HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 24 November 2003

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

SHINE

A petition signed by 22 residents 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.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Pursuant to Section 131 of the Local Government Act 1999 the following reports of Local Councils for 2002-03
- Holdfast Bay, City of—Report 2002-03
- Karoonda East Murray, District Council of,—Report 2002-03
- Mount Gambier, City of—Report 2002-03
- Mount Remarkable, District Council of,—Report 2002-03
- Roxby Downs Council—Report 2002-03

By the Minister for Health (Hon. L. Stevens)—

- Eudunda & Kapunda Health Service Incorporated—Report 2002-03
- Human Services, Department of—Report 2002-03
- Metropolitan Domiciliary Care—Report 2002-03
- Mid-West Health & Aged Care Inc. & Mid-West Health—Report 2002-03
- Millicent & District Hospital & Health Services Inc.—Report 2002-03
- South Coast District Hospital Inc (Incorporating Southern Fleurieu Health Service)—Report 2002-03
- Waikerie Health Service Incorporated—Report 2002-03

By the Minister for Environment and Conservation (Hon. J.D. Hill)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
- Native Vegetation—Exploration and Mining Operations

By the Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts (Hon. J.D. Hill)—

- Country Arts SA—Report 2002-03

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

Regulations under the following Acts—
- Aquaculture—Licensee's Fee.

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE (INNAMINCKA REGIONAL RESERVE) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: During the committee stage of debate on the National Parks and Wildlife (Innamincka Regional Reserve) Amendment Bill, questions were asked of me about mining access in the Coongie Lakes. The bill before the house addressed the no-mining zone. The members for Waite and Bright asked whether that zone would allow for subsurface access to resources. In order to answer that question, I sought advice from a departmental officer present in the chamber at the time. Based on that advice, I said that subsurface access to resources would be permissible in all of the protected area.

However, I have since been advised that this is not the case. In fact, the bill does not provide for subsurface access to occur in the no-mining zone. The new management arrangements for Coongie Lakes are complex. There are three parts in the zone, each with its own conditions. The new national park, which comprises the geographic centre of the Coongie Lakes Ramsar Wetland, will be free from mining (both surface and subsurface access) and from pastoral activity. Similarly, the no-mining zone—the subject of the bill—also precludes surface and subsurface mining access. The third area is the buffer zone that provides a buffer for key wetlands and riparian zones and encircles most of the bill's no-mining zone. That buffer zone provides for surface access only by walk-in geophysical surveys and subsurface access to resources from outside the buffer zone.

Mr BRINDAL: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I accept that the minister comes here to correct a statement. However, for the record, the statement that he has just corrected was pivotal to the deliberations of this house in consideration of a bill. This house considered the bill with the best advice available to it at the time. That advice now proves to be wrong. I ask you, Mr Speaker, to consider what, in your opinion, the house's position should be on that matter.

The SPEAKER: It is the chair's view that the house is now in possession of facts which are at variance with the facts before it at the time, and it is a matter for the house to decide. It is not a matter for the chair to determine what course of action should be followed.

SCALZI, Mr J., MISREPRESENTATION

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr SCALZI: On 17 November I was misrepresented by the Minister for Energy. In a media interview on public reaction to the 'doorsnake and light bulb' component of the government's energy saving measures announced recently the minister stated:

> I wish they never had a doorsnake in it because it is all people think about, and there are a lot more. The criticism that it is such an insult, well this came about as a result of a recommendation from a select committee of the parliament into poverty. . .

He continued:

> This came about as a result of a recommendation from a select committee of the parliament into poverty about what we should do for low income households on energy, this was the recommendation. Two Liberal members, one that sits in the lower house with Wayne Matthew, right near him, Joe Scalzi recommended this.

The Social Development Committee in its poverty inquiry (17th report of the Social Development Committee) reported to another place on 13 May. The comments by the minister implied that the 'doorsnake and light bulb' offer specifically originated in the recommendations of this committee, which upon review of these recommendations is clearly not the case.

As the minister has specifically named me and wrongly attributed to me and the committee, I ask him to apologise.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member may merely seek to explain the position and make no demand

upon any other member to do anything—that becomes the subject of a separate motion and the member for Hartley has been here long enough to know that.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the *Notice Paper*, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, 19, 29, 65, 66, 79, 80, 102 to 109, 111, 115 to 117, 121, 144, 147 to 153, 157, 169, 172, 174 and 181; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

HOSPITALS, GLENSIDE

In reply to **Mr GOLDSWORTHY** (25 September).

The Hon. L. STEVENS: There are no plans to reduce the number of beds in Helen Mayo House at the Royal Adelaide Hospital Glenside Campus, nor any plans to close the ward.

As part of the reforms to Mental Health Services, all service models of care are being reviewed to ensure the delivery of high quality care that best meets consumer and carer needs. This includes reviewing mental health services, such as Helen Mayo House at Glenside Campus, to identify resourcing needs, appropriate functioning and to ensure that service delivery practice reflects national and international best practice.

The review of services will be undertaken in consultation with mental health service providers, consumers and carers.

HOUSING TRUST

In reply to **Mrs HALL** (23 September).

The Hon. S.W. KEY: At June 2003, the South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) had approximately 48 270 rental dwellings, 58 per cent of which were located within the Metropolitan region. Of the total SAHT rental stock, approximately 26 837 (55.6 per cent) can be described as attached dwellings, specifically:

- 12 919 attached houses; and
- 13 928 double units;

Of the 26 837 attached SAHT dwellings, only sales of double units can result in strictly one half an attached property being in private ownership, with the remaining half in public ownership.

The majority of double units are located on properties owned by SAHT, with approximately 1 900 double units where only half the property is owned by SAHT.

Currently, SAHT has a house purchase budget, and a New Build program which includes the development of some attached housing. Attached housing or group housing is becoming increasingly important to meet the needs of smaller households and ageing tenants. This form of development is also efficient in terms of costs and utilisation of SAHT land holdings.

Allocation of properties to community service organisations is based on providing housing appropriate to the needs of the organisation's client group in terms of the location and type of dwelling (generally this is done through the SAHT's Special Needs Housing Unit) and takes into account any adjacent or surrounding tenancies.

While the SAHT has a policy of integrating public housing with private housing and has purchased many attached properties, it is not normal practice to allocate housing to community organisations that are attached to private residential housing. However, in some suburbs market pressures have made it extremely difficult to find suitable properties for such organisations and still balance the needs of some of the most disadvantaged women and children in our community who are escaping family violence.

The Special Needs Housing Unit currently leases 412 attached houses to 44 community organisations.

While the needs of these groups will continue to be considered in all areas, the SAHT Special Needs Housing Unit has no other examples of properties being leased to community agencies which are attached to privately owned homes.

HEALTH, REGIONAL SERVICES

In reply to **Mr WILLIAMS** (22 October).

The Hon. L. STEVENS: On 1 October 2003 the Premier announced $20 million over four years for regional health services. In this financial year, the following funds have been allocated:

Region	Amount $
Eyre Regional Health Service	452 781
Hills Mallee Southern Regional Health Service	727 896
Mid North Regional Health Service	608 667
Northern & Far Western Regional Health Service	503 448
Riverland Health Authority	326 936
South East Regional Health Service	1 500 000
Wakefield Regional Health Service	713 592
Gawler Health Service	16 400

COMPUTER TERMINALS

In reply to **Hon. DEAN BROWN** (25 September).

The Hon. L. STEVENS: All doctors will have access to the full suite of computerised patient information systems in the new 200 bed wing of The Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In anticipation of moving to the new wing, new and replacement computer hardware has been acquired and will be installed in the new 200 bed wing during the commissioning phase.

In addition, the redevelopment has included cabling infrastructure to each bedside should the technology to support bedside access to such systems become viable in the near future.

HOSPITALS, MOUNT GAMBIER

In reply to **Hon. DEAN BROWN** (16 September).

The Hon. L. STEVENS: The honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition refers to "practice rights". There are two types of privileges that specialists may hold, namely admitting privileges and clinical privileges.

It is assumed that the question refers to admitting privileges. The GP-anaesthetist in question still has clinical privileges in the South East region. He terminated all his dealings with Mount Gambier and Districts Health Services (MGDHS) in July 2003, and specifically his locum arrangements, effective from 14 July 2003.

The CEO of the MGDHS indicated to the GP-anaesthetist that this had the effect of terminating his "admitting privileges" at the public hospital. This is disputed by the lawyers for the GP-anaesthetist.

In relation to the private hospital, this is a separately incorporated body with its own board of management. The question of admitting privileges for the private hospital is a matter for that hospital.

McBRIDE, STEPHEN WAYNE—APPLICATION FOR PAROLE

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Earlier today Her Excellency the Governor in Executive Council, on the advice of cabinet, rejected a recommendation of the Parole Board of South Australia that Stephen Wayne McBride be released on parole. Mr McBride was sentenced on 4 August 1983 for the murder of an innocent woman on 18 April 1982, the armed robbery of a woman in her own house on 2 June 1982, and the malicious wounding of another woman in her own home on 18 October 1982. On 16 August 1983, McBride was also sentenced for the attempted murder of another woman on 16 October 1982. The circumstances of the offences were extremely grave.

On 18 April 1982, McBride in company with his brother went to the Sandy Creek post office and store armed with a rifle and held up the proprietor, Ms Shirley Docking. During the robbery, McBride deliberately shot the innocent victim in the head, killing her instantly. In sentencing McBride the court rejected any possibility that the shooting was an

accident. On 2 June 1982, just six weeks later, McBride robbed a woman in her own home at knife point.

Later that same year, on 16 October 1982, McBride attempted to murder a woman bus driver at Pooraka. In sentencing McBride, the court noted that there was no apparent motive for the crime and the victim was left in a grievous state. Just two days later, on 18 October 1982, McBride maliciously wounded a woman in her own home by stabbing her.

The cabinet's recommendation to Her Excellency the Governor was made having considered all the relevant material. The cabinet weighed very carefully the factors of the case, including the gravity of the offending, McBride's conduct as a prisoner and his two previous failures to comply with parole conditions when released in 1997, and again when he was released in 1999. This is the third time that Executive Council has refused the request by the Parole Board for McBride's release; it is the third time that his release has been knocked back. The recommendation was made by cabinet in the public interest and, in particular, in the interest of community safety.

The house will also be aware that the government has introduced legislation to reform parole procedures and clarify the criteria for considering the granting of parole. Under the proposed changes, the Parole Board must formally consider community safety in making any decision or recommendation to grant parole. Community safety will be paramount. The Parole Board will be given power to consider the grant of parole to prisoners sentenced for sexual offences to less than five years' imprisonment. At the moment, they can have automatic parole. Automatic parole will be out the window once this is enforced.

Currently, the Parole Board has the power to consider parole applications only from prisoners sentenced to more than five years' imprisonment. Parole will no longer be automatic for sex offenders in South Australia. That power may be extended to deal with offenders for other types of offences. The composition of the Parole Board will also be changed. It is proposed that a person with knowledge and an appreciation of victims' interests will be included on the Parole Board. It is also proposed that the board include a retired police officer.

WORKCOVER CORPORATION

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: On Wednesday 19 November, the board of the WorkCover Corporation finalised and announced the annual accounts for the 2002-03 year. Both the actuary and the new board determined to adopt significantly more prudent accounting practices than were used in the past. These practices will provide far greater certainty that appropriate provision is made for future liabilities. The former board admitted that the previous liability estimates were understated by as much as $100 million—it may well have been more. The liabilities of the WorkCover Corporation are the projected costs of claims over the next 40 years. The unfunded liability reflects the difference between the assets presently held by WorkCover and the liabilities 40 years into the future. Using the accounting practices adopted by the Liberal appointed board, the unfunded liability would have been approximately $420 million, much the same as the figure in the June quarterly performance report.

Put simply, the new board has put more prudent practices in place, and that has affected the headline number. At the very first opportunity allowable under the legislation, the government put an entirely new and first class board in place. The new board has demonstrated that it can make the hard decisions, and it has the government's complete support. Using the new, more prudent accounting practices—for example, a prudential margin on liability estimates—and taking account of a payment into the Statutory Reserve Fund, the board has reported an unfunded liability of $591 million. The board has said that it does not expect that levy rates will have to be increased. The board has also said that there is no need for a bail-out. The board has said that WorkCover has more than adequate cash flow to meet its obligations.

Projections indicate that the unfunded liability—liabilities stretching out 40 years into the future—will be fully funded within 10 years. At the core of this issue is the need for better rehabilitation and return to work outcomes. I have been advised that rehabilitation and return to work was in sustained decline under the previous government when redemptions—that is, payouts—were introduced into the system with inadequate controls. It will take time to arrest the damage and turn it around. Under the former (Liberal) government the average levy rate was reduced. I understand that, if the average levy rate had not been reduced, there would have been a cash surplus for the last financial year.

The Treasury reports I initiated shortly after coming to government, which have been tabled in parliament, identified issues that the board has now acted on. Those reports identified issues associated with diseases of long latency—diseases that strike many years after the relevant exposure—in particular, diseases related to exposure to asbestos. Accurately estimating the future costs of these claims is extremely difficult. First, we simply do not know how many people will ultimately make a claim until they actually do so, and each claim, because it will almost certainly involve the death of the worker, is very costly. We are dealing with the legacy of unsafe work practices that date back many, many years, and that is a challenge that other states, the commonwealth and other nations will have to deal with.

There are no easy answers. However, I can assure the house that every effort will be made to pursue anyone whose negligent conduct has caused those terrible diseases. Nationally coordinated action on this issue has been discussed at the Workplace Relations Ministers Council and, at my request, it will remain a permanent agenda item at future ministerial council meetings until it has been resolved. I am advised that WorkCover's cash flow is strong and a cash surplus is projected for this financial year. Preventing workplace injuries, disease and deaths is the best way to reduce workers compensation costs. That is why the government has delivered the biggest ever boost to occupational health and safety funding.

We have bills before the parliament to improve workplace safety and WorkCover's transparency and accountability. The government will work with the board to fix the Liberal mess.

ENVIRONMENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Ms BREUER (Giles):I bring up the annual report 2002-03 of the committee and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

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

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION

Mr CAICA (Colton): I bring up the 5th report of the committee entitled 'Interim Report into the Statutes Amendment (Workcover Governance Reform) Bill and the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare (Safework SA) Amendment Bill' and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: KILPARRIN-TOWNSEND SCHOOLS RELOCATION

Mr CAICA (Colton): I bring up the 193rd report of the committee on the Kilparrin-Townsend schools relocation and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

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

That the report be printed.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

ELECTRICITY PRICES

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): For how long has the Minister for Energy been aware of legal action mentioned in the Energy Consumer Council's report, which casts doubt on the process used to settle electricity prices and raises the potential to invalidate the electricity price setting process and force a fresh investigation into the 2003-04 price settings?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): I am not aware of any legal action, as outlined. Again, what we have—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: To help the minister, I actually said, 'legal advice'.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You said, 'legal action'.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister.

The Hon. K.O. Foley: You made a mistake, Kero, apologise.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will come to order.

Mr Meier interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Goyder will come to order. The minister.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am aware of one unsigned document that has been brought to my attention (one), which does not begin to do what the Leader of the Opposition purports that it does. It does not go to the price setting at all to this point, but it talks about price setting into the future. Every time something has been raised in this parliament by this mob it has gone back to last year when it has all been about a discussion paper by Lew Owens and prices into the future. Can I say this: there is something members opposite may not have noticed now that they have made Dick Blandy their champion—we appointed him! It is our Energy Consumer Council, our protection for the people of South Australia, our advice—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BROKENSHIRE: I rise on a point of order, sir. This, again, touches on your point about relevance. It was a specific question; and, sir, I ask you to rule on its relevance.

The SPEAKER: The minister will stick to the point.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I have seen an unsigned piece of advice, and I use the word 'advice' loosely, because it is not described as a legal opinion. That is all I have seen. I have discussed the same. I have sent the same to Lew Owens for his report and I have discussed it briefly with the Solicitor-General to obtain his views. My initial view is that it does not go anywhere near anything that the Leader of the Opposition has talked about. It is an unsigned piece of advice. I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that, in terms of that unsigned note, I will be relying on the advice of the Solicitor-General and not the unsolicited opinion of the opposition.

On the issue of prices into the future, the parliament set up a Regulator with a set of powers. That Regulator has come down firstly with a price set for FRC in 2003 that has not been challenged—regardless of what verballing the opposition wants to do—by the Energy Consumers Council. What the government-appointed Energy Consumers Council has taken issue with in, I must say, a submission funded by the government, is the applicable contract price for electricity. What it does not go to is that price locked in by privatisation that cannot be assailed. It does not go to that at all, because Dick Blandy—the person they want to quote all the time—has also said in his report that they wrecked it with privatisation.

As the Leader of the Opposition has just said, so many of us on this side have had the job of walking behind the former liberal horse and cleaning up the mess. I advise the opposition not to take pride in the mess that they have left for us to shovel up. We have not only instituted the Regulator, we have also instituted an Energy Consumers Council, we have provided them with the resources to have rigorous debate to make sure that the people of South Australia are protected on price—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Sir, I rise on a point of order. The question is very specific. I think the minister has attempted to answer that and I say that he is now contravening standing orders by trying to debate the issue.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

PORT STANVAC REFINERY

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is to the Minister Assisting the Premier in Economic Development. What has the government resolved with Mobil over the future of the Port Stanvac Refinery?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister Assisting the Premier in Economic Development): Thank you to my colleague the member for Reynell. Can I say from the outset that there was a commitment to her electorate, as there was

also from the member for Kaurna, the Minister for Environment, in ensuring that the interests of the southern suburbs were paramount in the government's negotiations with Mobil. I thank them for their efforts, their support and assistance.

The government has recently announced an agreement with Mobil for the future of the Port Stanvac oil refinery. Under the terms of the agreement Mobil will make an ex gratia payment of $714 338 to the government, equal to the amount paid to Mobil in recent years for rate assistance. The government will also be withholding $100 000 outstanding to Mobil under this assistance package. Both of these sums will be used for economic development in the southern suburbs in line with the Economic Development Plan being established by the Minister for the Southern Suburbs.

I can also advise that Mobil will allocate a minimum of $300 000 in a three year period to 1 July 2006 to be expended on local community groups, and I think that that is an outstanding commitment by the company. Mobil has also offered, separate to this deal, to lend $800 000 worth of oil spill equipment to the state government, at no cost, which would enhance the state's ability to respond to any spills which may occur in the future. Let us hope that they never do. The company has also recently pledged $500 000 to establish a joint research program with the University of Adelaide which aims to assist the search for oil and gas throughout the world.

Regarding the site: Mobil may, for a limited period, until July 2006, mothball the Port Stanvac oil refinery. At the expiration of this period Mobil has one of three options:

- it can resume the operations of the refinery;
- it can cease the operations on a permanent basis; or
- after ascertaining that market conditions do not allow for sufficient certainty to either reopen or permanently close the site, they can extend the period for a further three years.

Let me make it very clear that, if the government of the day—I am speaking for the Labor Party here; I cannot speak should there be a change of government—is re-elected, we will expect Mobil to give us a very sound business case that it should be given a further extension of that period. Make no mistake, if there is any doubt whatsoever, if a Labor government is not convinced of the bona fides of Mobil's position, it will not be granted an extension. We think that gives both surety to Mobil and, importantly, a surety for the southern suburbs.

Should the site be closed permanently, Mobil will be required to demolish the plant and remediate the land to a standard consistent with industrial use. If Mobil fails to remediate the entire site within ten years of a permanent closure, the state government can have the work done and send the bill to the company. The Environment Protection Agency has been involved in negotiations with Mobil and is satisfied with the arrangements for site inspection and remediation in the deal.

While negotiations occurred with Mobil, the government established a task force very swiftly when this issue arose to deal with all those issues that arose from the winding up and mothballing of the site. These issues include the impact on the state's fuel supply, future options for the site, the strategic value of the site, environmental considerations and supporting affected businesses. While discussions were occurring with Mobil, the government also implemented a range of measures to ease the problems associated with the wind down of operations. These included funded programs to assist employees find new jobs and to help businesses in the area. The government—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I would have thought that the member for Mawson, who purports to represent the interests of the southern suburbs, would have shown some interest. We have heard very little from the member for Mawson, and if it was not for the continued support—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson, as I observe it, was paying particular attention to what was being said. The Deputy Premier will come back to the inquiry put by the member for Reynell.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am pleased to say, in conclusion, that the government reached a good deal with the company and a fair deal for the community, which ensures that the obligations that Mobil have to the southern suburbs and to this state are honoured and we get the best outcome of what, for all of us in the house, was a disappointing decision by the Mobil company.

