

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 26 February 2004

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

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** I move:

That this house recognises the important contribution of South Australian public schools in teaching their students important and diverse values, and strongly rejects the views of the Prime Minister that public schools are too politically correct and value neutral.

The Prime Minister made these comments in interviews with two newspapers back in mid-January. He said that parents were sending students to private schools because 'they feel that government schools have become too politically correct and too values neutral,' and because of 'the incredibly antiseptic view taken about a whole range of things' in our public schools. The reaction to the Prime Minister's comments has been strong, with a wide range of groups and individuals condemning the comments. To put it a little more bluntly, this time his attempt to divert attention from the big issues, a tactic he often uses when something is not quite going his way, when he is under the pump, backfired.

Our community was outraged; parents were outraged; teachers were outraged; and even some of his own Liberal members of parliament were not too happy with him. He certainly put many of them in an awkward position. He seemed to have forgotten that his Liberal-held marginal seats have a lot of families who have chosen to send their children to public schools; that they are very happy with their choice and were not very happy with the Prime Minister denigrating their choice for their children. The member for Adelaide, Trish Worth, came out and said:

You can't categorise them all together. I have had experiences with some schools in South Australia where good values are taught. I've been impressed where they have a program on drug education and are able to bring balance to it. These things can mean different things to different people. . . but important values are considerations for others and assisting rather than picking on those who are weak.

The Liberal backbencher Judi Moylan said she saw a lot of 'pretty good' state schools in her Western Australian electorate of Pearce. She said that the main problem with state schools leading to an exodus of students to private schools was their under-resourcing and large class sizes. She believes that a lot of public schools teach appropriate values. She said:

I think a lot of them do. I think they try very hard. In many schools I see dedicated teachers in the public and private sector. They are utterly dedicated to the cause.

Liberal backbencher and former teacher Kerry Bartlett rejects Mr Howard's views. He said:

The time that I had in public schools, as in private schools, I think I would have to say that the values were part of both systems. I do not think that there is anything such as a totally value free education. I may be doing her a disservice, but I do not recall the member for Makin, Trish Draper, making any statements in support of the many wonderful public schools in the area that we share. It may be worth asking whether she supports the Prime Minister's views. We could be forgiven for taking her silence to be an endorsement of his views. An organisation representing private school teachers attacked the Prime Minister's comments, describing them as 'divisive, insulting

and absolute nonsense'. The Victorian Independent Education Union General Secretary, Tony Keenan, said:

All schools have core values that reflect the particular school. It is nonsense and an insult to any school to say that they are value free.

Melbourne University Professor of Post-Compulsory Education and Training, Richard Teese, said that studies show that parents do not make school choices based on values, but on the basis of academic expectation. He said this shift has accelerated in recent years as the federal government gave bigger and bigger subsidies to private schools. In stark contrast to the Prime Minister, Mark Latham said:

Standing in front of a classroom needs to be an honoured profession in our society. We should be praising our teachers instead of running them down.

He continued:

We need to respect our teachers and by and large they're out there working as hard as they can in all sectors, in all schools, trying to teach the young ones the difference between right and wrong.

I will reflect upon this a little later, but that is exactly what I see happening in my electorate every day. The logic to the Prime Minister's comments is at the very least flawed and at worst deliberately provocative and divisive. How can a school be politically correct and at the same time be value neutral? To be politically correct implies having a certain set of values. He may or may not agree with them, but they are values nonetheless. Where is the evidence to prove his case? In stark contrast, I have many examples, such as my small patch in my electorate, which totally dispel the Prime Minister's assertions.

Despite the time that has elapsed since his comments, no such evidence has been produced. One of his supporters, the acting minister for education, Peter McGauran, came to his defence giving two examples. He said that there was a school in Western Australia where a state school abandoned its Anzac Day celebrations and that schools in New South Wales and Victoria had banned nativity plays; that is the best that they could come up with. Research does not support what the Prime Minister asserts. The Values Education Study 2003 commissioned by the Federal Education Science and Training minister Brendan Nelson revealed a broad range of varied and excellent practice and approaches to values education in Australian government and non-government schools. In May 2003 a study commissioned by the Department of Education Science and Training entitled 'Parents and Community Members Attitudes to Schooling', shows that the majority of parents and community members do not agree with the Prime Minister. The majority of parents said that they are satisfied their school, and three-quarters are satisfied with the quality of teaching.

The Prime Minister does not even seem to know what was adopted in April 1999 by all state, territory and commonwealth ministers of education at a meeting of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs held in Adelaide. A meeting opened by then minister, Dr David Kemp, and chaired by then state minister for education, Malcolm Buckby, adopted the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century.

Part of the document declares that schools should: be socially just; be free of discrimination based on sex, language, culture, ethnicity, religion or disability; ensure that all students understand and acknowledge the value of cultural and linguistic diversity; ensure that students will be active and informed citizens with an understanding and appreciation of Australia's system of government and civic life; ensure

that students have the capacity to exercise judgment and responsibility in matters of morality, ethics and social justice, and accept responsibility for their actions. Does that seem too values-neutral to anyone here?

