statewide paediatric palliative care program was more than doubled. Most families want to be able to care for a child who is dying at home and need to be supported to do this. Their grief and bereavement needs are very intense and the increase in funding has allowed improved bereavement care to be provided, as well as a 24-hour on-call support service for families.
- Prior to 2002, community outreach services for people with palliative care needs in the central and eastern metropolitan area was very limited. Additional funding was provided to the Central and Eastern Palliative Care Service to employ staff to provide a community outreach program, which has resulted in an increased number of people who can be supported to remain home longer.

Sponsorship funding was also provided for the 7th National Palliative Care Conference held in Adelaide in September 2003. This conference attracted around a 1000 delegates and being held in Adelaide allowed many local providers of services and volunteers to attend.

The new Australian Health Care Agreement will continue to focus on improving palliative care in particular to 'improve the provision of palliative care services'. South Australia will receive dedicated palliative care funds under the Agreement to contribute to the ongoing implementation of the National Palliative Care Strategy.

NURSING HOME PLACEMENTS

130. **Dr McFETRIDGE:**

1. How many patients in each Adelaide public hospital are

waiting for a nursing home placement, what is the average waiting time and are patients required to accept placement regardless of location from their previous abode?

2. How many extra nursing home beds are required in Adelaide to alleviate current demand?

3. What action is being taken to address the special nursing bed needs of palliative care patients and their families?

The Hon. L. STEVENS:

1. As at 14 September 2003 there were a total of 144 nursing home type patients in metropolitan hospitals awaiting nursing home placement. The table below details the number by hospital:

Royal Adelaide Hospital	33
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital	16
Lyell McEwin Hospital	6
Modbury Hospital	9
Flinders Medical Centre	35
Repatriation General Hospital	33
Noarlunga Health Services	12
Total	144

The average waiting time for nursing home placement is not reported and varies according to the level of care required. In the period 1 September 2003 to 14 September 2003 there were a total of 81 patients from metropolitan hospitals placed in nursing homes.

Consistent with longstanding hospital policy/practice patients awaiting placement are not required to accept the first offer of placement.

2. The provision of aged care accommodation is a commonwealth government responsibility.

However, the state government has recently funded additional capacity of 40 beds provided by Aged Care Housing Group at Julia Farr, and has continued to provide \$545 000 per annum to support the Home Rehabilitation and Support Service.

3. Inpatient care for palliative care patients is available across all regions in SA, although the type of care varies. A range of inpatient care options are required to enable people and their families to have some choice in where people are cared for during the end stages of their life. All public hospitals provide inpatient palliative beds. Hospice care is also available at Daw House, Mary Potter Hospice, Phillip Kennedy Centre Hospice and Modbury Hospital hospice. In country South Australia the number of people dying who want or require hospice level care is not enough to support a specific hospice facility. Most of the rural hospitals have developed family suites that facilitate family members participating more actively in the care of the dying person.

Most palliative care patients prefer to be able to die in their own home if possible. The current priority in palliative care is strengthening community based support for people with palliative care needs to remain in their homes if they wish to for as long as possible, and also support these people in their choice to die at home whenever possible. Under the National Palliative Care Program, SA has received over \$3 million dollars to undertake a four year program of project and research initiatives aimed at supporting improvements in the standard of palliative care offered in local communities.