GAS PIPELINE

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): My question is to the Minister for Energy. Given that the new Seagas pipeline is nearly completed, will the minister advise what his government is doing to attract the hundreds of millions of dollars of investment required to build new gas-fired electricity generation from the groups that the Premier has called, 'blood-sucking power companies.'

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): I thank the member for the question and for acknowledging the great work of this government in delivering the Seagas pipeline.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is good to make comparisons. I will not be doing what was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition; I will not be going cap in hand to companies. He suggested that we go cap in hand to electricity companies to get a generator. That might have been how they brought business in the previous government, but I will not be going cap in hand to any electricity business, because that is not the way to deal with businesses. The way to deal with businesses is openly and fairly and by showing them a commercial interest, but I will not be going cap in hand, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Someone has mentioned a snake. The only snakes in electricity are the people who sold ETSA.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: That is right—the deadly death adders of electricity. On this subject—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You will note, sir, that they have not asked a question about concessions, because they only like bad news. We have said it before: they don't like good news; they only like bad news. It is obvious that, not just in South Australia but around Australia, there are major difficulties in having new investment in generation. I will say one thing in here that I have said a number of times outside this chamber: until the federal government has some vestige, some trace of a policy on greenhouse emissions—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: If they will listen, I will explain it to them. Until the federal government has some vestige of a policy on greenhouse gas emissions, there will be major impediments to generation investment in Australia. I will explain why. The simple truth—and I have been told this by people who operate generators (both gas and coal)—

An honourable member: Name them.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am challenged to name them. I will ask these people if it is all right to say their name—I wouldn't do so without asking them—because I am telling the chamber the truth, which is something very rare with the previous government; remember their promise not to sell ETSA. What I have been told by these people—and it makes sense—is that no-one will build a new coal generator, because they do not know what the rules will be in five or 10 years' time. These are big lumps of investment, and they do not know what the rules will be. What they do know is that the commonwealth has its head buried in the sand and has to have some rules, but they will not build them until—

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker, which again relates to relevance. I asked a very specific question about gas-fired electricity generation. I still await an answer from the minister telling us what he has been doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has been addressing the question of investments that will not occur.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Sir, it may be lost on this Liberal opposition, as it is lost on the federal government, that the matter of greenhouse policy is absolutely central to new electricity generation in gas and coal. I have explained about coal; I will now explain the difference in gas. Gas is not competitive against coal on a price basis. I have cited examples in here before, but I will repeat them for the opposition, because they do not appear to understand. One person operates a coal generator in Victoria at a short run marginal cost for fuel of about $7 per megawatt hour. That same person operates a gas generator in South Australia at a short run marginal cost of $27 to $28 per megawatt hour. What the commonwealth has done is put Australia in a position where people will not build coal generators, because they do not know what the rules are, but they are reluctant to build gas generators—

The SPEAKER: Order! Can I help the minister ever so slightly. The investment regime to which the government referred was the subject of the question. It was not about whether generating capacity reliant on one source of energy or another would be installed but the consequential industrial investment that would follow from the completion of the Seagas pipeline.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Thank you, sir. I can say that one of the things we have been doing very strongly is recommending a greenhouse policy to allow the investment to go ahead. I have had a number of discussions with a number of companies in South Australia about greater energy investment, but I will not discuss those here. However, I can tell members that I did not do it cap in hand. I sat at the table as an equal; I did not go cap in hand as the opposition suggests.

SCHOOLS, STUDENT OUTCOMES

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. How is this government helping our state's primary and preschools to focus on providing better student outcomes?

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I am pleased to respond to this question from a member who has a very keen interest in (and advocacy for) the schools in the district that she represents. I am pleased to report to the house that all schools will be notified this week of their allocation under a $10 million state government commitment which will allow the equivalent of an extra 140 teachers to be employed in primary schools and preschools from the start of next year. All of our almost 800 primary schools and preschools will benefit from this initiative. There will be more staff to help support the work of teachers in classrooms and drive school directions.

The extra funding will be provided in the school and preschool annual budgets. The schools that cater for primary age students will be allocated an extra $85 for every student enrolled. Already this year, the government has provided an extra 160 teachers for government junior and primary schools to reduce class sizes. We have put in extra primary school counsellors this year and will add the equivalent of an extra 140 teaching salaries from the start of next year to ensure that our schools and preschools are run as effectively as possible so that school principals and leaders can spend more time focusing on what we want them to do—that is, planning the curriculum, improving school programs, improving behaviour management, focusing on student attendance and essentially ensuring that every South Australian child progresses well in their schooling.

ELECTRICITY PRICES

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): My question is again to the Minister for Energy. Why did the minister tell a group of attendees at a power conference interstate earlier this year that he was not concerned about the increase in electricity prices in South Australia because the Liberals would get the blame and Labor would get the credit when the price came down?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): That is utter rubbish!

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Mr RAU (Enfield): My question is to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. What is the government's response to the State of the Environment report that was handed down by the EPA today?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I thank the member for his question. Today I received from the head of the EPA the fourth State of the Environment report, a report into the state of the health of our natural environment that is tabled each five years. In the past, this has been an authoritative study that has raised serious issues, and this year's report is the same. However, for the first time, the government will formally respond to this report rather than leave it sitting on the shelf, and it will take the recommendations of this report very seriously. In addition, for the first time in this report there is a separate chapter on the River Murray, and I think members would understand why we have seen that as a priority at this time. The whole of government response will be delivered by around April next year. In the meantime, the report will be referred to government agencies, the Office of Sustainability, the Premier's Sustainability Round Table and key stakeholders.

I am pleased to inform the house that many of the issues raised in the report are already being addressed by govern-

ment initiatives such as Waterproofing Adelaide, NatureLink, Zero Waste SA, Greening of Government Business, reforms to natural resource management and the Native Vegetation Act, and the historic deal to save the River Murray. The report card for our environment is mixed. For example, it is great to see some improvements in air quality in Adelaide; more home recycling and significant increases in recovery efforts for endangered species (there are fewer foxes and rabbits in our natural environment)—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I cannot answer in relation to cats. However, more information is needed about water, the coastal and marine environments, climate change, and species loss and biodiversity. I commend this report to the house. I now table both the report and the executive summary and key findings that are linked to it.

HOSPITALS, PUBLIC

Ms RANKINE (Wright): My question is to the Minister for Health. What have been the increased demands on our metropolitan public hospitals this year at emergency departments and for elective surgery?

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I thank the member for Wright for this question. All metropolitan emergency departments have been working at capacity to meet the winter emergency demands, manage elective surgery lists and ensure safety and quality standards are met. At the end of September 2003, 2 511 beds were open, which was an increase of 155 beds compared with March 2002 when this government came to office.

Year to date admissions to the metropolitan hospitals January to September 2003 were 63 682 admissions, an increase of 2 805 admissions over the same period last year. These demands can mean delays and, unfortunately, elective surgery can be postponed. I recall when the member for Finniss made this very point on 21 June 2000, when he told the house that he had always said that there would be delays as a result of winter illnesses. In our emergency departments, the acuity of patients is continuing to rise, though the numbers of patients presenting has fallen slightly compared with last year. In the September quarter this year, there were 75 460 attendances at the metropolitan emergency departments compared with 77 165 attendances during the same quarter last year.

However, due to demographic factors, including our ageing population, the number of patients requiring admission from the emergency departments is increasing, placing additional pressures on the system. The percentage of patients admitted across the system in September 2003 was 32.2 per cent compared with 30.2 per cent in September 2002. Significantly, the number of occupied bed days increased during the quarter by 6 197 days, or an increase of 7.3 per cent compared with last year. During October there were 127 ACAT assessed patients in hospital awaiting nursing home placement—and I recently raised this with the federal Minister for Ageing (Hon. Julie Bishop). Obviously these numbers have an enormous impact on hospital capacity and certainly do not offer the best option for people who should be able to leave hospital for more appropriate care.

In 2003 the number of admissions for elective surgery has increased by 1 478 compared with the same period last year. The majority of patients received their surgery in a timely manner. In September 2003, 81.8 per cent of urgent patients, 86.4 per cent of semi-urgent patients and 95.3 per cent of non-urgent patients were admitted within the desirable time frames. A figure of $2.24 million has been allocated to undertake a total of 445 additional elective surgery procedures during the 2003-04 financial year. The target will again be for overdue urgent, semi-urgent and long-wait patients, and the extra surgery will start this quarter. We are committed to our hospitals doing better. We are progressing the recommendations of the generational health review and we have increased spending on surgery, intensive care and nursing.

ELECTRICITY PRICES

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): Will the Minister for Energy advise the house what recent changes have occurred to give him more control over electricity price rises for 2004 than when the prices were set for 2003? On 20 November this year, the minister said that he could guarantee that increased power prices were 'just not going to happen'. However, on 17 November, just three days earlier, the minister advised that his life would be a lot easier if the government could reduce power prices but 'some things are simply beyond our control'.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): Sir, it makes—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. Dean Brown: You change your story every day.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It makes slightly more sense than the previous question, but not a great deal. Deano knows about being rolled in cabinet: he was rolled from the very top all the way down.

The Hon. D.C. Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Thank you, Dorothy, for that kind advice. The comments on 20 November were based on very sound advice, very simply. I can explain the comments on 17 November as well, because they are very soundly based. On 20 November I said that there was no chance that the price would go up. We had many streams of advice in government—Treasury and Finance and Energy SA, and we had the advice of the regulator and the advice of Dick Blandy. The only people giving me advice that the prices should go up was (indirectly) Business SA. Frankly, I found that one a little hard to understand, because the representative of Business SA and the Energy Consumer Council signed their report saying they should go down. So, Business SA might have a slightly confused set of mind. The basic answer is that every stream of advice I have says that it is a try on by regulators—it was said at the time and I stick by it now. The comments of 17 November are very simple. Why do we have less control? Because someone sold it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member: Fight back.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Fight back! At last they admit they were wrong. It is very simple. In New South Wales, which owns its industry, they run an ETEF scheme, an internal equalisation scheme, which removes risk for their retailers and allows them to control the prices. That is not available to us. I am not the only person who said that. It has been said, in fact, in the Economic and Finance Committee, I think, by regulators, and even auditors in the past, from memory. It is quite simple. If we do not own the assets we do not have the same mode of control. I think I have explained the question, at least to the understanding of my side, if not

the satisfaction of the other. I will repeat it. The simple truth, on every piece of advice that I have seen, is that a claim for an increase by retailers is outrageous, and we stand by that.

The reason why we had to have a 23.5 to 23.7 per cent increase is that the Liberals privatised. It is dead simple; everyone understands it. When I was asked in a previous question about this allegation of what has happened with the price—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is absolute rubbish. It is an absolute insult from this side to suggest that I was happy with the price. To suggest that I may have said to the people of South Australia, 'Blame the Liberal Opposition'—well, I agree, I did—

Mr Williams interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for MacKillop!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: —because the people of South Australia are not stupid. They will not fall for your lies. They know who is to blame.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): My question is again directed to the Minister for Energy. Does the minister stand by his comments of Monday 17 November, when he advised that the government spends 'about $70 million per year on electricity concessions'?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): We were spending about $70. I am glad that we finally got a question about concessions. It was $70 a year. I referred to other concessions as well. When the opposition said that it would cost us hundreds of millions of dollars to fix up the cost of privatisation, that was based on the advice of a private sector representative who said that it costs $200 million a year or more for electricity in South Australia after privatisation. That is the extent of the problem you would have to address to fix privatisation by the Liberals. The concession in South Australia was $70 a year in 1993 when they came to government. It was $70 a year in 2002, when they left government. After less than two years of a Rann Labor government, it is going up 70 percent to $120.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You want to talk about concessions, sunshine. Breaking news, Einstein: we fixed it!

TAFE

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): My question is directed to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. How successful was South Australia's training system in achieving recognition at the recent Australian Training Awards and, more particularly, what are the details of the Torrens Valley TAFE successes?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism): I thank the honourable member for her question, because it gives me an opportunity to tell her and other members of the house about the astounding turnaround in the fortunes of our TAFE system over the last 18 months. I am very proud to tell her that we received three out of the 10 awards in the Australian Training Awards on Friday evening and, in addition, gained runner-up in one of the other categories. In addition, one of the winners, the Murray TAFE, got a second award at Food SA, so that throughout Friday evening our TAFE systems were very well acclaimed throughout the country.

In relation to the Torrens Valley Institute, I am particularly pleased to say that it won the Large Training Provider award for the whole of the nation. This was achieved through having a very clear vision of what it takes our TAFE sector to provide good services to industry and the private sector in terms of future training and industry needs. Torrens Valley prides itself on its responsiveness. I can see the member for Florey across the chamber, and I know that she would be very proud of the Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE, which is one of the most responsive within our system. It prides itself on being innovative and has achieved adaptable and flexible courses to meet the needs of local students and, seeking feedback from industry, has provided particularly innovative partnerships with both industry and other enterprises to ensure that a skilled work force is provided for local employers but, more particularly, that that skilled work force is designed to provide jobs for the young people in the neighbourhood.

It has been particularly effective in working in the innovation areas of biotechnology and also in sustainable water use. Torrens Valley has identified skill sets that are essential in the workplace and has developed employability skills of a more generic type to aid young workers to get employment. It has supported them through problem solving, communication and working in teams, and has been particularly good in working across different areas of the TAFE institute to provide a multiskilled work force. In addition, I am very proud of Jonathon Kemble, a student at Regency TAFE, who was the Apprentice of the Year. Many members may know Jonathon: he works at Urban Bistro at Rose Park, is absolutely passionate about cooking and has built on the strength of Regency College, in addition, to start his own small catering business.

He completed his apprenticeship at Regency this year, has completed certificates in Western/Asian Cookery, and almost finished certificate III in Commercial Cookery. His ambition is simple, and we would wish him well in that: he wants to be the best chef in the country. He is well on the way to doing that, having also won a prestigious Bonland Proud to be a Chef scholarship, which gave him the chance to go to an international food festival in Canada.

I am particularly pleased to talk about Murray Institute of TAFE. As well as the Food SA award, it won an award for the most innovative school-to-work transition program. Working with my colleague minister White, with Futures Connect Riverland it won the Schools Excellence Award, which is a nursing pathway to employment in the aged care sector. In addition, I should mention, of course, Christopher Crouch. He was runner-up in the Trainee of the Year award, and he is a particularly interesting young man. I think he comes from the Leader of the Opposition's electorate. He was the only candidate for any award who was truly working within the rural sector. Most of those people who were involved in awards were working in cities and industries of various kinds: he works on a cattle station.

He started a school-based traineeship at John Pirie Secondary School and went on to the Spencer Institute of TAFE. I am sure that the honourable member will be interested in knowing that he has a certificate III and believes that a competitive and constantly changing industry like agriculture means that he will be learning new skills for the rest of his life. So, I am particularly pleased to announce three wins out of 10 and one runner-up: a great achievement for TAFE SA.

ELECTRICITY PRICES

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): Will the Minister for Energy confirm to the house that, under the operation of the National Electricity Market, the regulator would be setting the price of electricity regardless of whether it was provided by a government-owned utility or by private companies?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): I cannot guarantee any such thing, and the reason is that when we came to government, of course, electricity had already been privatised. Members would recall that one of the first things we did in coming to government was to put in place the legislation to create the Essential Services Commission. That was done by a parliament. I can speak for government: I cannot speak for a parliament. I do not know what form of regulation a parliament would have put in place if the opposition had kept its promise and not sold ETSA. I certainly cannot give any guarantee that a parliament would not have taken a different approach.

However, I will tell members that the difference that any regulator would have in a government's own system is that which they have in New South Wales: a massive cross-government hedge between government-owned generators and government-owned retail supplies. It removes a massive risk margin, and it removes the volatility to which we are exposed in South Australia through our peak demand periods. It would have been a lovely outcome for us to have that available. We do not have it, because electricity was privatised by the previous government. I do not know how many times I have to tell these people that, but they have to understand this: you do have other avenues available to you if you own your assets. If we owned all the assets, customers would be customers in South Australia, not prisoners of private businesses, which is the system we have inherited from members opposite. Very simply, the people of South Australia would be massively better off if government still owned the electricity assets.

METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): Did the Minister for Emergency Services or any of his staff request or discuss with the Chief Fire Officer or any staff of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service that the media be advised that 000 phone calls did not go unanswered when fire officers had already advised the media that many 000 calls did go unanswered?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services): As I understand it, the question is that I directed the MFS on how it answered the media with respect to 000 numbers. Is that what the leader is alleging?

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Your staff or—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Me or my staff. Well, I can tell the leader that that is an absolutely outrageous allegation. It is completely wrong. It is absolutely wrong—

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: It is not.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I rise on a point of order, sir. The minister accuses me of making an allegation: I have purely asked a question.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. It is a valid observation on the part of the leader. The minister may not infer anything from a question. A minister's duty—indeed, a minister's sworn duty—is to answer questions put to them by members.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Let me make it absolutely plain. The question, in my view, is unpleasant, completely misguided and absolutely wrong. The suggestion that I or anyone in my office has suggested to the MFS what they tell the media is completely and utterly wrong.

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister need not protest, merely answer. The member for Mawson.

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): Has the Minister for Emergency Services or any of his staff discussed or requested the fast-tracking of the promotion process for SAMFS firefighters with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, executive staff or the United Firefighters Union to address part of the overtime and recall problems, as reported in the media?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services): No; I explained how that happened. When we came to government, as I have told the house before, we inherited a promotional system that was fundamentally wrecked. As a result, and in order to address it, the MFS set up a process with retired Industrial Commissioner Greg Stevens to rebuild a promotional system. The only thing I have ever asked the MFS is to make sure that we get the station officers we need as soon as possible to overcome the legacy we have inherited.

I do not mind doing so. As I have said before, since we have come to government we have been shovelling up behind the Liberal horse and this is just another example of it. There is no doubt that I have asked that we get those station officers in place as quickly as possible, within the bounds of the system that we spent a lot of money getting Greg Stevens to set up, and I am told we will get them in place by January. I have recently had discussions with the chief officer about this and a range of other issues—that is what you do when you are the Minister for Emergency Services, you talk to your chief officer about the issues out there. May I suggest, as a word of caution to the opposition, that there has been a bit of a union election at the MFS in recent times, and I think they may find that some of the stuff that they are trying to promote in here may have more to do with union elections than with what is happening in the fire service.

Mr BROKENSHIRE: My question is to the Minister for Emergency Services. Why are approximately 60 fire officers receiving counselling from the private counselling firm Cognition, located in Unley, due to the unfair fast-tracking promotion process in the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Sir, I can honestly say that I have never discussed with the fire officer that there were 60 people who were having counselling because of fast-tracking. I am told that by the member for Mawson, but I am going to check it; I am not going to take his word for it. However, let me say this: I have not fast-tracked anything. I do not know whether they have fast-tracked the system. As far as my understanding—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: My understanding is this: that issues were raised during the promotion period and there was a series of discussions between the chief and the unions about how to deal with making sure that they got enough people to

fill all the positions. As I understand it, it was done in accordance with those arrangements. If it is different then I will bring back a different answer, but I am very surprised by the allegation that we have 60 fire officers getting counselling over a promotional system. I find it very hard to believe, but I will bring a report back to the house.

METROPOLITAN FIRE SERVICE, COUNTRY COMPETITIONS

Mr CAICA (Colton): My question is also to the Minister for Emergency Services. Can the minister provide information on this year's South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service country competitions?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Emergency Services): Sir, they will not want to hear this because it is good news. On Saturday 15 November I had the great privilege, along with the member for Flinders, of attending the South Australian Fire Services victory dinner for the country competitions at Port Lincoln. It may be a fair indication based on the location of the dinner, but I can announce that the Port Lincoln crew won those competitions. They were victorious in the 2003 Country Fire Fighters Annual Proficiency Competition. The Loxton station came second, followed by Victor Harbor which also won the Most Improved. I understand that Port Lincoln last won the competition in the year 2000, and has not been out of the top five over the last four years. I think that Loxton won it for the last two years but—and with the greatest respect to members from other places—we are very pleased to see the Port Lincoln team back on top.

These stations put in thousands of hours of voluntary service in addition to the ordinary duties that they do looking after fire safety in schools and other public institutions. I can say that—having met all bar one, I think, who might have been missing—they are all outstanding South Australians and richly deserve the honour that was bestowed upon them. It was an outstanding night attended by the mayor and the member for Flinders, and I have to say that it is a great pity that Port Lincoln is such a safe Liberal seat. It would be a wonderful seat to hold, and the member for Flinders is very lucky in that regard. They are absolutely outstanding firefighters and I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations, and hope that I can speak for the house in extending the congratulations of parliament to them.

SCHOOL CARD APPLICATIONS

The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland): Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services advise the house why the Department of Education has not yet completed processing school card applications for the 2003 school year? Also, will she advise how many unprocessed applications are presently held by the department across the state? All but one of the eight schools in my electorate of Newland are still waiting for approvals or rejections on school card applications. The schools and governing councils advise me that a total of 150 families do not know whether they are eligible for the $161 government concession for their children for this year. In a letter that I received, the schools and governing councils advise:

> If we don't hear by the end of the year, it makes it difficult for the school to collect these fees—a lot of these families are struggling and we'd find it hard next year to levy next year's fees plus this year's fees. More so for those families that have more than one child. . . If families find out in the last week of school that they are not eligible they have to find the money just before Christmas.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I am pleased to have this question from the member for Newland, because it enables me to point out to the house that there has been significant improvement in the processing of school card applications this year. For many years, the processing of school card applications has been quite slow, and changes were put in place this year to improve it.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: One of those changes was that, instead of a single point of processing, they would be done progressively throughout the terms. I understand that the term 1 applications were processed in about April, the term 2 applications were processed in term 3 and term 4, etc. I will have to check the details, but the information provided to me by my department is that the school card approval process has been markedly improved this year. The difference is that there is continuous approval throughout the year and, I think, all schools agree that that is an improvement in process. I will check the detail of the member's accusation to discover whether it is in fact true, and come back to the house with a response.

WHYALLA WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Ms BREUER (Giles): Will the Minister for Administrative Services advise how the state government's new waste water treatment plant in Whyalla will benefit the region?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Administrative Services): I thank the honourable member for her question and congratulate her on her tireless advocacy for the Whyalla region. She is rightly very proud of the fact that the government has now signed up to a $14.36 million new waste water treatment plant in Whyalla. This is the biggest single investment in Whyalla for decades. It is a tremendous demonstration of our commitment to this region. Everybody in the town is excited by this proposition. They are excited by the fact that it represents an ongoing commitment of this state government to this part of South Australia.

It will do a number of very important things. The first thing it will do is ensure that what we stick into Spencer Gulf is much less nutrient rich, and this will ensure that the changes that have occurred in the local marine environment there will, over time, be reversed and will ensure that the delicate ecosystems in that area have a chance of recovering. It will mean that during the summer months there will be periods when no waste water will be put into Spencer Gulf, and this will give time for the local area to recover. It will reduce stress on the River Murray and it will put into the system about an extra 900 megalitres of recycled waste water that can be used in and around the city area to improve the local amenity of some of the ovals and other things which would otherwise have difficulty drawing on the potable water system that comes through the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline. It is a tremendously important project and has lifted the whole community. Everybody is extremely happy with their representative as well as the council, and it is great news for the region. I am very pleased to be part of it.

TAXIS

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): My question is to the Minister for Transport. When will taxis be able to use bus lanes, and how will this benefit commuters?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport): I thank the member for West Torrens for his question. I am not so sure why he is laughing: it might be because of his new attire today. The question asked by the member for West Torrens is important, and I am pleased to announce that from 8 December this year taxis will be permitted to use bus lanes. This has been endorsed by the Premier's Taxi Council. Roads with bus lanes include Goodwood Road, Henley Beach Road, Main North Road, South Road, Payneham Road and the Southern Expressway; and city bus lanes on Pulteney Street, Botanic Road and Victoria Square will also be available. It is important to also highlight that cyclists will continue to be able to use bus lanes and that this will not apply to 'bus only' lanes. This recognises the significant role of taxi drivers as tourism ambassadors and, of course, the great work they do for all of us in that public transport area. There will be multiple benefits to commuters, including more efficient taxi travel, improved traffic flow and better use of existing road space.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): My question is to the Minister for Energy. What is the extra financial cost to South Australian taxpayers of providing door snakes, light bulbs and energy advice to pensioners and low income households, and how many households will receive such items?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): One thing that is illustrated by this question is just how sharp the opposition is. I gave these figures to parliament some months ago. Following the *Sunday Mail* article, they noticed that a door snake is mentioned. This was discussed on Andrew Male's program on regional ABC six weeks ago. This question demonstrates what a sharp, observant opposition we have. They are right on top of their game.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. As much as I respect 639 ABC, the minister was asked to advise the parliament how much extra money has been appropriated for this purpose and how many households will be assisted.

The SPEAKER: I understand the question. The minister.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The entire cost of the audit is $2.05 million, and I suggest that the last few per cent of that component would be the snakes.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It does not actually cost extra. It has been of the order of $2.05 million for years. It is estimated to provide $4.5 million in benefit to low income households. That is the estimate. It is based on a scheme in New South Wales which, combined with water conservation measures, took $185 off bills on average. I know the opposition does not like good news and will not ask about concessions, but I repeat that the cost of the scheme is $2.05 million and the estimate of benefit to households is $4.5 million. I would do that every time.

INTERPRETING SERVICES

Ms BREUER (Giles): My question is to the Attorney-General and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. What is the government doing to ensure that language barriers for indigenous people do not impede their access to government services in remote and regional areas?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): It is government policy that interpreting and translating services are provided to people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in South Australia. There is a great need for interpreters by police, health units, schools and other state government agencies to ensure that people of indigenous background receive access to services.

In the past, Aboriginal interpreters in regional areas such as Ceduna have been provided from Port Augusta and, because interpreters were not based in Ceduna, access was restricted to times when interpreters were booked in advance. I am pleased to announce that four new interpreters in the Pitjantjatjara language have undergone interpreting training in Ceduna; a casual interpreter's pool for Aboriginal languages in the Ceduna area will be established; and representatives of the government's interpreting and translating centre recently visited Ceduna to interview and train four new interpreters in the Pitjantjatjara language. In the near future, there are plans for representatives of the government's interpreting and translating centre to visit Coober Pedy, in the member's electorate, to interview and train interpreters and to meet government agencies that will utilise the services of interpreters.

HOSPITALS, INFECTIONS

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Health. With the release of information today that up to 25 per cent of patients in some wards at the Royal Adelaide Hospital swabbed positive for methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, will the Minister for Health table in parliament this week the three-monthly reports on MRSA for the past year for all public and private hospitals which monitor MRSA?

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I am pleased to answer this question and I thank the deputy leader for it. MRSA is a very common infection and, in fact, about 20 per cent to 30 per cent of healthy people carry staph bacteria in their noses at various times without getting sick. Most of us begin to have staph growing harmlessly on our bodies before we are one week old.

Infection control in our public hospitals is a very serious issue and is taken very seriously by the government. Hospital-acquired infections are a major cause of adverse outcomes for patients. Members will recall the closure of the Cardio-Thoracic Unit at the Royal Adelaide Hospital in November 2001 which followed closures of the Women's & Children's Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and also the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Intensive Care Unit.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I asked a very specific question in terms of the release of three-monthly reports. I appreciate that the minister is giving other interesting information, but I want an answer to the question. Accordingly, I draw attention to standing orders.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The minister.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: As people will know, on coming to government I ordered an urgent review into infection control in our metropolitan hospitals.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the minister intending to answer the question?

The Hon. L. STEVENS: Yes, I am answering the question.

The SPEAKER: The question was: are you going to table the report?

The Hon. L. STEVENS: Sir, I am happy to look into what the deputy leader has asked for and provide information.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: I want the reports tabled in this parliament.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I am always very happy to provide this parliament with all the information that I can to clarify any matters, and I will do so in this case. As I was saying, when we came to government I ordered a complete report into and urgent review of infection control in our metropolitan public hospitals and, since that time, the government has put in place a range of measures to address these issues.

The Hon. DEAN BROWN: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order and again refer to standing orders and highlight the fact that the minister is not answering the question I asked. All I am asking is for those reports to be tabled. Will she indicate whether she will do so?

The SPEAKER: Again can I advise the minister that the question is explicit.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I have answered the question, sir.

SCHOOLS, PARAFIELD GARDENS HIGH

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I would like to bring to the attention of the house a racially motivated campaign being undertaken against Parafield Gardens High School and, in particular, the school's principal, Ms Wendy Teasdale-Smith. Once again, last night National Action erected posters and distributed pamphlets in the Parafield Gardens area in an apparent promotion of racial hatred. This campaign has been ongoing against a number of Adelaide high schools with Asian student enrolments and their principals. This campaign has been very disturbing to Ms Teasdale-Smith, her husband and her family. The information being distributed refers to an incident that occurred outside school hours on 13 November on the school oval, involving a number of students and non-students. It stemmed from racial tensions outside the school.

The incident allegedly involved a number of weapons and, according to police, one person sustained an injury not requiring hospitalisation. Police are investigating that matter. The school has taken disciplinary action against some students. This incident was followed by a second incident on 20 November on the primary school oval. A group of intruders entered the oval and one allegedly grabbed a school student by the throat. The primary school principal intervened and the intruders left. Police attended and are following up that incident. This kind of behaviour on school premises is completely unacceptable to this government. We are giving our schools the power to evict and ban intruders who threaten the safety of staff and students.

As well, through our school care initiative, the manager of the school care centre has been working with Parafield Gardens High School and South Australia Police for the past two months on improving safety at the school. During the summer holiday period, fencing will be erected at the school to lessen the chances of intruders entering. A number of other security measures (which for obvious reasons I will not detail) are being installed. The school has a close relationship with South Australia Police and provides police with immediate advice about any threatening behaviour. Police have visited the school on a number of occasions to speak with students about weapons and the consequences of carrying weapons. A number of further visits are planned to educate students about violence.

Parafield Gardens High School has a zero tolerance policy on fighting and takes disciplinary action when appropriate. The school won a Prime Minister's award last year for its work in the local community and also recently won a state crime prevention award. I can assure the house that this government will continue to work to stamp out such racially motivated behaviour.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): This morning *The Advertiser* carried an article in which a student taught by me claimed that for him I had been a cruel teacher. Central to his allegations are claims that, as a pupil in my year 7 class at Northfield Primary School in 1971, I would 'often hit male students' if I thought they were misbehaving. He claims that another student, Mr Robert Gibbs, will collaborate his story. In education circles it is often said that doctors can bury their mistakes but society must live with teachers. As a teacher, I was a product both of my times and the prevailing ethos of what then constituted the education system, and that is just not the public system but the private schooling system as well.

I did indeed, with the knowledge and authority of the principal, administer corporal punishment to boys committed to my care. Neither the principal nor my inspector, Mr Jim Giles (who is much respected in Labor circles) had any reason to question my abilities as a teacher, and I was promoted to the position of principal at the age of 25. As the principal of Cook—I was away for two years overseas—for 1976, 1977 and 1978, I continued to administer corporal punishment to boys until I was seconded into the education administration in January 1979. As was then required by the regulations at that time, I kept a detailed punishment register and, if the minister has the prurient interest, she can go into every gory detail, because I am sure it exists somewhere in her department's archives.

In the 1970s, it was not uncommon for teachers to be required—in fact, almost expected—to administer corporal punishment to boys. It was not allowed for girls. One of my earliest recollections of affirmative action was a delegation of girls coming to me one recess time saying that it was not fair: I would hit the boys with a yard stick but they were required to do lines or stay off school; and they quite earnestly asked me to start smacking them as well so that they

did not have to stay in after school, because they considered that the boys got off more lightly. I found that very difficult to deal with, because I could understand where they were coming from. They were arguing from an equity and fairness principle, but it was something which I could not bring myself to do.

It seems weird—and I am not proud of the fact—that we all used to administer corporal punishment for boys, but we did. What does concern me though is that now a lad—he is not a lad any more, he is 44 years of age—should in the year 2000 have been so affected by one year of my teaching that he thinks I have completely destroyed his life and has gone to a law firm for the purpose of taking a class action against me. That does not fill me with any joy or any pride, because one thing I did do was care about the kids whom I taught. I do not like to think that even one kid had a miserable experience from it, and that is something I will have to wear. What I do not like is that that statement has sat around for three years and last week found itself circulated anonymously to *The Advertiser* newspaper, and to it was appended statements that I had been making to this house about paedophilia.

I think that is wrong and it is abhorrent. We are here to do a job. We are what we are. If anyone who stands up and says that they have been perfect before they came into this place, I will show you a remarkable man or woman. None of us have been perfect, but it does not mean that we do not come here and try to do our job a little more perfectly than we might have been in our lives. It does not mean that we cannot learn from our mistakes and try to move on from them, and it certainly does not mean that we should come here and be intimidated by people with malice, viciousness, or whatever else motivates people in such a way that they would seek to deprive us and the people of South Australia of the earnest consideration of what we should now be doing.

The past is very difficult to judge from the perspective of the present, and I believe that this parliament is faced with some horrendous considerations about what has happened to kids in the last two or three decades. I would be quite pleased to be part of any consideration to consider the better judgment and handling of kids in the future.

VIETNAMESE YOUTH FORUM

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Administrative Services): I would like to take the opportunity in the time I have available to draw to the house's attention an experience I had at a Vietnamese youth forum on 8 October at which a young Vietnamese man, who was a peer educator in the clean needle program, basically gave a testimony about his life. I do not think I can give a more eloquent example than this of the relationship between racism, drug abuse and then the capacity for rehabilitation and the ability to be able to turn that around. It is therefore my great privilege to be able to read his words, which are as follows:

My story goes back 26 years. I will talk about many of the issues and problems that some refugees and migrants may have experienced and been confronted with having moved to a foreign country that is different to their own.

It all starts off with the Vietnam war. My father lost most of his family. We don't talk much. He says that I lost my cultural background. My mum's family are all safe. I can tell that my parents love Vietnam, they have pride in their voice when they talk about their homeland. I'm the third child in my family so that makes me number four. Parents are number one. In many Vietnamese families, family members are addressed by the order that they are born. Mum and dad are still called mum and dad though. Being the first child born in Australia it was only fit that my parents express their love for Vietnam through naming me [a name] meaning patriot to my country Vietnam.

My parents first arrived in Australia in 1977. My mother and eldest sister were on the front cover of the newspaper. The title reads '40 refugee boats hits Australian shores'. One year after arriving I was born. My parents found trying to fit into another country hard. Just knowing how much groceries cost was a challenge. Their English is much better now, they are more independent, not having to have one of my brothers or sisters interpret for them when doing the shopping or every day chores. My parents have adapted to the Australian way but haven't forgot where they come from.

Growing up in Australia wasn't easy for myself either. My family had moved from Mansfield Park to Salisbury. At that time there was no other Asian families living in that area. I had many unanswered questions and mixed emotions as a child. The feeling of being incomplete. My whole primary schooling years was a very confusing time for me. The first issues I was faced with was trying to learn how to speak English. The only people that I interacted with was my family. So the only language that I could speak was Vietnamese.

I would always be doing different things compared to my other classmates. Being singled out was very embarrassing. I just wanted to be like the other children but it couldn't be. I was different, the way I spoke, the way that I looked and even the things that I ate was different. I was in full denial of who I was and where I was from. A lot of the other children would tease me all day. So I hated going to school. I would tell my mum but not much could be done about it because her English was even worse than mine. Because of this barrier I rebelled at school and never did any work and ran a complete muck. I had total disregard for everything and everyone. If the world was out to get me I was going to get them first. Teachers would come to my house every week with a folder of what I had got up to at school. My parents would discipline me the old fashion way with a stick. I thought that my parents were on their side and didn't love me either. But that was because they didn't see or were aware of the problems that I was facing every day at school. I just didn't fit in.

Most of my time was spent telling myself that if I tried hard enough my skin colour would change and I would be normal like everyone else. Trying to fit in and simulate the behaviour of my peers was the only thing that I wanted. I didn't ever pray for presents at Christmas, I wished that my appearance would change so that I looked like the rest of the world. I was the only one facing this problem in my family and had no-one to talk to about it. My older brother and sister went to a different school, they were already in high school and mixing in with other Vietnamese people that came from other suburbs to study at their school. So their childhood was filled with more happy times. I always felt left out 'cause I looked different. Like an alien from another planet.

For me it was a constant battle within. Everywhere I went people would always look and stare at me. Like I was a caged animal at the zoo. I would talk to myself and say I was an ugly creature that crawled out from the gutter. I was trapped in a world that I didn't create but was all against me, no matter what I done or where I went. Alone I had to face the world and everything that it threw at me. I had no answers but millions of questions. There was no summer and no winter, there was me and the world. I had hit an all time low, I was very depressed and no longer cared for my well being. I came to the conclusion why care any more, it wasn't getting me anywhere.

Things all changed once I hit high school. There were other people like me. I had finally found what I had been looking for all this time. There were other Asian people after all. I was in heaven. I am human, I'm not an animal. But once again I was faced with a dilemma. After seven years of denying who I was—

Time expired.

CARABINIERI ASSOCIATION

Mrs HALL (Morialta): Yesterday—Sunday 23 November—at the invitation of Signore Giovanni Scalzi, the President of the Adelaide branch of the Carabinieri Association, along with many hundreds of people in the congregation, I attended a holy mass at the Church of Saint Francis of Assisi in my electorate of Morialta. The other special guests there, in particular, were my friend and colleague the member for Hartley, Joe Scalzi, the member for

Norwood, and a member of the upper house, Ms Carmel Zollo.

I was privileged to represent the Leader of the Opposition at this particularly important ceremony in my electorate. This holy mass is held every year by the Carabinieri Association in honour of the holy virgin Virgo Fidelis, the patroness of the Carabinieri of Italy. The Carabinieri, as many members are aware, are held in high regard both in Italy and around the world, and it follows from the principles of duty, conduct and honour which they have upheld for nearly 200 years. In addition to the people I have mentioned, this mass was also attended by the Consul of Italy, Dottore Simone de Santi, Assistant Police Commissioner, John White, the former police commissioner, David Hunt, and various members of the Italian organisations, including those representing retired servicemen of the Italian armed forces, all of whom paid their respects to a very proud institution.

This year, the remembrance mass had added significance following the tragic loss of life and the devastation of a suicide bombing of Carabinieri headquarters in the Iraqi city of Nasiriyah on 12 November. The President of the Carabinieri Association, Giovanni Scalzi, and the Italian Consul, laid a wreath in remembrance of those who had fallen while discharging their duties and, as the local member, I also laid a wreath. Dr de Santi spoke very movingly about the pain suffered by Italians throughout the world. He talked about the condolences that he, as Consul, had received from many South Australians from a very wide section of our community. He said that it was very evident to him, as the new Consul, that there was great friendship between Italy and Australia and that it was shared by many members of the South Australian community.

Mr Speaker, I am sure you have heard me say before that both my colleague the member for Hartley and I are privileged to represent electorates that have a very large percentage of people with an Italian heritage and, from several weeks ago, the enormous pain and grief that this shocking event had inflicted was very obvious to us. As we now know, 26 people were killed in that bombing and, of the 18 Italians who died in the blast, 12 were Carabinieri police officers. They were the victims of what I understand is the worst attack on the Italian military since World War II. I am told that the only time Italy suffered similar losses was in 1961, when 13 Italian airmen were killed during an aid operation in the Congo.

Understandably, of course, this recent attack has placed Italy in a state of mourning, and many thousands of Italians have attended memorial services in Rome and throughout the world. In fact, in Rome, I understand the estimates are that there were more than 300 000 mourners, a number of whom waited for as long as three hours in the rain to walk past the coffins and pay their respects.

The Carabinieri Association has a very long and proud history. It was established in 1886 as an association of retired members of the Carabinieri to consolidate their ties of allegiance and to help those in need. It has about 1 600 divisions in Italy, and about 16 divisions outside Italy, and they include those here in Adelaide, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne. It boasts a membership of more than 180 000, and they are generally retired military men, relatives and friends. The South Australian association was formed in 1976, and continues to contribute in a very real way to the state's cultural diversity. Many members and I have had the pleasure of enjoying the presence of Carabinieri at numerous special celebrations in the Italian community and, in particular, those that mark the arrival of many of the religious festivals and Carnevale, to name just a couple. The Carabinieri have always been involved in the fighting of crime in Italy and participated—

Time expired.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Today I would like to bring to the attention of the house the process of restorative justice as an interesting alternative, perhaps, to some of the things that we are seeing within the community at the moment. Restorative justice is a process that advocates that the people most effective and able to find a solution to a problem are the people who are most directly involved or impacted by the problem.

Opportunities are created for those people to work together to understand, clarify and resolve the incident and to work together towards repairing any harm that may have been caused. Restorative justice actually personalises crime, bringing the victim and the perpetrator together, an approach that is a little different from the justice system, where the perpetrator faces a judge rather than the victim. Restorative conferencing was introduced into the Australian juvenile and criminal justice systems in the early 1990s. The idea was borrowed and adapted from New Zealand but applied here in different ways. South Australia began to use conferences routinely in 1994, run by the justice authorities.

The aim of conferencing is to divert offenders from the justice system by offering them the opportunity to attend a conference to discuss and resolve the offence rather than appearing in a court. Conferencing is not offered where offenders wish to contest their guilt. A conference, which normally lasts between one and two hours, is attended by the victims and their supporters, the offender and a support person, and other relevant parties. The conference coordinator focuses the discussion on condemning the act without condemning the character of the offender, who is asked to explain what happened, how they have felt about the crime and what they think should be done about it. The victim and others are then asked to describe the physical, financial and emotional consequences of the crime.

This discussion may lead the offenders, their families and friends to experience the shame of the act and prompt an apology to the victim. A plan of action is developed and signed by key participants. The plan may include the offender paying compensation to the victim, doing work for the victim or the community, or any other undertaking the participants may agree upon. It is the responsibility of the conference participants to determine the outcomes that are most appropriate for these particular victims and these particular offenders. The Centre for Restorative Justice in Adelaide, coordinated by OARS SA, is an exciting new development on the justice scene. As a division of OARS, it has been operating since 1997, OARS being the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Service. It is a venture with key collaborations from the victims' movements, an important part of the whole process.

The aim is to bring a balanced approach with respect to the rights and needs of victims. I understand that the Centre for Restorative Justice derived from significant community feeling that different approaches to justice were needed to ensure that the current system did not continue to generate damage and harm. This feeling focused significantly on the issues facing victims of crime and the poor treatment of victims by the criminal justice system. The aim is to develop community and justice systems that deal with conflict and the

consequences of offending in a restorative manner, and the mission is to reduce conflict within the community and work towards repairing harm by enabling the development of restorative approaches in justice and other settings by providing the opportunity for people who have been affected by conflict to be part of the healing process, and also to help people to heal themselves as a means of preventing the occurrence, onset and recurrence of a conflict.

The restorative process is not a feel-good approach or a soft option: it is about tackling a huge and controversial problem that is very topical in this state. It is a real attempt to change behaviour and deliver better outcomes. At a recent public meeting I attended, at which Mr Leigh Garrett from OARS spoke about information that he had gathered from his recently completed study trip, part of a prize he had won in recognition of his work in this area, he displayed a great deal of passion and dedication to providing rehabilitation for offenders. He spoke about some really amazing statistics. He gave a brief outline of the restorative process and the importance of saying sorry face to face, and agreeing on how to make amends for the crime.

He said that in Germany 136 000 cases had gone to restorative justice, and that they now have a lower crime rate than that of Australia. In the US, 2.3 million people are in custody. The US, of course, has the highest crime rate. Clearly, there needs to be some rethinking of the whole process. A 'tough on crime' stance alone is not working over in the US, so there has to be some extrapolation of experience there. They also have a large problem with incarceration of native Americans and black Americans—indigenous people. At least 14 per cent of our indigenous men have been or are in the prison system annually, which reflects the problems of social disadvantage and poverty here in South Australia.

HIGH SCHOOL ELECTRONICS PROGRAMS

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I am constantly surprised and impressed by the amount of ingenuity and innovation present in our schools. Again I have been impressed by Nuriootpa High School's achievements, this time by their electronic and robotics program. Nuriootpa High has become a leader in this field after recently taking part in a new and innovative course. The school has been involved in the development and implementation of the University High School Robotic Mentoring Program and has had great success with it. On Wednesday 12 November this program was awarded the national AusIndustry Innovation Award for 2003. The award was presented at Parliament House, Canberra, and Nuriootpa's teacher of electronics, Mr John Barkley, was there for its presentation.

Mr Barkley was able to speak to many federal politicians to expand on the Nuriootpa High School course. This program was established through a joint effort by eLabtronics (an Adelaide-based innovative control solutions company), the University of South Australia (Mawson Lakes Campus), the Electronics Industry Association and 14 year 10 electronics students from Nuriootpa High School and their teacher John Barkley, as well as other northern Adelaide schools. The course was designed to create a partnership between business, university and high school students so as to generate interest in electronic engineering among those still in high school.

During the course, university students at the Mawson Lakes campus of UniSA mentor the year 10 students from Nuriootpa High School in relation to a challenging project that the year 10 students take on. These projects are normally attempted only by university-level students. Not only does this program give the high school students a chance to explore the world of electronics and robotics but it also gives them a great introduction to the university. The high school students travelled from Nuriootpa to Mawson Lakes once a week to work with their mentors. This was done through the valuable assistance of local businesses in the Barossa Valley. John Barkley has attacked this course with zeal, and his attitude has rubbed off on the young people involved.

This group of 14 year 10 students have been so successful that they have been invited to take part in a statewide competition to be held at UniSA at the end of the month. This has been a reward for their hard work and recognition of their ability in the field. Mr Barkley recently said:

> Since commencing the University Mentoring Program, the interest that has developed from other students at Nuriootpa High School not involved in the program has been amazing. There has been an increase in the number of students wanting to do year 10 electronics, because they want to experience this innovative programmable technology.

Surely, this is what education is all about. Mr Barkley continued to speak about the program and the students involved. He said:

> They have shown initiative, a willingness to learn new things and put them into practice through testing and problem solving; an ability to work collaboratively with their peers and interact with people of differing ages; and a desire to take this technology further than the classroom.

Importantly, Mr Barkley pointed out that this study is not just one of understanding the robotics or electronics industry: it has practical and important outcomes.

Recently, the students have begun to work through practical applications of the information they have learnt. The students have come up with applications with particular relevance to the high school's other programs, including its winery and aquaculture courses. Some of these ideas for the Vine and Wine course include developing an automated bottle filling system, a label application system and a constant testing program for the wine temperature and acidity levels. Some of the ideas that the students have brainstormed for the aquaculture project at the school include developing a safety device for the water heaters in the barramundi tanks, automatic aeration of the tanks and automatic measuring of the ammonia/nitrate levels within the fish tanks. Other ideas include an automated feeding system and the development of a solar power facility to generate power for the aquaculture centre. When discussing these ideas, Mr Barkley said that they were all workable and, with the continuation of the University High School Mentoring Program, could become a reality.

This style of program is essential to the progression of our state. The course has created hands-on interest for students in electronic engineering. This type of interest can only see South Australia benefit and become a smarter state. The mentoring program has received strong support from the electronics industry as well as from local high-tech companies such as Coda, Holden's, Tenix Defence and many others. Electronic engineering is a vital field for the development of our state, and I commend the work done on this program.

WHYALLA YOUTH

Ms BREUER (Giles): If we were to believe media reports about Whyalla one would think that all we ever do is copulate or be chased by killer kingfish that escape from our kingfish

farms. Recent *Sunday Mail* reports on teenage pregnancy in Whyalla horrified the community by the negative way in which our young people were portrayed. Many young people have spoken to me about this—certainly, many young women but also many other people in Whyalla. It was a slur on all those young women in Whyalla who do not have babies, and also most degrading to those who do but who are managing very successfully to care for their babies at home or who are continuing their education and work.

The *Sunday Mail* article reported that teenage girls in Whyalla were having babies out of boredom and to avoid going to school or work. They saw motherhood as a status symbol and a ticket to financial freedom, enabling them to earn up to $300 a week in welfare and other benefits. One young woman to whom the *Sunday Mail* spoke said, 'There is nothing to do here, but being a mum I suppose is something to do. Some do it for the money because it's pretty good money to be getting at this age.' The newspaper quoted statistics and said that Whyalla carries the dubious title of being the state's teenage pregnancy capital ahead of the West Coast region, the Murray-Mallee and Adelaide's northern suburbs.

I would seriously question these figures. However, I believe figures change from year to year, and I know that many other areas have figures similar to those attributed to Whyalla. Apparently, several teenage mothers complained to the *Sunday Mail* about the intense boredom they suffer in Whyalla—perhaps, then, they should chase these kingfish! They said that the only highlights to relieve the boredom were nightly parties, coupled with binge drinking, drug taking (marijuana and amphetamines) and having unprotected sex. The newspaper spoke to very few people.

I was appalled by this article because, as I said, it really implies that our young teenagers just copulate—that is what they spend their life doing. Pleasurable as it may be, certainly, that is not the case with young teenagers in Whyalla. On Saturday night I was privileged to attend a production of *Grease* by the Whyalla Players. The entire cast consisted of young people. In fact, the one person in the group who was a little over 30 years of age seemed positively ancient. It was an excellent production. It was full of life, it was vibrant and the dancing and singing was excellent.

The theatre was packed three nights straight. So, nearly 2 000 people attended the theatre over the three nights the play was performed, and it was an absolute credit to our young people. The week before I attended an art exhibition, again, at the Middleback Theatre, of work by year 12 students from the Edward John Eyre High School. The exhibition was called 'For all the Senses'. Year 12 students from the art, music, drama and food and hospitality areas participated, which was another outstanding success. Like everyone present, I was amazed to see the talent in our young people; and, certainly, in the future I expect to see a few names become leading artists in their field.

Certainly, some achieved perfect scores for the year. Particularly, we saw the excellent work of Jo Bradley-Scott, and a painting by Nicole Stone is to be a part of an exhibition in Adelaide of work by year 12 students across the state. We are very proud of these young teenagers and the work they do. We are concerned about this article; it upset my community. A lot of young people contacted me and talked about it, and many community people are very concerned. A number of our young people have written to the newspaper complaining about this article. Our young women are most distraught at the way in which they have been portrayed.

When I asked my daughter whether there was any truth in this article, she said, 'Mum, these girls have babies because they have unprotected sex, not because they are doing it for money.' The majority do become concerned when they find they are pregnant and wonder what they are going to do about the future. We wonder where this article came from—who contacted the *Sunday Mail*? We believe that it may be connected to a program that is being proposed for Whyalla but, at a cost of something like $5 000 per student, we do not think we will be looking at this. Certainly, the education department is not prepared to entertain it.

I congratulate our community health people, particularly Litza Graham for the programs she is running in Whyalla to educate and help our young people, and also the education department. The principals have been very supportive on this issue. Our three high schools and our private school are very concerned about this portrayal of teenagers and young women in Whyalla.

Time expired.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE CEMETERY PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I bring up the final report of the committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence, and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I move:

That the report be noted.

This is a most timely report. It has taken almost exactly a year for the committee to gather evidence, to deliberate and bring back a report to the parliament. At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the committee and to the staff who assisted the committee. The committee received approximately 200 submissions. As well, it conducted hearings at which the public was able to present a case. I seek leave to continue my remarks at a later date.

Debate adjourned.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (EXPIATION OF OFFENCES) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 November. Page 760.).

Mr BROKENSHIRE (Mawson): As I said, the Statutes Amendment (Expiation of Offences) Bill 2003 has been covered in quite a lot of detail by my colleague in another place, and in order to best utilise the time in this house I do not wish to repeat much of what has been said that is already in *Hansard*. I understand why the Attorney-General has introduced this bill. In fact, this matter was raised with me as police minister in about the last six months of our last term in office and, therefore, I understand the general thrust of why the Attorney is making this amendment. I understand part of the explanation but, as has already been put on public record in the other place, we do have some clear concerns with the bill. I have advised the Attorney, and I advise my colleagues in the house, that I have put two amendments on file, and I would like to speak to these amendments during my second reading contribution. If that is clarified it will give

people a chance to assess that before committee, and hopefully that will expedite the committee stage.

Before doing so, I would like to raise a couple of general points on expiation notices that relate to comments out there at the moment about revenue-raising. I am concerned that we are seeing increases in road fatalities and road casualties. I have seen too much of it in my own area—there was a serious accident right in front of our track early on Saturday morning—and I realise that we have to continue to get messages through when it comes to drinking and driving, speeding, not wearing seat belts, fatigue, and all those other matters. That is important. As I have always said, at the end of the day, whatever the parliament and the government do for road safety, drivers have to be responsible for the vehicles that they are driving. In fact, they can be a lethal weapon if they are not managed properly or if they are not maintained properly.

Of course, the roads also need to be suitable and adequate for the driving conditions; that is, if you are on a road that is designated as 100 or 110 kilometres per hour then one would expect to have a reasonable road surface in order to allow safe passage of vehicles on that road. Sadly, I am seeing a deterioration in road works wherever I travel across the state, particularly on roads such as the one that I travel all the time to go home, the Victor Harbor road. I would encourage any member over the Christmas period to go for a drive down into the great country of Fleurieu Peninsula and look at the mess that this particular road is in at the moment. Only recently I saw a police officer hop off his motorbike, pull a piece of broken bitumen off the lane and put it right over on the road verge, because he saw it has being dangerous. But, of course, even though he removed that loose bit—especially if you hit that with a motorbike—there is still a pothole there.

If you go down the road, you see where the transport department has spent money to make the road verge a little wider so the road is not broken up right on the edge, but they have had to do it on the cheap, because this government has cut road maintenance and road funding. It is an absolute waste of money, because it is all breaking up. From Willunga Hill right through to Mount Compass it is just breaking up everywhere. This morning I saw a piece of road that would have sagged probably nearly eight to 10 inches—imagine hitting that on a motorbike! What is happening is that it is now a patchwork quilt; it is just a matter of cutting out a patch, putting some rubble in there, consolidating that rubble and running a bit of bitumen over the top—not even hotmix—and that'll do. Well, it does, until the next hot day when the B-doubles travel along there and then it turns to jelly. These lanes then have to be closed off, because the road is just so dangerous.

At the same time as I talk about that, I see in the budget papers that the government is expecting to fine an additional 40 000 motorists this financial year. That is a huge increase in expiation notices, but where are we seeing that money being spent? Well, we are going to see some of it spent on police because, together with the public and with good work by the Police Association, and after more than 12 months of pressure that we put on them, the opposition was able to embarrass the government and push it into a situation where it had to knee-jerk react and recruit additional police officers. Its policy was only to recruit at attrition, but in the end we got the government to roll over on that, and I congratulate the South Australian community for the work that it did in assisting us there. It is now a weekly occurrence to see the government roll over; the list goes on, including the Cora Barclay Centre, neonatal services at Flinders Medical Centre, police numbers and the horse trials in the parklands—it is just one after another. With another push, particularly by the Hon. Wayne Matthew, the member for Bright, we finally saw the government give concessions on its bungled power prices to pensioners and self-funded retirees. It shows that the community and the opposition are the ones that have to drive the agenda for the government.

What we are concerned about here is that this government needs to be more focused on road safety and proper policing than it is just on matters around revenue-raising. The amendments that I have on file are pretty straightforward. They are to reduce the period for issuing notices based on a camera-detected offence from six to three months, and there is a consequential amendment to reduce another time limit from 12 to 9 months. The period of three months from the date on which the offence was or offences were alleged to have been committed, or in any other case the period of six months from the date on which the offence was or offences were alleged to have been committed, is the thrust of what the amendments are, then clause 9 changes one year back to nine months.

I read with interest what the Hon. Paul Holloway in another place had to say about my very learned colleague the Hon. Rob Lawson. I could not really follow why the Hon. Paul Holloway was so critical about what the Hon. Rob Lawson had to say on the basis of the amendments that are being moved there. The Hon. Rob Lawson said that there had to be reasonable time but that too much time should not be given to matters concerning who was or was not driving a vehicle, involving statutory declarations and then a chance for someone to be able to give police further advice on them. The point is that you should not need too much lead-in time on that. Contrary to what has been said in parliament and also in the media in recent times, I think that you can actually have too long a time lag for these things to be addressed. People have forgotten the speeding offence that they committed and, as an example, 12 months down the track is simply too long. So, whilst I appreciate the anomalies and the loss of quite a considerable amount of revenue—$1 116 017—and I therefore understand why the government is introducing this measure, together with other reasons that the government is working on at the moment with expiation notices for cameras and the like—I do believe that it needs to consider these amendments.

There has to be a sense of fairness in this. At the end of the day, the government will suffer the wrath of the community if they do not support these amendments. The community is very vocal when it comes to their concerns about revenue raising versus that fine or penalty being there to be a deterrent for people who drive in a fashion that is not in the best interests of the rest of the drivers and motorbike riders, etc. that are on our roads. So it is a warning to the government that, if they are not prepared to be fair and reasonable to these drivers, the drivers will certainly let them know at the next election. Apart from those amendments that I have filed, we will be supporting the bill.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to participate in this debate. It is not that I support the concept or the principals involved; I do not. I think that it is an outrageous suggestion. I am sorry the Attorney in all his wisdom does not seem to be interested, but the people of South Australia are going to be interested when this government, at the behest of its Sir Humphries and bureaucrats,

plunders their pockets. We are at a stage where the public has nearly had enough of this attack upon their pockets, at the behest of insensitive bureaucrats. Let us look at the circumstances. If the bureaucrats think that they are going to continue to get away with this, I have news for them: you are at the end of the road.

Let us look at this set of circumstances. A police officer—this is how unfair and wrong it is—writes out one of these dreadful on-the-spot fines and he makes a mistake. He has written it out because a normal law-abiding decent citizen of this state has made a slight mistake. The police officer has two chances. He can wrongly issue the ticket, and he can come back for a second cut of the cake where the long suffering constituent of ours, instead of as in most cases getting a caution or a warning, gets walloped for $150 or $200. What an outrageous set of circumstances. What an absolutely unfair and unreasonable course of action for these people to put forward.

What is the real motive in relation to this sort of legislation? This is Treasury driven. They are out to continue to attack ordinary, decent, law-abiding citizens. Why are we not concentrating on the real villains in society? We should have more police officers dealing with the sorts of people who assaulted my constituent at Port Augusta yesterday, or dealing with disruptive tenants who harass, hinder or annoy ordinary good law-abiding citizens. But, no; we have circumstances like we had a couple of weeks ago.

A speed camera was set up—and I have got a lot of questions for the Attorney-General in relation to the operation of this, and the public are entitled to know—south of Port Augusta, before the Wilmington turnoff, going south on the right-hand side. The police car was hidden back in the bushes, and the camera was put back. I thought that these particular instruments—we have been told for years—were road safety devices. If they are road safety devices, why are they not visible and why are the police officers, or those operating them, in the front? Why is it, at Crystal Brook, that the police car is always hidden at night off the side of the road? Why is it, Mr Attorney—we are entitled to know—that that car is hidden? Why is it not out and visible? The people of South Australia are entitled to know.

I want to know what instructions are given to the police officers. I have been told that the issuing of these on-the-spot fines has a higher priority than other police work. Is that correct? Is it the sole purpose to have as many people as possible out issuing these things? There are a lot of questions in relation to this. Are police officers required to issue so many on-the-spot fines? Are people's promotions affected by the number of on-the-spot fines that are issued? Are police stations judged on their efficiency, by the number of on-the-spot traffic notices that are issued? What other instructions are given?

The Attorney, as someone who believes, I hope, in people's rights, should well know that when a person is issued one of these particularly obnoxious documents that they are at a grave disadvantage. Anyone is at a grave disadvantage when they are fighting the government, its agencies or bureaucracy, because they have unlimited resources and they can delay the process.

Therefore, the public of South Australia have a clear right to question the motives and the aims of this particular legislation. It is not good enough for us to rubber stamp this. We are entitled to answers in relation to these particular matters, and why it is that the Commissioner of Police and others can have the audacity to say, 'Well, the police can make a mistake, but an ordinary member of the public cannot make a mistake.'

The other point I want to raise with the Attorney is: how often are the people made aware of the trifling offences legislation? How is that drawn to our attention, with some of these minor misdemeanours? I can give an example, where one of my poor constituents was given two or three on-the-spot fines in the course of half an hour for having three fishing rods instead of two. You can imagine what an outrage it was. Fortunately, some commonsense applied after a couple of telephone calls were made. I did suggest to the senior officer at the time that he would get himself on the frontpage of *The Advertiser.* I looked forward to it, but commonsense prevailed.

If that particular person had not been advised to come and see the local member of parliament he would have been pinged. He should have been given a caution and told, 'This is a silly law. We are supposed to police it, but, look, don't do it again.' I want to know from the Attorney what rights people have under trifling offences legislation?

I ask the Attorney: does he agree that police should hide these speed cameras? I was not quick enough, but I would have moved an amendment to this legislation to make it an offence. It should be illegal to hide speed cameras and these devices, because we are continually told that they should be visible, that they are a road safety issue. I want to know, which police officer, which public servant, issues the instructions to hide or to camouflage these particular devices. This parliament is entitled to know, because we are elected, and they are appointed. There is a big difference. It is to us the people complain. So, I want to know from the Attorney: on whose advice and instructions?

The other thing I want to know is whether management at the highest level of the police department issue their regional commanders with instructions that they have to ensure that a prescribed number of on-the-spot fines are issued over a prescribed time. We are entitled to know. If I do not get the answers here, I will make it my business to pursue these matters during budget estimates, and I do not care how long it takes. I will not be put off. They can get touchy, get grumpy and all that, but it will not have any effect. If the government wants to see questions put on the *Notice Paper*, you will see them not by the tens but by the hundreds, because I can think of dozens of examples. I will put them on ad infinitum, because we are entitled to the answers to these questions.

I am sorry that the member for Fisher is not here, because in the past he has had a lot to say about the draconian effects of these particular actions on people who cannot afford to pay them. I am looking forward to him supporting my amendment and I hope the Attorney supports my amendment. It is fair and reasonable.

Earlier this afternoon I was told during the excellent briefing that we had from their honours that people driving unregistered motorcars cannot afford to pay their fines and that they ought to be able to pay their fines on a monthly basis with a bank draft against their bank account. I think this is a very good idea, because it would avoid some of the ongoing difficulties that occur with people not being able to pay their fines and the government not being able to collect them.

We have now reached the stage where these fines are an imposition on people. One of the problems that face the community is that to those who make these recommendations (the Attorney and this parliament) a $200 fine means nothing.

It is not a great imposition for a member of parliament, but it is a great imposition for someone on a fixed income or a pension, an ordinary law-abiding citizen who may not have committed an offence for 20 or 30 years but who is suddenly lumbered with one of these things. It makes life terribly difficult for them. It is an imposition which, if it is of a minor nature, they should not have to put up with. Anyone who thinks they should is naive, nasty or mean-spirited—or a combination of all three. I do not care who has to wear that, because that is true.

I say to the Attorney that the people who make these recommendations are not facing reality. They are not the ones who are approached by people when they walk down the street or attend a public function saying how unreasonable some of this legislation is and the way in which it is administered. I had hoped that we would hear from the member for West Torrens, someone who in his former occupation as a taxi driver would be aware of some of these complaints. I am sorry that he is going to sit quietly by and put up his hand and not stand up for the average hard-working citizen of this state who is the victim of this sort of nonsense.

We were told earlier that on-the-spot fines were a road safety measure and would free up the courts. They have now become nothing more than a revenue raising exercise by people who are obsessed with dealing with minor traffic issues. They are absolutely obsessed! If that is the case, some of us who have very firm views about this matter will pursue this issue. We will find out from the bureaucrats, because one of the things that they do not like is having to appear before the budget estimates. They tell the minister that they are unnecessary and take up a lot of time. The process of democracy may be frustrating to them, but if they are unhappy with it let them get elected, because most of them would run a bad second if they put themselves forward, because they do not live in the real world. I say to the Attorney-General, who is handling this legislation: why is it necessary to continue to unmercifully pursue these people—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No. Unmercifully to pursue or to pursue unmercifully.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The honourable Attorney might be an expert in English; I am only a simple country farmer. One of the things I have learnt in this place is that if you stand up for what is right you may subject yourself to ridicule from certain people but, at the end of the day—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Was it right to let Sam Bass go through our letterboxes?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I beg your pardon?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Was it right to let Sam Bass go through our letterboxes? You made that decision as Speaker. Was that right?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is not right, but if you would like to pursue that issue in relation to the Bass case, I am very happy to talk about it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis): Order! The member for Stuart will not respond to the Attorney-General's reflections and accusations. He will continue his very good remarks about revenue raising.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, because I was indicating—

An honourable member interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: —that, if you believe firmly in an issue and how it is affecting decent, hard-working people when they are unmercifully pursued by the government or its instrumentalities, it is the role of members of parliament to stand up for them. I say to the Attorney: why is it necessary to have three police cars sitting just south of Woomera on one occasion when there are villains in Port Augusta harassing decent people living in their own homes because of the stupid people in Aboriginal housing who are putting the wrong people into those streets? The member for Giles got cross with me. Since I raised this issue, dozens of people have come up to me and thanked me. Let me say to the honourable member that I have some more house numbers that I am going to mention in the not too distant future, because decent people should not be harassed or hindered. This is where the police should be.

Yesterday, I went to see a constituent. Half an hour after I saw that person, some of these hobos assaulted him. He was upset, and I am upset. We will go after those people with a vengeance.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I don't care who they are. If they live in a particular locality, they should conform to a reasonable standard of behaviour. That is why it annoys me that you can have three police cars sitting south of Woomera plus the local bloke at Woomera sitting over the hill trying to catch someone. What harm are they doing if they do 130 km/h on their way to Coober Pedy? None whatsoever.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Torrens will restrain herself.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Only a fool would insist that you are doing too much. I make these comments sincerely out of my concern for the welfare of the average citizens of this state whose patience has been sorely tested by this sort of legislation. I issue a warning to the Sir Humphreys out there who think they are building up a nest egg of money that they can spend according to their whim on some harebrained scheme that no-one wants and, unless we get answers to these questions, we will go after them. Members opposite can smile at me, that is fine, but I have a long memory. I have seen lots of injustices perpetrated against people. Members are elected to this place to stick up for their constituents. One unreasonable act always generates another.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: That's why we knocked you off as Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is another reflection that is contrary to standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Stuart will not tell the Speaker his job. The Speaker knows his job. The Attorney will not inflame the situation.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: What I said is that the comments are offensive and contrary to standing orders.

The ACTING SPEAKER: And I pulled up the Attorney. I ask the member for Stuart to continue his remarks and ignore interjections. That is unparliamentary.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: If the Attorney wants to provoke me, he obviously wants to have a long afternoon here. I have plenty more examples that I can site in relation to this legislation. This legislation reminds me of the arbitrary and foolish decisions taken by the Minister for Transport in relation to reducing the speed limit from 110 to 100 in some cases—absolutely ludicrous; it can only be a revenue raising issue. I look forward to the committee stage and a favourable response from the Attorney-General.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Schubert.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): At last, he does recognise me. Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I support the member for Stuart, because you can be very personally affected. Speaking as a country person who drives on these roads—not as far as the member for Stuart does—I can certainly get emotive about subjects like this. I support the member for Stuart's amendment. I think it is reasonable, and I will be interested to hear the discussion on it during the third reading.

Initially, I pay tribute to the work of our police, but I believe they are now forced to work within faulty legislation. People are getting caught for breaking the law—and the Attorney would know this—who are not habitual law breakers. These people try to do the right thing but are penalised because of the stupid laws that parliament has made or allowed to be implemented one way or the other—that is, in relation to a 60 km/h speed limit on main roads but in some towns it is 50 km/h, and in other towns it is 50 km/h one way and 60 km/h the other way. It is ridiculous, and we have to have some uniformity.

I believe we have to tidy this up in relation to the expiation notices whereby people are being fined. The town of Truro in my electorate has the Sturt Highway going through it. If I asked every member of parliament what the speed limit should be through Truro, they would say 60 km/h. But it is not 60 km/h: it is 50 km/h. Members would not believe how many people get picked up. You only have to miss the sign by not looking and you are gone, because patrol cars sit there religiously. Many people, particularly interstate people, get picked up for speeding. There are other areas in my electorate where it is confusing because of the contradiction between a 50 km/h speed limit in back streets and the limit on what you would presume is a through road—and the amount of traffic on a road will tell you whether or not it is a through road—which is marked 50 km/h. I know that in some instances this decision is made by local government in the regions, and they blame us and we blame them when they come under the heat, but I believe that to be fair to everybody we have to have some consistency so that if people do not actually see a sign they have some feeling of what the speed limit ought to be.

I cannot believe that we have got to the situation where we have all these speed limits. It is 100 km/h or 110 km/h on the open road. As you go north from Kapunda there are three speed limits on the main road before you get to Clare, irrespective of the towns. If you happen to miss one sign and a little blue car is hidden among the trees, you are gone, and it is a fairly substantial fine. So, I am very concerned about protecting people whom I do not class as habitual law breakers and, in fact, did not intend to break the law.

But, only last week, patrolmen in their little blue cars (or large blue cars in this case, because they drive SS Holdens) were pulling over trucks. I support the patrolmen pulling over trucks with structural faults—particularly in relation to broken springs, worn kingpins, brakes and steering. The vehicle has to be safe, sir, because it is your life and mine when these trucks come onto the road. But when the police start picking the trucks for little patches of rust oil leaks, cracked side windows or whatever, I get a bit cross because all these things I do not believe have anything to do with the roadworthiness of the trucks. Most farm trucks sit in the shed for 11½ months of the year. The farmers bring them out, dust them off, fill them with fuel and away they go. Of course, what happens? They weep oil because they have had so much lack of use and a bit of oil seeps out. Along comes a patrolman and says, 'Bingo, I will defect this truck and you will be off the road until you get it fixed.'

Every year we have this problem, and again I support what the member for Stuart has said. Yes, we do have some truck drivers, as you would know, sir, whom we class as cowboys, but we also have cowboys in blue patrol cars. As I said to the police who came to see me this morning, we endeavour to try to keep our patrolmen briefed on everything that is reasonable and unreasonable but there is always one over-zealous, younger patrolman who will go over the edge and be what we would call pedantic and cause some angst. But there are not many of them and, as I have always said, I have the highest regard for the men in blue. But they are there, and we are trying to protect those who want to do the right thing.

As the member for Stuart said, it is all about revenue raising. Why do patrol cars hide behind trees; why do they park at the bottom of steep hills; and why do they park alongside passing lanes? As you would know, sir, you might be behind a truck which is sitting on 105 km/h for a fair while. What do you do, sir, when you get to a passing lane? You have a Monaro V8, sir, whereas my car has six cylinders. You put the foot down and you have to get up to 125 km/h or even 130 km/h to get past that truck and be away from it before the passing lane finishes. So, that blue car sits at the side of the road; and alongside a passing lane is a great place to get a few quick fines. Why do they park there and, also, why do they use unmarked cars? It is all about filching from the unsuspecting motorist.

So I think the speed limits are being targeted unfairly in relation to the road toll. What really narks me is that the facts speak for themselves, because we have all these speed limits which have caused this confusion and all this money is being collected for general revenue by police (who should be doing other things) but look at the road toll! Is it any better? No, it is worse than last year. So you cannot say that the reasoning is that this will help our road toll, because it has not helped. I think that, in the long term, it will make no difference apart from making money for the government.

Will the government spend this money on roads? No, it will not do that. I believe that the condition of our roads is one of the major reasons we have accidents. The condition of the roads, inexperience and fatigue are overlooked, I believe, and very much under-estimated in relation to road fatalities. I would not mind quite so much if all the money that is collected was spent on roads, but it is not. I believe that all money for registrations, stamp duty and everything to do with motor cars and drivers, and revenue raised through expiation notices, ought to be spent on our roads. We would then see a rapid increase in roadworks and upgrading in our state. I think we could almost be said to now have the worst roads in Australia, and that is a shame, because only 20 years ago—

Ms Breuer: The worst roads?

Mr VENNING: The worst roads in Australia. I am ashamed, because 20 years ago we had the best roads. We have some very good roads but the rank and file roads such as the Barossa Valley Way and the Main Road North to Clare have patches on patches a lot of the time. They are very rough. It is a shame that our tourist areas have roads that could only be described as back tracks. The percentage of sealed road in other states, particularly Victoria and Tasmania, would be much higher than ours.

So, I would not mind so much if all the revenue raising helped our roads, but it does not: it just goes into general revenue. That is a shame in itself. Look at our road assets. There is nothing worse than a government's running down any of its essential assets, whether it be hospitals, schools or roads. If you get behind in maintaining your road assets, all

your roads are worn out suddenly and you are up for millions of dollars, and what can you do? Under the previous Labor government some years ago, some bitumen roads were ploughed up and reverted to dirt roads because they were dangerous, pot-holed bitumen roads. I hope we never see that again, but that is what will happen unless the government does regular assessments, looks at the priorities and does upgrades.

I believe that the police have to take a lot more notice of one other thing. We talk about speeding and we know all about testing drivers for alcohol, but what about drugs and driving? I was speaking to the police only this morning, and it is quite wrong that when they brought in legislation about four or five years ago—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: The police? You mean the judges.

Mr VENNING: Well, I think the parliament brought in the legislation.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You were talking to the judges before.

Mr VENNING: I was talking to the police before that, and names will be supplied if you wish. Legislation was brought in by the previous attorney Griffin, and the Attorney might help me with the name of the legislation.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: The Forensic Procedures Act.

Mr VENNING: That is right. But what did it do? It took away the capacity of the police to take blood samples. I cannot believe that in this day and age, with drugs as prevalent as they are, that we did that—Liberal government or not, it was done. Why has this Attorney not addressed it and reversed it? I think we should move in the house immediately that this be reinstated—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr VENNING: It is important. We need to plug this loophole so that, if the police pull over a driver, conduct an alcotest with a zero reading but the person can barely stand up and they really suspect that something else is wrong, they can take the person away for a blood test. They could have done this prior to 1996 but they are no longer allowed to do that. What sort of law is that? I have spoken to the police this morning and they would like to have this loophole plugged. I cannot understand why the Attorney does not do that.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Why did you vote for it?

Mr VENNING: I was not aware of the legal connotation; I am sure many people were not. Why did legal people such as the Attorney (who was the shadow attorney-general at the time) not pick it up? Why did he not remind us? I am sure the member for Stuart and I would have backed him if he had. We are purely simple country lads, honest toilers. The Attorney is supposed to be the legal brain in here, so why did he not pick it up? In conclusion, I am happy to support the bill but with the amendment from the member for Stuart. I think it is a movement in the right direction. You must reward good behaviour; you must reward good, law-abiding citizens. I think that the amendment from the member for Stuart has much merit and I support it.

Ms BREUER (Giles): I rise because I am amazed at the comments from the two members opposite, the two country boys who have spoken before me. I am appalled at their comments. I am a country member on this side of the house and I certainly travel as much as the Hon. Graham Gunn—in fact, even more. Both members spoke in particular about the problems with speed limits. I know that being able to drive much faster in our remote areas and our big highways is a particular hobbyhorse of the member for Stuart. Members would be aware that recently I—along with a couple of colleagues—was singled out for my mileage and my so-called chauffeur driven luxury car. I felt very embarrassed by the article in the paper; it featured in both the *Sunday Mail* and then my local paper. The reason was that I was embarrassed at the mileage I had done. I should have done far more than what was reported in the article. I have the biggest electorate in the state, which is over 500 000 square kilometres. A trip to Adelaide, for example, is an 800 kilometre return trip and a trip to Coober Pedy (which is in my electorate) is a 1 500 kilometre return trip. I felt a little embarrassed by this article, because I do not believe that I have done enough travel in the last 12 months. I think I have been letting the side down a little. Of course, it did not mention the 40 or 50-odd return flights between Adelaide and Whyalla, or the fact that, on a number of occasions, I used my own vehicle, and I also hired a vehicle and did another 5 000 or 6 000 kilometres at one stage.

The reason I have not been quite as far in the last 12 months is that I have been staying at home a little more overnight, because my daughter has been doing year 12. However, I will take on the challenge next year and people will certainly see what mileage is all about once I get going trying to service an electorate the size of mine and trying to fulfil my duties as the chair of the ERD committee. In the past, I certainly did many more kilometres in my own vehicle than were mentioned in this recent article. Of course, having a very good car (which I leased) and an excellent highway and knowing the road conditions very well because of the number of times I have travelled those roads, it was very easy to consider that we should be doing more than the 110 kilometres that we are allowed to do.

I have to admit that there were times when I certainly considered doing more than the 110 km/h that we are allowed to do on those highways. Members opposite said 'Why are we hiding police cars to catch people on these highways?' The reason is that statistics prove that speed kills. There are many other reasons but the big reason is speed kills. That is why we have these speed limits on these highways and we cannot get away from that fact. If we do not have cameras and police patrolling those highways, we will speed—and I know that outback people are guilty of speeding. The other fact is that the great majority of people who are killed in accidents in our country regions are country people. We like to say that it is all the city slickers who use our highways and who do not know our roads and conditions who get themselves killed, but the fact is that it is country people who are killed on country roads, and very often that is because they are speeding.

The police have their cameras set up out there. I know where they are much of the time. You will always find a camera or a police car around Woomera, so you are very careful around that area. You know the speed limits and where the cars start patrolling from just outside Coober Pedy. I have been caught outside Port Augusta in my vehicle—and perhaps on more than one occasion. Everyone knows that when you are heading towards Adelaide to be careful around Lochiel. We do know the areas where they are often situated, but you often come across them in other places. Why are they there? They are catching us if we speed, because speed kills. It kills our sons, daughters, cousins, brothers, sisters, mums, dads and us. There are lots of reasons for accidents on these country roads, and a big issue is tiredness. I have been very pleased that I have not had to drive myself around my

electorate in the last 12 months, because tiredness has been a big issue for me.

When you are driving as far as I do, you get very tired. This applies particularly to city drivers when driving in country regions. They have no idea about the effects that driving those distances and tiredness can have on them. I am sure we are all very concerned about that. I am pleased to see the number of signs that have been erected throughout the state of South Australia saying 'Fatigue kills' and 'Tiredness kills'.

Mr Brokenshire: We put those up.

Ms BREUER: That was very well done and I am very pleased to see them, because tiredness is a big issue, particularly for city drivers when driving in the country. Another issue which is a particular favourite of mine is headlights. I think it should be compulsory to turn your headlights on as soon as you leave the city boundaries, because it makes life so much simpler—

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms BREUER: Not your high beam, no, but it is so much easier to see cars, whatever the conditions. I think that, if we did that, we would prevent some of these accidents. People travelling unknown roads and who have no idea where they are going and what they are doing can be a real issue. Of course, there are animals in country areas and you have to be very careful about avoiding them. I was interested to see that one of the current oppositions to wind farms is that it kills birds. I would have to say that my strike rate in the country would be much greater than the wind turbines. I have killed more than two eagles and many other birds as well, not to mention a number of kangaroos. I have not hit an emu, thank goodness, but I have seen many dead ones on the side of the road. Animals can be a real problem in our region.

Another thing that really annoys me is slow drivers and getting stuck behind caravans. I really think that they create accidents. For instance, you can get stuck behind a slow vehicle such as a truck but particularly a caravan or some dear old mum and dad going on a trip who drive below the speed limit for 10 kilometres, and it creates real problems. Cars build up and people take silly and unnecessary risks—and a lot of young people particularly do this—but I must admit that, when you have been driving for 400 or 500 kilometres, your temper frays and anyone can take on a car that is being driven slowly. Of course, we all know the problems with alcohol and drugs. The real issue is that speed is what causes accidents in the country. As I said, the majority of people who get killed in the country are country people, so we cannot blame the city slickers. We cannot say that it is them who are being killed: it is us who are being killed.

My driver now sticks to the speed limit. I admire him for that and I think that he has incredible virtues in being able to do that. However, I have to say that it never takes us any longer to get anywhere because of his sticking to the speed limit. We still get there in the same time. You might shave five minutes off by taking risks but, if you stick to the speed limit, you get there in the same time. I am amazed at the comments from members opposite who are complaining about the fact that their roads are being policed so carefully and about the speed limits which are not just something that are pulled out of the air. Speed limits are well researched. There has been many a time in the past when I have wanted to take someone on because I cannot do 130 km/h on my Stuart Highway. I would love to be able to do 130 km/h, but I know that I am unable to do so. I have had this argument with many people. I know that I am not able to do it and that it is not appropriate to do that speed—it does kill. Therefore, I would fully support this bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Mackillop.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Good member.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, and I thank the Attorney for his compliment. In speaking to this bill, I will also speak to the amendment as proposed by the member for Stuart, because I think it is a very fine amendment. I want to canvass a range of issues.

I will start from where the previous speaker (the member for Giles) left off. She said a number of times that speed kills. Speed might kill but, in the majority of cases, in my opinion, speed does not cause accidents. Speed very occasionally might cause accidents, but most of the accidents caused on country roads, in my opinion, are caused by inattentive or inappropriate driving.

Ms Breuer: That's your opinion.

Mr WILLIAMS: I said 'in my opinion'. That is something that you did not say when you made the bold assertion—

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I did not say anything.

Mr WILLIAMS: I take your advice, sir. That is the something that the member for Giles did not say when she made the bold assertion that speed kills. She then said that fatigue kills—in fact, she said a whole heap of things which, when all strung together, made a bit of a mishmash. I do not believe that speed is the major cause of accidents in country areas: it is inattention. If one looks at where the majority of accidents have occurred throughout my electorate, one will see that it has been on the Dukes Highway. I do not believe that people driving between Keith and the Victorian boarder travel at any different speed than they do anywhere else on the Dukes Highway. But most of the accidents that occur on the Dukes Highway occur between Keith and the Victorian border, which is about 2½ hours from Adelaide, and even further from Melbourne. A lot of the traffic is travelling from Adelaide into Victoria and it is the fatigue factor, I believe, after driving for that period of time, that causes them to lose attention. I think that is a significant factor in the accident rate. I am sure that, if we look at other roads across the state, we will find that there is a direct relationship between the area on those roads where accidents are occurring and the distance generally from the point of beginning the journey.

There are some other causes that, again, I think are quite often related to road conditions. One of the things that often intrigues me is that our speed limits are not based on road conditions. It is my understanding that in Europe there is a different speed limit for good and bad driving conditions. If one is driving in good light conditions during the day, with a dry road surface, a different speed limit applies to when one is driving in the rain at night. I think that is eminently sensible. With respect to the way in which we police the speed limits on the various roads throughout South Australia, there is no doubt that the legislation and the policing that we undertake in South Australia has a lot more to do with revenue raising than curtailing accidents and road trauma. There is no doubt in my mind, and I will cite a case in point.

Recently, I was contacted by a constituent who had received a speeding fine in Hutt Road. He had come down from the country to visit his daughter in the city, and he turned off Glen Osmond Road into Hutt Road and received a speeding fine whilst traversing the parklands. The speed limit on the road had recently been converted to 50 km/h, but he was unaware of that. Not only did he receive a speeding

fine coming into the city, but an hour later, when he was leaving the city, he was caught in the same speed trap and received another fine. I can assure the house that he was not very happy about it. I have written letters to the police minister and have received two replies, which indicate to me that, as alleged by my constituent, there was no signage on Hutt Road at the time when the offences are alleged to have occurred.

When the government reduced the suburban speed limit to 50 km/h, I believe that the debate that occurred in the community left no-one in any doubt that this was about road safety in leafy suburbs or back streets, where children would be out playing, or in their yards and likely to walk out onto the street, or where pedestrians are walking up and down the street. Why was the speed limit set at 50 km/h through the parklands? I know that it had a lot to do with the city council. Why do we have police sitting in the middle of the parklands pinging people for doing 56 or 57 km/h, when they have every expectation that the speed limit is 60 km/h? It is not a suburban street. There are no houses, shops or buildings on either side and there are no warning signs—or there were no warning signs.

I understand that one of the things that has happened, probably because of me raising the issue with the police minister and others (because I am absolutely certain that I am not the only person who has raised this matter), is that appropriate signs have now been placed there. That just proves to me that this is more about raising revenue than saving lives. I do not believe that putting a 50 km/h speed limit in the parklands will save any lives at all. In fact, the reality is that is does not matter where you set the speed limit; those few people who lose their lives or who are seriously injured as a direct result of speeding will exceed the limit, anyway. It does not matter if you set it at 120, 100, 90 or 50 km/h: a certain percentage of the community will always exceed the speed limit.

They will literally take their life into their own hands. That happens from time to time, and I do not believe that the wisdom of Solomon could come up with a legislative approach to stop that from happening. In our wisdom collectively as a parliament, we would say that we will introduce these measures, I think, because it raises plenty of revenue.

The member for Stuart made the very pertinent point that here we have a piece of legislation to give the officer issuing an expiation notice a second chance if he makes a mistake. That is what this is about. The officer got it wrong when he was issuing the notice. Human frailty comes into it. He made a little mistake: as a parliament, we will give him a second chance. Where does the long suffering motorist get his second chance? It just does not happen. Every one of us knows that, time and again—and the Attorney may not be aware, because he does not hold a driver's licence, and never has, to my knowledge—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I never have.

Mr WILLIAMS: So, he might not be quite as aware the rest of us, because I understand that virtually every other member of the parliament holds a driver's licence, and we know full well that we err from time to time. It is not very difficult, when you come over the crest of a hill or down a slope—as I found out, to my loss, quite recently, as I was coming down a slope on Portrush Road when travelling from the tollgate to the city late one evening. I fully admit to a slight bit of inattention on my behalf. The next thing I knew, the car was exceeding the speed limit, and I received the appropriate treatment. But we are going to say to the officer, 'If you err, if you get it slightly wrong, we will give you a second chance.' But we never say that to the motorist.

Regarding the point that I was making about going downhill, down a slope, and the car speeding up, we generally find the cameras on a downhill slope. In my experience, I have not seen too many speed traps set up halfway up a long hill. To my knowledge, it does not happen. Some members have suggested that we should put in legislation exactly where speed cameras can be hidden away and, in fact, that they should be directly related to black spot areas on the roads, and the legislation should have definitions of what these black spots are. I think that is probably something that the parliament should investigate.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Well, we'll wait for your private member's bill.

Mr WILLIAMS: It might be coming. It probably will not have my name on it, but it might be coming. I finish by commending the member for Stuart on the amendment that he is presenting here. I noted the long-suffering driver never being given a second chance. Our laws in general are all about sticks and have very little to do with carrots. This is an example of where some good legislation could come from the sort of amendment where we actually give a reward, albeit small, to those people who have for a long time been able to resist the temptation to deliberately speed or who have been so cautious in the way that they drive going about their business that they have never been reported for speeding, at least for a period of 10 years. I think this is a very sensible idea that has been put forward by the honourable member.

It might, in fact, restore the confidence of the community in the parliament and in our police because, as far as the policing of our road traffic legislation is concerned, I can assure the house that most people in the community do not really thank us for bringing in these draconian measures. That is because most people do not have confidence that this is about road trauma. Most people in the community believe that this is nothing more than the hands of the Treasurer in their pocket, taking another form of tax. So, I commend the member for Stuart. I do wonder at some of the clauses of the honourable member's proposal, suggesting that at the time of receiving the expiation notice the driver would fill out a statutory declaration claiming the exemption. With the technology that police officers have available today, I think they probably should be able to determine immediately—and I think the buzz words are 'in real time'—the status of the driver's offending or otherwise and be able to take the appropriate action at the time to issue an official warning or an expiation notice.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: But then you would have to keep a record of official warnings.

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, and my understanding is that the police do issue official warnings to motorists and a record is kept. Other members seem to acknowledge that that has happened. That was my understanding. I am sure that they are recorded on an electronic system somewhere that is immediately retrievable by the officer in the field. One other point I want to make goes back to when I was talking about what causes road accidents. By our concentration on speed and our denial that there are a number of other significant causes of road accidents, I think that we lull the general public into a false sense of security. I think a lot of people in the community probably believe, through the brainwashing that has taken place over a long time, that if they stick to the speed limit they will be invincible.

One of the things I do not think we teach—which I do not think should be taught in a physical way but it can be taught in a mental way—is that drivers must be responsible for their own actions. As an example, it is virtually an obligation today for farmers who are droving livestock on the road to put up a sign saying that there are livestock on the road. When my father taught me to drive at a very young age, I was taught that you never drive faster than you can see. If you come around the corner and there is a mob of sheep or cattle on the road unexpectedly, you should not be driving at a speed at which you could not stop in order to avoid them. That is why a lot of people get themselves into trouble. They see the speed limit of 100 or 110, and I think a lot of people think that that is the minimum speed, not the maximum and tend not to drive either within the conditions of the road on which they are driving or, more importantly, within their own capabilities.

That is one of the problems particularly with young drivers. I do not subscribe to the commonly held belief that we should be running physical training programs for young drivers. I believe that the only way you learn to be a reasonably proficient driver is by experience, and that happens over many, many years and is not something that you can teach in a couple of weeks at a TAFE course or a driving school course. In fact, research has shown that the people who do advanced driving courses tend to have a greater belief in their own ability and tend to drive even closer to the edge, so to speak. They put themselves and other road users at greater risk because they believe, again, that they are invincible.

I guess we will continue to live with this nonsense that speed kills and I guess we will continue to introduce more and more draconian laws. I honestly believe that this is more about revenue raising than about protecting road users, and I certainly agree with the member for Stuart that some people in this state—and I know it is a minority and that they are all out in the country and the government does not necessarily care about them too much—spend a lot of time on the road. Largely, that makes them relatively good drivers, because of the experience they gain, but I think it is counter-productive to continually slow those people down or continually harass them by fining them for minor breaches of the Road Traffic Act.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): The debate this afternoon has reminded me of a quote I like from a British economist, the former director of the Conservative Research Department, Adam Ridley, who wrote:

> Parties come to power with silly, inconsistent and impossible policies because they have spent their whole period in opposition forgetting about the real world, destroying the lessons they learnt in government, and clambering slowly back onto the ideological plane where they feel happiest.

Listening to the members for Stuart, Schubert and MacKillop, we can see that it has been about 18 months of opposition for the Liberal Party, and those three members are proposing things that they would never have seriously pursued when in government. I admire the indignation of the member for Stuart. I wonder how he works himself up to such a pitch. He starts at a very high pitch of indignation and continues for his entire speech. And it is an art. I can answer one of his questions, about what is the law on triviality regarding expiation of offences. That is contained in the existing section 8A of the Expiation of Offences Act 1996. Note: 1996, when the member for Stuart was a member of the governing party and the member for Schubert was a member of the governing party. It provides:

> A person who has been given an expiation notice issued after the commencement of this section may apply to the issuing authority for a review of the notice on the ground that an offence to which the notice relates is trifling.

That is a provision inserted by the previous government, and I have no quarrel with it. That is the law.

I think that the member for Stuart made a good point when he said that the fines or expiation fees can have a harsh effect on pensioners and the unemployed. He made the point that the expiation fees would not have much of an effect on the people who work on the framing of this law, the people he was pleased to refer to as the Sir Humphrey Applebys. Now, whether or not that is so, if we follow the member for Stuart down that track, what we would do is have a law whereby expiation fees or fines were made proportional to an offender's income. The member for Stuart had eight years in government to introduce that proposition.

He did not do it, and I presume that he did not do it because he knows that it has been tried in another jurisdiction (which is dear to his heart) and it was found wanting, and it would not be practical here in South Australia. The member for Stuart asks whether police deliberately hid speed cameras and whether the police command instructs each police station to raise so much money in expiation fees. Those questions are better directed by letter to the Minister for Police and are not directly pertinent to the bill before us. Indeed, it seemed to me that nearly all the second reading debate was unrelated to the proposition before us, which is making some small adjustments to the Expiation of Offences Act to deal with the effect of magistrate Vass's judgment in Police v Hunter.

However, the case of Police v Hunter did not get a run in the opposition's second reading contributions. Members opposite chose to decry the parent act rather than the amendments I bring before the house. The member for Mawson, who led the debate for the opposition, is a typical case of gamekeeper turned poacher. He was happy, as the former minister for police and a member of the previous government, to raise large amounts of money in expiation fees, and he did not make any of the points he made today when he was in government. The member for Schubert asked what the name of the law was that prevented the police taking blood samples except under strict conditions.

I interjected that it was the forensic procedures act. In fact, I am wrong, it is the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Act. The member for Schubert said that speed cameras and red light cameras had not reduced the road toll. I am not an expert on road safety, I do not drive a motor vehicle, but one thing I can say is that, when I was in primary school, I recall that the number of road deaths in South Australia was above 300 a year. A campaign was run in Adelaide in *The News*, the evening newspaper (which I sold on Hilda Terrace, Hawthorn, and also at the Torrens Arms Hotel), to reduce the road toll below 300.

Well, the road toll is now well under 300, but in that time our population, I think, has doubled. I think, therefore, that speed cameras and red light cameras have had some effect. The member for Schubert referred to the parent act (Expiation of Offences Act) as the 'stupid law the parliament has made', yet he was here in 1996 when the law was made and I do not remember his dissenting from it. The member for Schubert went on to say, 'It is all about revenue raising'. But my understanding is that the amount of money raised by the police through expiation fees issued for traffic infringement would meet only a fraction of the police's total budget. Yes, it is a significant income for consolidated revenue but it is not

one of the government's major incomes. With those remarks, I urge the house to support the principle of the bill.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4.

Ms CHAPMAN: For the record, I have assumed the conduct of the management of the bill on behalf of the opposition. I should disclose a potential conflict of interest in that I have had some association with the Road Traffic Act 1961, but only to say that I certainly do not profess that driving is one of my strong points. I move:

Page 2, after line 10—

Insert:

(a1) Section 6(1)(e)—delete paragraph (e) and substitute:

(e) cannot be given after the expiry of—

(i) in the case of an offence against section 79B of the Road Traffic Act 1961—the period of three months from the date on which the offence was, or offences were, alleged to have been committed; or

(ii) in any other case—the period of six months from the date on which the offence was, or offences were, alleged to have been committed; and

This amendment standing in the name of the member for Mawson essentially seeks to place a time limit on the capacity for the notices to issue, and that there is an expiation period that will provide for three months. I understand that the member for Mawson has indicated the basis upon which he presents this amendment; but, quite clearly, it is to ensure that even the offender in such circumstances has the opportunity, in the sense of having some memory of the occasion and event, to be able properly to present a defence in those circumstances, and therefore I commend the amendment for consideration.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The amendment moved by the member for Mawson would permit owners and non-owner drivers to collude to avoid being held responsible for speeding or running red lights. There is no reason in principle, policy or logic to have one time limit for camera detected offences and another time limit for all other expiable offences. There is a further objection. If a prosecution is begun rather than an expiation notice issued, this takes longer to proceed. The person receiving the summons can sometimes later nominate some other person who is driving.

It might be appropriate to issue an expiation notice to that other person. However, if more than three months have expired, under the opposition's amendment this would not be possible. The person would therefore get off entirely from what could be a serious expiable offence.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think this clause is the appropriate one. The Attorney-General addressed certain comments in relation to a course of action taken by the previous government in dealing with trifling offences. Will the Attorney then consider including on each expiation notice handed out a clause that advises people unfortunate enough to be handed one of these obnoxious documents that they have certain rights under South Australian law, and that they can apply to have it considered as a trifling offence?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: As always with the member for Stuart—a member for whom I have profound respect—I will take his suggestion into consideration. I believe it may have been put up to a previous attorney-general and it was decided that the amount of small print on expiation notices was already quite sufficient without including more information and making the print even more microscopic. But if—

Ms Chapman: You could add another page.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Add another page, says the member for Bragg. Well, I am sure that if we did that the member for Stuart would come in here thundering about red tape. We will give it some thought, and perhaps the member for Stuart could suggest what information could be usefully deleted from the current expiation notice to make way—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: Delete the lot!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Delete the lot, says the member for Stuart. I will take some advice on that. As he knows, the wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly and I would not expect a swift outcome.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I thank the Attorney for his response. He indicated that this may have been put up to a previous attorney-general, but we have moved on from there. Parliament has to look at a particular set of circumstances at a particular time in our history and, therefore, if the parliament agreed to this proposition unfortunately not enough people in the community would be aware. The next time that I have the opportunity to get on 639 radio—which is quite often—I will make sure over those airwaves that people are aware and should ask the officer what their rights are. I will do it in chapter and verse, although I am normally very shy when I get on those programs. I draw the Attorney's attention to what happened when a concerned listener rang in—and it was brought to my attention by the excellent interviewer on radio 639—talking about these silly changes and the 50 kilometre speed limit in Tumby Bay. They came and stuck a speed camera there. No-one knew it was going there; they did not put the signs up afterwards for people to know that they had gone through it—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Tumby Bay doesn't listen to 639: they listen to something else.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No, it gets hooked up. They took $18 000 out of that community. People were given tickets who had been driving all their lives and had never committed an offence. In my view, it was a quite outrageous misuse of power. There was nothing in the newspapers to say that they were going to be there. When you read in the newspapers on a daily basis you can see that list of where they are liable to be, and if you can watch the appropriate television station in Adelaide it comes on. Therefore, there is a very good cause, and I thank the Attorney for considering it. It appears to me that, on past practice, not only of this government—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Don't worry, Patrick, we are making some progress. It appears to me that, of course, there was always a hesitation on behalf of those people who may have to alter the forms; it is a bit of work for them. I know, Mr Chairman, that you are one who has complained vigorously in the past about some of these provisions, and the effects they have on people who have difficulty paying them. I am pleased that the Attorney is going to consider it. I think the community in general should be made aware—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You mean the public.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: If the honourable member wants to use that term, I am not going to object to that. The people of South Australia—long suffering citizens, taxpayers who are on a regular basis having their pockets plundered, with the money often not put to very good use—are the ones I am sticking up for. We have not seen the finish of the debates in relation to this legislation. Let me say to the Attorney-General that he has not seen the last of me. He is going to have to put

up with me—and he will probably not be on that side of the house—for quite a while in the future, because I am going to pursue these issues, and there are a couple of other departments that I have got in my telescopic sight.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: A couple more years before Justin arrives.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, if the honourable member wants to go down and talk along that line, about misuse of government offices—and we will ask the Auditor-General about the selection process and about the cost. That is the sort of debate we are going to have, because what goes around comes around. We have all just been given a most interesting document about crook election process. It was sent to us today and is most illuminating reading. Well, we might add a bit more to it.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: A typical speeding offence is, of course, not trifling. I would have thought that exceeding the speed limit would very rarely be trifling, because police generally do not issue notices if the speed is less than 10 kilometres an hour above the limit.

Mr MEIER: I am interested to hear the minister say that a speeding offence is generally not trifling. I do not know if the minister is only referring to police stopping someone or speed cameras reporting someone. If it was police, then my comments are perhaps not relevant, but, in terms of a speed camera, I had the situation myself here a few weeks ago on Peacock Road. I was doing, I think, 62 or 63 and got pinged, because Peacock Road is now a 50—I think I am right there. I regarded that as a totally trifling offence, a reflection on the ineptitude of this government, on the way the minister is totally inept, on the way he has no idea how he is supposed to regulate speeds, and we see that the minister opposite now says that is not a minor offence.

I regard it as a totally minor offence. In fact, I think a lot of other people do. I notice that even the council is talking about it now and acknowledging that it is wrong. Even this morning, when I came along West Terrace—which is 60, three lanes, and it might even be four lanes—I turned into North Terrace, still basically doing the same speed, and I suddenly realised, 'Hang on, hang on, I think we are down to 50 now,' and I am supposed to know these things. I feel for any tourist in this town. They will have a horror time and I would bet that many who rent cars over a period of time will get fine after fine some weeks or months later. It is absolutely a complete shemozzle in this state; in particular in this town, but also in country towns. Some of my towns are 60, some of them are 50, and, of course, in the back streets we go the same. I just wanted to take the one issue up. I regard such infringements as minor and, in fact, I think it is simply a reflection on the way this government has mishandled the whole issue.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Section 4 is the interpretation section of the Expiation of Offences Act, and section 4(2) states:

> An alleged offence will, for the purposes of this act, be regarded as trifling if, and only if, the circumstances surrounding the commission of the offence were such that the alleged offender ought to be excused from being given an expiation notice on the ground that—
> (a) there were compelling humanitarian or safety reasons for the conduct that allegedly constituted the offence; or
> (b) the alleged offender could not, in all the circumstances, reasonably have averted committing the offence—

and I think that is the point that the member for Goyder will take about Peacock Road—

> or
> (c) the conduct allegedly constituting the offence was merely a technical, trivial or petty instance of a breach of the relevant enactment.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5 to 8 passed.

Clause 9.

Ms CHAPMAN: On behalf of the member for Mawson, I move:

> Page 5, line 33—
> Delete '1 year' and substitute:
> 9 months

Again. this is a time requirement which seeks to reduce the period of one year to nine months to allow for an extension of the period from the date of commission of the alleged offence. Again, for a similar reason as provided in the previous clause, there needs to be a time limit on this. Taking into account that fresh expiation notices may need to be issued, because one offender may be found to be clearly not guilty and some search and effort needs to be made to issue the expiation notice against another party, some reasonable time must be allowed. I submit to the house that nine months is quite adequate, and I ask that the house consider the amendment favourably.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Information from the police commissioner shows that in some instances it will take up to 12 months to issue an expiation notice to the right person.

Ms Chapman: That is slack.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: No, it is not slack: it is unavoidable.

Amendment negatived; clause passed.

Clause 10 passed.

New clause 10B.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I move:

> After clause 10 insert:
> 10B—Insertion of section 174DA
> After section 174D insert:
> 174DA—Formal caution for certain speeding offences
> (1) For the purposes of this section, there are grounds for an expiation notice or summons for an alleged speeding offence to be withdrawn and substituted with a formal caution against further offending in respect of speeding offences if—
> (a) the person alleged to have committed the speeding offence has held a driver's licence continuously for the 10 years immediately preceding the alleged offence; and
> (b) the person has not, during that period, expiated, been convicted of or been issued a formal caution under this section in respect of a speeding offence.
> (2) An expiation notice, expiation reminder notice under the *Expiation of Offences Act 1996* or summons for an alleged speeding offence must be accompanied by—
> (a) a notice (in the prescribed form) inviting the person to provide the issuing authority or complainant with a statutory declaration setting out grounds on which the expiation notice or summons should be withdrawn and substituted with a formal caution against further offending in respect of speeding offences under this section; and
> (b) a form suitable for use as a statutory declaration.
> (3) If the issuing authority or complainant is satisfied of the veracity of a statutory declaration provided under subsection (2), the issuing authority or complainant must withdraw the expiation notice or summons and instead issue the person with a formal caution against further offending in respect of speeding offences.
> (4) If the issuing authority or complainant is not satisfied of the veracity of a statutory declaration provided under subsection (2), the issuing authority or complainant must send a notice (in the prescribed form) to the alleged offender by post containing a statement that the statutory declaration is not accepted.

(5) For the purposes of the *Expiation of Offences Act 1996*, a notice under subsection (4) given in respect of an expiation notice will be taken to be an expiation enforcement warning notice and that Act (apart from the requirement for the notice to contain a statement about the statutory declaration) applies to the notice.

(6) It is a defence to a charge of a speeding offence to prove that the defendant provided a statutory declaration in respect of the alleged offence in accordance with an invitation under this section (unless it is proved that the declaration was false in a material particular).

(7) In this section—

speeding offence has the same meaning as in section 79B but does not include an offence involving—

(a) exceeding the speed limit by more than 15 kilometres per hour; or

(b) speeding in a school zone (within the meaning of the *Australian Road Rules*); or

(c) speeding in a shared zone (within the meaning of the *Australian Road Rules*).

This amendment brings to the whole process an element of fairness and gives people the ability to question the issuing of an on-the-spot fine when they believe they have been harshly or unreasonably dealt with. There is no doubt that there is an attempt to issue far too many on-the-spot fines and many of them are issued for unnecessary, trifling and minor offences. The example I gave in relation to what took place at Tumby Bay and elsewhere is a disgrace. In those sorts of instances where people unfortunately take it upon themselves to act unreasonably and unwisely, this parliament has not only the moral duty but also the absolute necessity to step in and protect them. In a democracy the public has a right to question, challenge and seek an explanation for the action of public officials, no matter who they are or under what circumstances. In issuing on-the-spot fines we are stepping in the way and interfering with that process.

Parliaments which work under the Westminster system such as we have in South Australia are being bombarded by bureaucracy and are unwisely surrendering the rights of the community to bureaucracy. That is a course of action which is not only dangerous, unwise and unnecessary, but it also leads to further erosion of people's rights. I am surprised that members of the legal fraternity have not been stronger in their condemnation of this sort of activity, because they above all people are the ones who see at first hand what happens to the average citizen when they are confronted by the authority of government or government instrumentalities to which the parliament has given discretion to issue these notices. Surely, a person has the right to say, 'I have been a good, law-abiding citizen for a considerable amount of time and this offence is of a minor nature.' What is the objective of government? Is it to make life as difficult as it possibly can for the average citizen? Or is it—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: When is this going to commence, Gunnie?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: What do you mean?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: When will the benefit, this exemption, start?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: If it is carried at the same time, at the same time as this act is proclaimed.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Is that right? Where will the record of expiation offences going back ten years come from?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I am very happy to answer the question, but let me say to the Attorney-General—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: The records are not available for the last 10 years.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Those sorts of alleged difficulties are no reason to erode or interfere with the rights of an average, decent citizen.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: So everyone will just say, 'Officer, I haven't been pinged in the last 10 years,' and that would be good enough in your book, Gunnie?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Stuart has the call.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: My amendment does not say that, and the Attorney knows it does not.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Well, the records don't exist.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, how do you know—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Attorney can respond in due course.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: If the records do not exist, how do you compile driving demerit points? Tell me that. I say to the Attorney-General that is a nonsense and a reflection on the administration of the whole system. If the records do not exist, he will need more than a bit of green paper. It is an absolute outrage if the records do not exist, and gross negligence and incompetence on the part of those people who administer the scheme, and I do not care who is responsible. It is just used as a smoke screen to deny ordinary citizens a bit of decency and courtesy.

I was about to indicate my concerns about the role of government and instrumentalities. It is not their role to make life as harsh or as difficult as they possibly can for people. That is not the role of government. That is not what we are sent here for. We are sent here to act reasonably and sensibly—and compassionately, at times. When you inflict these things on people who do not readily have the ability to pay, you are imposing two penalties. But if they say they do not have the records, how do they trace people who do not pay? Tell me that. The Attorney could not answer all my questions about the operation of the scheme, but we are required to vote upon the further modification of it. I say to the Attorney that I want to know how they follow up. If you do not have a record, how do you know if people do not pay? Is he saying to the public of South Australia, 'They have no records, so don't pay, because they won't follow it up'?

I put it to the Attorney and his adviser that they can do better than that. I give them full marks for trying, but even Sir Humphrey Appleby trying to put it over Jim Hacker could do better than that. In my time in this place I have heard some pretty woolly answers trying to justify the unjustifiable but I reckon that takes the cake. I say to the Attorney and those around him that that answer leads us to pursue this matter with great vigour. No wonder people are not paying the fines, if there are no records. We all appreciated having a briefing from their honours today, and one of the issues raised by the person sitting next to me was that thousands of outstanding fines have not been paid but they are trying to follow them up. Come on, where are we at now? You have let the ferret right out the cage. I say to the Attorney that that is not a suitable answer. My proposal allows people the fundamental right to make a proper submission to the police that their action at the time may have been slightly naughty but not that unreasonable that they should be pinged. One of the problems in relation to this matter is that the police issue the tickets, the police adjudicate it and there is no independent adjudication of whether the expiation ticket should be endorsed.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It may appear to be humorous—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Bring in a QC.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I am one of those who believe that it ought to be independently adjudicated, and I tried very

hard once to have that brought into effect. I do believe that they ought to be independently adjudicated—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Every one of them!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: You have the police doing it—Caesar unto Caesar. It would not be very hard and we do it in other areas. It should be independently adjudicated, so that if people have an objection, it can be fairly and reasonably considered. That is not unreasonable. I say to the Attorney that people can think that I am going overboard, but no matter what anyone thinks, including the people advising the Attorney and the government, they have to understand that we are at the point where the public has had enough—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You get it independently adjudicated by taking it to court.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That in itself is a nonsense because, as I pointed out to the Attorney previously, it is beyond the resources of the average person to go to court. In my view, the cost involved is another public scandal. The cost of having legal representation to get justice before the court depends on whether or not you can pay for it. In my view, that is an indecent set of circumstances in a democracy. The average citizen has a choice between losing their home and defending themselves. I know what happens. I know what happened to a former premier in Western Australia. He could no longer afford to defend himself because he would endanger the home of his family, so he went to gaol. I am absolutely right in what I am saying. It is all very well for people sitting in offices away from this place to tend to advice: it is not them who are dealing with the end result.

I would say to some of those people, as I used to say to certain people when we were in government, come and spend a day in my electorate office and you will see the reality of some of the decisions made by governments as a result of so-called people acting on behalf of governments. From time to time, the only way in which those people get anywhere is by a member of parliament using a bit of huff and puff with some of those Sir Humphreys to get a fair approach. There is nothing unique or unusual about the approach I have today: it is just giving people another right to object, and is not the hallmark of a democratic society giving people the right to have their objection heard. It distinguishes us from the actions of people such as Mugabe and others. In a fair and reasonable society we are entitled to that right.

It does not matter if you do not have the ability to argue your case before the police because you can get someone else to write a letter and, in many cases, it would be the member of parliament. As the Attorney would know, we write heaps of letters on behalf of people who do not have the ability and long may it continue that we stick up for them when they have been badly treated by private companies, government or local government. We do it all the time: it is one of our jobs and we do not mind doing it. However, it ought to be formally available to those people, as in the case of the Italian immigrant who was riding his pushbike and who was issued three on-the-spot fines in a matter of half an hour. What an outrage—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: For what?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: For having three fishing rods instead of two. That is what happened to him. He approached a prominent person in the town who directed him to me and I got on the telephone. I photocopied the on-the-spot fine and had it delivered to the regional commander of police. It was only as a result of my intervention that action was taken. I said to that person, 'If this is how the law is administered in this city, I will make sure that the people of South Australia know. Not only will it be raised in parliament but I will get on to the *Advertiser* and you will be on the front page.' If that person had not had the wit or the wisdom to come to the local member, he would have been pinged and the independent adjudication would have stamped it.

What I am saying to the Attorney today is to have a bit of commonsense and compassion in these matters. It might not be applied on many occasions but that is not a reason for not changing the law. We have it before us now. I put it to the Attorney very clearly that life for many people is made unreasonably difficult by the process that is taking place currently.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I am advised by the police commissioner that the amendment is not supported because police officers currently have the discretion to caution. Factors to be considered include, the proposed amendment interferes with the discretionary authority that police have to arrest, report or caution persons. This discretion is fundamental to effective policing. The first offence may be excessive, for instance, 100 in a 60 zone and not suitable for caution, or in the case of a driver detected by a police officer, the driver's conduct may not be suitable for a caution. Provisions already exist under section 8A, trifling offences, for matters to be withdrawn. SAPOL general orders provide guidelines for cautioning drivers, in addition the Expiation Notice Branch has a policy approved by the Commissioner of Police in place for cautioning drivers under certain circumstances.

Owing to owner onus legislation for photographic detections, there can be no guarantee that a person does not have a previous history. For instance, John Smith is the registered owner of a vehicle and has 10 expiated notices in his name. John Smith is a 90-year old pensioner who allows his grandchildren access to his vehicle. John Smith could not claim the benefit of the proposal, however, the actual offenders, his grandchildren, could. It should not be automatic. This is not supported by existing IT processes and would be very costly to introduce and expiation notice records, presumably after they are paid, are not available for the past 10-year period.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The reasons the Attorney-General has outlined are a clear indication of why we should support my amendment. It is not for this parliament to legislate or act on behalf of a government bureaucracy which wants to administer a particular proposal in its own way. That is one of the very reasons why people should have the right to challenge and to object.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: And they do.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: But the police are not required to take notice of it. The Attorney's answer has made me even more determined that we need to pursue this line. It is not for us to legislate for and on behalf of an individual bureaucracy or instrumentality of government; that is not our role. Our role is to ensure, above everything else, that the public of South Australia is fairly, reasonably and properly treated. That is our role above all else, and I am surprised that the lawyers in this place have not recognised it. I think it is unfortunate that I had to take so much of the parliament's time this afternoon to labour these points. But I believe that I would not be acting in the best interests of the people of South Australia if these points were not vigorously debated on the public record to ensure that people who do not have the ability to defend themselves can have their objections properly considered. I know that, from time to time, members of the public service and others get very annoyed with me.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I don't, Gunnie.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: They get very annoyed and angry with me, and walk straight past me at public functions. That is fine.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Do they?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I could give you chapter and verse. My wife often says to me (and we do not attend many of them; occasionally we go to one), 'I can see who you've upset; they walk straight past you.' Not even the wives say g'day. My attitude is that, if they are so small minded, so be it. We can get on without them; we do not need them, anyway.

Mr Chairman, you have complained on many occasions about how people have been affected. We all have the right to ensure that people are given fair treatment. We will make sure, on the public record, that those who support the line that I have taken will be counted. I forewarn that I do not intend to give up on this issue, because I have seen the results and how ordinary, decent people have been affected. The points that I raised with the Attorney about the location and operation of these speed detection devices are relevant, because we are changing the law in relation to on the spot fines. I will certainly take it up with the Minister for Police; people should make no mistake about that. I believe that we are entitled to raise these issues in this parliament on every occasion that we can. I am very concerned that certain members of the parliament seem to be inflexible, because that is denying reasonable justice to people who cannot afford to defend themselves elsewhere.

Mr MEIER: There is no doubt that the member for Stuart is endeavouring to make a very legitimate point through this amendment.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: And he put it eloquently.

Mr MEIER: He has. The problem to fix, I suppose, is the way in which speed cameras are so prevalent these days, and the way in which some of our speed limits are completely inapplicable to the respective roads. Why should we single out people who have a perfect 10-year driving record? Some of them may have got away with a lot during that 10 years and been lucky, and I guess that would happen to many of us who are on the road on a regular basis. I travel between 40 000 and 50 000 kilometres a year. I guess that would be five times more than many other members, but it would not be as much as the member for Stuart would do; he would do that much more. Therefore, our chances of being picked up for speeding are much higher than is the case for other members. The Hon. Diana Laidlaw, a former member of another place, said, 'There is no more chance of you being picked up, John Meier, than anyone else. If you stick within the speed limit, you will never be picked up.' With due respect to the Hon. Diana Laidlaw, I think that is somewhat unrealistic. MPs often have to rush from function to function to get there on time, and it is often out of one's hands—and I try to be punctual.

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

Mr MEIER: Before the tea break I was referring very briefly to some aspects of the member for Stuart's amendment and highlighting that I had some sympathy with some elements of it. At this stage I would like to move that progress be reported.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debated on second reading.

(Continued from 22 October. Page 593.)

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): This bill is introduced to the house essentially to introduce a number of minor amendments to the Legal Practitioners Act 1982. Some of these are initiated as a result of National Competition Policy Review; others are of a somewhat administrative nature. In summary, to identify aspects of the bill, the bill will remove the requirement for legal practitioners to be resident in Australia. It will remove the restriction on land agents preparing tenancy agreements but will stipulate that they must have approved professional indemnity insurance if they do so. Trustee companies will be entitled to charge for the preparation of wills, provided that they disclose the commission and remuneration that they will ultimately receive for administering the estate. An interstate practitioner will have to notify within 14 days any conditions or limitations imposed on his or her licence to practise interstate.

There will be greater flexibility on the issuing of practising certificates and a bar on the renewal of a certificate until after the expiration of any period of suspension. The powers of the Legal Practitioners Conduct Board and Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal are clarified, and the power of the tribunal to suspend a practising certificate is increased from three to six months. The opposition supports clauses 1 to 4 and 6 to 14 which, in essence, cover the amendments as I have summarised tonight. However, the reasons for the opposition opposing clause 5 require some explanation. This clause seeks to legitimise any undertaking given by a legal practitioner who is appointed Queen's Counsel. In fact, as the second reading explanation acknowledges, it is designed to legitimise a particular undertaking that the Chief Justice currently requires applicants for silk to sign.

Whilst we in the Liberal Party agree that anyone who signs an undertaking should honour that undertaking, there is more to this seemingly innocuous amendment than meets the eye. The reason we oppose this clause is that it seeks to insert into section 6 of the Legal Practitioners Act a new subsection that is quite inconsistent with the rest of that section. Regrettably, the issue is rather convoluted, but it can be summarised as follows. Section 6 of the act is entitled 'Fusion of the legal profession.' The opening subsection provides:

> (1) It is parliament's intention that the legal profession should continue to be a fused profession of barristers and solicitors.

We say that the proposed new subsection (3a) contravenes that intention because it is a measure that facilitates the division rather than the fusion of the legal profession. Put shortly, the proposed subsection fosters division and undermines fusion. If it really is the desire of the government to legitimise this particular form of undertaking, it should have the courage of its convictions and repeal section 1 of the act. We say that it is hypocritical to declare on the one hand, in subsection (1), that parliament has a particular intention and, on the other, to insert a provision to undermine that intention. It is necessary to look at the history of this matter.

Since the establishment of South Australia, legal practitioners have been admitted to practise as both barristers and solicitors. This is a different regime from that which applies in the United Kingdom. There, a practitioner is admitted as

either a barrister or a solicitor but not both. We have a legal profession that is amalgamated. However, in 1845 the South Australian legislation empowered the Supreme Court to separate legal practitioners into two classes: barristers on the one hand and solicitors on the other. This provision is reflected in section 7 of the Legal Practitioners Act 1936. The Legal Practitioners Act was extensively amended in 1981, and section 6 of that act preserved the capacity of the court to separate the profession. It should be noted that the court never sought to exercise that power.

The old section 6 was repealed in 1993 pursuant to the Legal Practitioners (Reform) Amendment Act 1993. For the first time, parliament declared that the legal profession should continue as a fused profession. The then Liberal opposition opposed the new section 6(1). The then shadow attorney-general (Hon. K.T. Griffin) said that it was unnecessary to declare parliament's intention because the act itself provided that every practitioner was admitted as both a barrister and a solicitor. The 1993 amendments should be seen in context. At that time there was around Australia quite an agitation for reform of the legal profession. In New South Wales, where there has traditionally been a separation of barristers and solicitors similar to that applying in the United Kingdom, there was a move to amalgamate the profession. Restricted trade practices like the so-called two counsel rule were under attack. Some Labor states were threatening to abolish Queen's Counsel and did so, only to replace them with senior counsel.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Shame!

Ms CHAPMAN: I'm pleased to hear you say that. Although South Australia had always had an amalgamated legal profession, from the 1960s onwards a small but growing number of practitioners were going to the independent bar and signing a voluntary bar roll maintained by the South Australian Bar Association. The effect of signing the bar roll was that such practitioners voluntarily undertook to practise only as barristers. Moreover, Chief Justice King, who had the sole power to recommend appointments as Queen's Counsel, insisted that anyone who wished to be appointed would undertake to practise 'solely as a barrister'.

It was the view of Chief Justice King that anyone who wished to be a QC should be independent and available to be briefed by anyone in the legal profession. He did not believe that the larger legal firms should be able to 'acquire the services of an in-house silk'.

In 1990 attorney-general Sumner issued a discussion paper in which he proposed that the undertaking sought by the Chief Justice should be done away with and that Queen's Counsel should be able to practise in a firm. Chief Justice King responded in a rather robust fashion, as follows:

> I summarise my position by stating that the proposals in the discussion paper as to the appointment of Queen's Counsel are retrograde and deplorable. . . We have had practical experience of Queen's Counsel practising in firms and the detrimental consequences of such practice. . . There is no excuse in this state for reverting to a system which has been experienced and discredited. I foresee that, if the proposals were implemented, silk would come to serve no useful purpose but would become a mere empty honour or an appendage conferring a competitive advantage upon a large legal firm.

Attorney-general Sumner responded, as follows:

> The amendment introduced by the government would mean that the undertaking that has been required is of no effect. I have to say that I disagree with the Chief Justice on this point. I have always disagreed with him on it. I do not agree that the abolition of the undertaking would be a retrograde or deplorable step. I take the view that if you start from the position that the profession in South Australia should be fused that is something that should apply to all practitioners, including Queen's Counsel. Queen's Counsel should be able to practise in a manner that they see fit either in firms or at the separate bar if they wish. . . If you start from the assumption that I have that the fused profession is the best way to deliver legal services in this state then it follows that the undertaking required by the Chief Justice should no longer be required.

Notwithstanding the objections of the Liberal Party, the Bannon government carried its legislation which included section 6(3) and which states:

> An undertaking by a legal practitioner to practise solely as a barrister or to practise solely as a solicitor is contrary to public policy and void.

Quite obviously, Chief Justice King could not continue to insist upon an undertaking from Queen's Counsel that they 'practise solely as a barrister', because such an undertaking had been declared to be contrary to public policy and void. In order to get around the new subsection, Chief Justice King (somewhat cleverly, I suggest) changed the form of the undertaking to, 'I hereby undertake that if I practise in future as a solicitor I will not. . . use or permit my partners or associates to attribute to me. . . the title of QC.' This undertaking circumvented the letter of the law. Clearly, however, it did not comply with the spirit of the law.

Chief Justice Doyle has continued to use this form of undertaking. A second reading contribution states:

> The Chief Justice has expressed concern that the undertaking required. . . could arguably be open to challenge under section 6 of the act.

The second reading contribution further states:

> This provision of the bill is designed to put the matter beyond doubt.

In fact, if this subsection is allowed to be inserted, section 6 will be a mishmash of inconsistencies. If this government was really serious about this issue it would seek to have the whole section redrawn to reflect reality and to recognise the public interest; and, in the absence of a complete redraft of section 6, the Liberal Party opposes this clause.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I thank the member for Bragg for her contribution. Clause 5 appears to be one more example of the Liberal Party and the Labor Party swapping positions.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 4 passed.

Clause 5.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: With this clause the government moves to regularise the Chief Justice's requirement for an undertaking from candidates for silk. The government takes the view that the title of Queen's Counsel is an important attribute; that to have a Queen's Counsel practising in a firm of solicitors is to suggest that the firm of solicitors is somehow enhanced by having a Queen's Counsel in their midst and on the brass plate outside. I think that to have a Queen's Counsel practising in a firm of solicitors does not say anything about the firm of solicitors as solicitors; and so it does not warrant that the solicitors are of a better standard than other solicitors who do not have a Queen's Counsel practising in their midst.

The government has, little by little, come around to the Chief Justice's point of view that, if a barrister is to be made silk, he or she should practise at the independent bar and his or her services should be available—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Unley is out of order and out of his seat.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: —to everyone alike (the cab rank principle), and the services of a QC should not be limited by his or her practising in a firm of solicitors.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have one question for the Attorney. Given that position, why is the government not prepared then to amend section 6 completely, that is, to remove the inconsistency so that we allow what is currently being given by way of undertaking without that being inconsistent? Why is this not being remedied comprehensively to ensure that we do not have that inconsistency?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: As the member for Bragg well knows, legislation is often like a New England farm house: there are many additions, renovations and extensions and fundamental reconstruction is avoided. The question of the fused profession can be controversial. It was resolved in 1993. All we want to make is a small exemption to it that will regularise the undertaking which the Chief Justice requires of candidates for silk. We think it is only a small amendment, a small exception, to the broader principle. We do not think fundamental reconstruction of the section is required.

I think that the member for Bragg is being a little pure about this, and it would be nice if she disclosed to the committee her true position. Does she want to have a fused profession in South Australia? Is she in favour of the undertaking on its merits, or not?

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Well, the member for Bragg says that, no; she is against the undertaking. At least she has nailed her colours to the mast. The amendment proposed by the government does not require QCs to work only as barristers. It means that QCs must not use the title QC when working in a firm of solicitors. The title QC is a recognition of skills as an advocate, and a QC may be a poor solicitor, as I alluded to earlier.

Subsection (3)(a) would help protect consumers of legal services from thinking they are getting greater expertise from a firm of solicitors, when they are not. If the undertaking is now invalid owing to this parliamentary debate, then the firms of solicitors will start vying for Queen's Counsel for their firm. The government believes—

Mr Brindal: There's a mobile phone going—there is not supposed to be.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member is not supposed to be going either because he is out of his seat.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The member for Unley is exuberant as always. Perhaps in the dinner adjournment he has had too much lemonade and the gases have affected him. So, we think QCs ought to be available to all clients, whereas QCs in a firm of solicitors would be captured by the firm's clients.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (6 to 14) and title passed.

Bill taken through committee without amendment.

Bill read a third time and passed.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (IDENTITY THEFT) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 15 October. Page 463.)

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): This is a bill that was introduced by the Attorney-General on 15 October this year. It creates some new criminal offences—as if we have not got enough already—and I summarise them as follows: assuming a false identity; intending to commit a serious criminal offence; falsely pretending to have particular qualifications or to be entitled to act in a particular capacity intending to commit a serious criminal offence; to make use of another person's personal identification intending to commit or facilitate the commission of a serious criminal offence; or if they produce or have in their possession a so-called prohibited material, anything that enables a person to assume a false identity or to obtain funds or credit, again, intending to use the material for a criminal purpose.

It also seeks, as I recall from the second reading speech, to give victims the right to obtain from the court information in certificate form from which they can then prove an offence has been committed against them. The information available is quite restricted in the bill, if I can just briefly refer to that, and is confined to details of the offence, the name of the victim, and any other matters considered by the court to be relevant. There is some process by which that is restricted, and so it is really for the purpose of proving their position rather than having any other detailed information.

In relation to the new criminal offences that are being created under this bill, the issue of so-called identity theft has become fashionable for law enforcement agencies and policy makers. I might add that, of course, identity fraud is already an offence, and a serious one, and to commit a fraud is already clearly covered by the Criminal Law Consolidation Act. But as I have said, identity theft—that is, to steal an identity for the purposes of or having the intent of committing another serious criminal offence—has become rather fashionable.

A conference on fraud prevention and control in the year 2000 highlighted the high cost of fraud, and everyone appears to have jumped on the bandwagon in relation to this issue. The KPMG Fraud Survey of 2002, the NSW Crime Commission 2002 Annual Report, recent publications of the Australian Institute of Criminology, and I note even that Mr Graycar—who is now in the employ of the government—has written about this issue, the adoption by the Australasian Police Commissioners of an Australasian Identity Crime Policing Strategy of 2003-05, and the South Australian Police Force's recent identity theft phone-in are all evidence of the enthusiasm for this new topic. In *The Advertiser* this month I note there are claims in an article in relation to the cost of identity fraud—the principle offences that already exist—that the nation meets the cost of this of more than $1 billion per year.

The topicality of the subject is seen in premier Rann's media release of 25 February 2003 which, to a large extent, the Attorney-General has repeated in his presentation to the parliament on this subject. But it mentions identity theft in the context of terrorists, illegal immigrants, drug couriers, money launderers, World Trade Centre bombers, and an Al-Qaeda terrorist cell in Spain. What it does not mention, not surprisingly, is that the greatest number of people who are identity thieves are welfare cheats. In reality, the largest number of those who will be caught, if this bill is to have any significant application in this country, are people who cheat on social security by assuming, at least temporarily, the identity of another person either living or dead for the purpose, usually, of receiving some benefit from the commonwealth treasurer to which they are not otherwise entitled.

Interestingly, there is a concession in this bill to what I would suggest is electoral popularity, because the bill excludes identity theft by under-age persons. Anyone under the age of 18 years who attempts to gain entry to age-restricted venues or to purchase age-restricted items such as cigarettes or alcohol is exempt. Here is a group in the population who, I would suggest, regularly use a driver's licence or some other identification to pretend to be that person, who is over the age restriction, for the purpose of obtaining cigarettes or alcohol or, usually, to obtain access to a liquor-licensed premises from which they are otherwise prohibited or prohibited from being served alcohol therein. It is interesting that for an issue that is out there and quite prevalent, I would suggest, the government is prepared to say, 'Well, we are going to introduce a bill, because it is very important to catch people who are going to use someone else's identity. We are going to catch all those terrorists that are out there.' But in reality those who are frequently abusing the identity of other people are ordinary, young, and other not so young members of the community who masquerade with the identity of someone else for the purpose of breaking the law.

Yet, a whole portion of the population will be exempt, namely, people under the age of 18 years. Of course, that age group would otherwise have access to the Youth Court with respect to all other offences that they are subject to. We do not have other situations where just because you are 17 you cannot be charged. Interestingly, a 17 year old here could be charged and convicted for identity theft in some circumstances, namely, attempting to scam money out of an access vault into a bank from an ATM. On the other hand, they can be completely exempt if they go into a drive-in liquor outlet and attempt to buy alcohol. So, that is what produces a ridiculous inconsistency in the attempt by the government to excise from this bill anything that might cause them some discomfort in the popularity stakes.

The government claims that these laws are an Australian first. However, the reason these laws have not been introduced elsewhere in Australia is that they are unlikely to be very effective, because of the conceptual difficulty that underpins them. They require some brief explanation as to how they operate. There are weaknesses in the application of this new law. The five new offences created in the bill are a new species of offence. They make it an offence to take preparatory steps to commit what is otherwise the traditional offences. At present, it is an offence to obtain credit, cash or any benefit by falsely pretending that you are someone else. So, the principle act is already an offence.

This bill seeks to go one step back in the process by making it an offence to undertake a preliminary or preparatory step with the view to making use of that step for a criminal purpose. Traditionally, the criminal law has not punished preparatory steps. A person who purchases rat poison with the secret intention of using it to poison his mother-in-law is not guilty of an offence. Nor is the person who buys a motor vehicle intending to use it as a getaway car in some yet to be arranged bank robbery guilty of an offence. Nor is the person who buys a flashlight with the view to using it in a possible future house break-in. He or she is not guilty of an offence. The distinction between an attempt in law and mere preparation is sometimes difficult to draw. However, the accepted common law rule is as follows:

> It is always necessary that the attempt should be evidenced by some overt act forming part of a series of acts, which if not interrupted would end in the commission of an offence.

In order to secure a conviction under the new offences, the prosecution will have to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the person undertaking the preparatory steps did so with the intention of committing a criminal offence or assisting in the commission of such an offence.

Recognition of the conceptual difficulty in these offences is proposed in section 144E, which excludes the possibility of being charged with an attempt to commit these offences, because they are in themselves in the very nature of an attempt. As noted in the Attorney-General's second reading explanation, a United Kingdom Cabinet Office study recommended similar laws, notwithstanding that identity theft is already prohibited by other laws. That recommendation was based on the rather dubious and unproven assertion that:

> Specific identity theft provisions aid prosecution and are more effective at reducing the prevalence of the crime.

To date, the United Kingdom government has not adopted the recommendation. I do note that the Law Society of South Australia has been consulted in relation to this bill and has raised no objections to the same. I therefore indicate that the Liberal Party will not be opposing the bill, but we do emphasise that if identity crime is already as costly to the community as the government claims—and that may well be the case—it should be putting more resources into catching the identity thieves, not simply creating new offences which will probably make little practical difference to the incidence of this conduct.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I thank the member for Bragg for her contribution. The question of electoral popularity could not have been further from the government's mind in the preparation of this legislation.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4.

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

> Page 4, line 37—
> Delete 'sells or gives' and substitute:
> sells (or offers for sale) or gives (or offers to give)

All but one of the offences established by the bill are preparatory in nature. They are designed to catch people who assume a false identity or take personal ID information or pretend to have qualifications intending to commit a serious offence such as fraud, theft, terrorism and so on. They do not require proof of the commission of that serious offence. They are in effect attempts at the serious offence, although not constructed formally as offences of attempt.

Proposed new section 144E provides that one cannot be guilty of an offence of attempting to commit any of the new offences in this part. This is consistent with the rationale behind section 270A of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, that one should not be criminally liable for attempting to commit an attempt. The only offence that is not preparatory is in proposed new section 144D(2). It makes it an offence to sell or give prohibited material to another person, knowing that that person is likely to use it for a criminal purpose. Prohibited material is defined in clause 4 on page 3, line 32 as 'anything (including personal identification information) that enables a person to assume a false identity or to exercise a right of ownership that belongs to someone else to funds, credit, information or any other financial or non-financial benefit'.

The offence in proposed section 144D(2) does not comprise conduct undertaken with an intention to use the result to commit another crime. This amendment adds preparatory conduct of offering to give or sell to the offence in proposed section 144D(2). In this way, section 144E can apply to this offence in the same way as it does to other offences in this part. This would have gone entirely unnoticed by me were it not for our consultations with the Independents in another place. Thea Hennessy, who works for the Hon. Andrew Evans, pointed this out to us, and we amended accordingly. Thea Hennessy is a treasure.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Schedule and title passed.

Bill reported with an amendment.

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

That this bill be now read a third time.

These proposed offences are serious preparatory crimes. We do not want to be tougher on children—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The member for Bragg says: see how many prosecutions there will be. I am happy to submit to that test. We will see as time goes by, but unlike the member for Bragg we do not want to be tough on children. Children who assume a false identity to get a smoke or a drink or, as I did when I was 16, a bet will be dealt with—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes. The member for Bragg will be very interested in the legislation that I will bring to this place soon to remove those lame excuses that publicans have for serving under-age patrons. Children will be dealt with for the main offence using the usual Youth Court procedures. They will not be dealt with under this bill, which is meant for far more serious intentions.

Other jurisdictions that have these laws and have studied the matter have found it ineffective to use these laws against children. They are aimed at people contemplating serious crime, not children trying to get into a nightclub. There is no evidence that the largest numbers who will be caught by this legislation are people trying to access social security, as claimed by the member for Bragg. There is a large number of tax evaders and people fraudulently applying for lines of credit or skimming or using others' accounts who will be caught by this measure, not the dole bludgers whom the member for Bragg mentions. I have as my authority for this no less than Senator Chris Ellison, the Liberal senator for Western Australia with whom I had the privilege to dine at the meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General in Hobart last week. He said:

Half of all identity fraud cases in Australia involve the falsification of personal documents to steal cash and purchase goods and services.

I hope the member for Bragg is now chastened.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

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

That the house do now adjourn.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Stuart.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I thank members for their compliments. In this adjournment debate tonight, I want to make one or two brief comments. First, I appreciate the opportunity given to the member for Wright and me to attend the funeral at Toowoomba of the late R.M. Williams. I thank the Premier for making it possible for us both to attend. It was a long day, but it was a most interesting and historic occasion. In particular, I was interested to attend because the late gentleman was born at North Belalie in my constituency and he spent a considerable part of his younger days in the north of South Australia.

One of the photographs used on the Order of Service is of R.M. Williams digging a well at Nepabunna in the Flinders Ranges. As well, he spent time at Oodnadatta and in the Musgrave Ranges, which are also well known to me. So, I appreciated the opportunity to attend his funeral service. The esteem in which he is held was obvious, because in excess of 1 300 people attended. It was also indicative of how widely accepted by the community are the products that bear his name. So, I thank the Premier for making the resources available to enable us to attend, and I hope that in similar circumstances in the future similar opportunities will be made available to other members where they have an interest.

I want to make some brief comments in relation to the report of the inquiry by the House of Representatives Select Committee on Recent Australian Bushfires dated October 2003, which makes some 59 recommendations. It was unfortunate that state instrumentalities (either of their own volition or on behalf of state governments) declined to give evidence to this committee, because there is a clear need to have a coordinated responsible approach to controlling wildfires and to ensure that what took place in Canberra and Victoria never happens again.

There appears to be thinking in certain government bureaucracies that they know best. They will not take note of the local people, and they will not allow people to construct and maintain adequate and effective firebreaks or carry out effective hazard reduction programs. Only last Friday (I think) on the ABC's *Stateline* program people were complaining about the lack of action. I understand that when the minister was asked how much controlled burning off had taken place, the answer was less than four hectares. You might as well do nothing! There is no doubt that since the implementation of the Native Vegetation Act, which is currently an unworkable document, the community is endangered. There is a need to allow farmers to revert to the practice that they adopted in the past of the controlled burning off of certain areas as part of a hazard reduction program.

As far as mallee eucalypts are concerned, if burning them was going to kill them there would be none left in South Australia, because in the past they have all been burned on a number of occasions. There is an urgent need to ensure that there are adequate firebreaks put through our native vegetation with adequate access tracks because, if people go in to fight fires or to burn back, not only do they have to be able to get in but they have to be able to get out again if the wind changes.

It is no good people's continuing to have the ostrich idea of putting their heads in the sand and taking no notice. It is deplorable that the government has had apparatchiks racing around the country measuring fire breaks that farmers have put in. The minister should remove those people, because they are endangering the community. Local government should have the power to order the construction of fire breaks on private and government land and it should have the power,

if work is not carried out within a prescribed time, to go and put in access tracks and fire breaks in some of these areas. There is a huge cost if a fire gets going in not having this sort of protection. Commonsense dictates that these steps are necessary.

I do not know how many people in this chamber have had experience in effective controlled burning off. It is not a dangerous process if it is carried out by people who know what they are doing, and people who have been involved in this process over many years know how to do it successfully. The sad situation is that in the last few years since the implementation of the Native Vegetation Act it has not taken place, so there is a huge build-up of combustible material. The academics and bureaucrats who are pulling the shots (of whom ministers are taking notice) themselves have no understanding. But I say to you, Mr Acting Speaker, that they will all be held accountable when a disaster takes place, because they will not be able to hide. The minister and his bureaucrats have been warned. I say to him and the bureaucrats that it is not a case of whether it will happen: it is a case of when it will happen.

They resist and do not carry out such work, but there is no reason why you could not put some sheep in some of these parks for a limited time to reduce the fuel hazard. The only reason that does not happen is that people have a dog-in-the-manger attitude and are unwise and foolish. In actual fact, they are dangerous in the extreme and should be brought to account. When these areas catch on fire it disrupts the whole community, people's properties are damaged and there is a huge cost to taxpayers. Why not prevent that? There are already insufficient funds available to look after the needy and to provide health services to the aged and infirm without spending unnecessary amounts of money trying to put out fires that are out of control. We should take the preventive steps first and ensure that we minimise the effect of wildfires or fires that get out of control.

So, I hope the minister and his department will consider these recommendations. We have had a bushfire summit and a lot of hype, but we have not seen much action. The Premier is going to bring in on-the-spot fines for courses of action which already, in my view, are illegal. However, we are looking forward to debating that issue at a later date.

The next matter I want to raise is that some time ago I asked questions about a water conservation program at the Booleroo Centre school. The original project was knocked back because of the railway line; that was the reason. The trains have not run for 20 years and there is no railway line, because it has been pulled up. So that was a fine example of well-informed decision making. Now, the person who owns the land which was going to be available to the school council has had second thoughts, and that land will not be available. The minister should get on and fix the problem by making a decisive decision. There has been too much indecision and bureaucratic red tape in Adelaide at the expense of taking note of what the local school council wants. They are well organised people who strongly support their school. The school has an excellent reputation and is well supported by its communities.

Why, for goodness sake, would you stop good people from carrying out improvements which will benefit not only the school but also the community, and save money for the government? I cannot understand for the life of me why outsiders with no general knowledge want to get involved and make short-sighted, foolish decisions which greatly inconvenience the community and do no-one any good in the long term. It is a set of circumstances which enrages communities and is unnecessary. It has certainly not shown the minister and her administration in a good light, and I call upon the minister to fix the problem in the lead-up to the meeting of the school council, whose good judgment I support.

Motion carried.

At 8.26 p.m. the house adjourned until Tuesday 25 November at 2 p.m.