Look at South Australia. Is the Prime Minister accusing the former Liberal government of overseeing an education department that was a value-free zone even though they signed on to the national goals for schooling in the 21st century? Even the most cursory glance at DETE's strategic plan shows this to be nonsense because there, on page 3, are listed, under the heading 'Our Values', some 10 values. They are: trust, caring, diligence, excellence, integrity, respect, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and equity. I am not sure how politically correct they are but they look pretty good to me. Values, in fact, are embedded right through the South Australian public school curriculum. The DECS anti-racism policy, multiculturalism in schools and children's services policy, the languages plan, and the reconciliation statement, all teach and foster our children's respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. Core values are embedded right through the public system and are based on a firm commitment to values such as responsibility, creativity, teamwork, tolerance, achievement and caring concern for others. Through the Essential Learnings and Equity cross-curriculum perspectives embedded across all learning areas in the SACSA framework, learners are able to develop accurate understanding about the history, lives and cultures of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

This state government is currently trialing strategies to educate our students about other values currently of interest. 'Dicey Dealings' is a gambling education strategy targeted at students in years six to 12, and is designed at promoting responsible attitudes to gambling. The drugs strategy is helping schools develop a whole of school approach to drug education and related issues. Three hundred and eighty schools have now developed a strategy. A new crime prevention model will be piloted to eight schools this year. Children will learn about the consequences of crime and how criminal behaviour is unacceptable. This material will be available to all schools before the end of the year. In light of this, it is indeed absurd to suggest that what is happening in our state schools is values-neutral.

Finally, I share with the house what is happening in the state schools in my own electorate. There are 11 state schools and something like eight private schools in my electorate. I have regular contact with all of them and I reject out of hand that there is one school in my electorate that is values-neutral. I reject out of hand that what the Prime Minister says applies to any of them in the slightest possible way. Let me give some examples of where the schools are quite openly and explicitly stating what their values are. Their values can be found on their web sites, in their newsletters which are published on a regular basis, in their annual reports or in booklets given to new or prospective parents. More importantly, these values are practised every day in the schools. I defy anyone to suggest these are too politically correct or values-neutral. Golden Grove Primary School is a caring, safe and welcoming school which has identified school values of responsibility, empathy, self worth, personal excellence, enthusiasm, collaboration and trust. Greenwith Primary School is committed to the values of collaboration, organisation, respect and excellence, and includes another 28 values under these four headings. Salisbury East High School aims to enable students to achieve their best in academic and vocational learning and in personal and social

development, with an emphasis on the values of mutual respect, equity, diligence and responsibility for learning and behaviour.

Keithcot Farm Primary School wants to focus on quality standards and continuous improvement through its values of trust, respect, fairness and caring, diligence, excellence, honesty and integrity, responsibility and equity. I could go on and on, continuing to list the schools. I spent some considerable time last year or late the year before with the students of Wynn Vale Primary School who spent a full day identifying their priority values for their school. The school, very much to their credit, consulted with their governing body, parents and students. They all had input into what they considered to be important values for their school, important values for their children to be learning. It is clear that the schools in my area have a strong emphasis on values and are proud to stand up and say so very loudly.

As I have mentioned, I have a large number of private schools in my electorate and they are all collocated with the public schools. Golden Grove High School is collocated with Pedare Christian College and Gleeson College, and let me tell this house that the principals of those two private schools are outraged, as are many other private schools, at the comments made by the Prime Minister. The problem is not that our schools are value neutral but that Mr Howard does not like the values they teach. That must be a real worry, considering all the values that I highlighted to the house. The only alternative is that his remarks were simply a diversionary tactic. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that, a week before his statement, the uni entrance figures were released and they showed that many qualified students were set to miss out on a place. We know that, when he is in trouble, he tries to open up a new front. He is also having trouble justifying the increased funding that his government has directed to the elite, high fee-paying private schools. He is also clearly rattled by the 'L' factor. He is not dealing with the seachange of federal politics. He is not dealing with the new Labor leader and the 'L' factor has him clearly rattled. The Prime Minister is looking for anything that will take away attention.

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** I move:

Delete all words after the words 'values and' and insert: rejects any attempt to politicise or devalue this contribution.

It is important that we put this debate in its proper context. As a former teacher in the public school system for 18 years, there is no question that I value the contribution of public education. I speak here as a member of the Norwood-Morialta school council who attends those council meetings regularly, and I am aware that public schools are teaching important values to our students. That is not in question, but I have difficulty with the way in which the Prime Minister's comments have been politicised and the frenzy of debate on the topic of state versus private education. What we should be concerned about is valuing our education system as a whole.

Therefore, I believe it is important to amend the member's motion to include the fact that we reject any politicisation of our public education system—and the private education system, because both are very important. If we were to follow down the track of the member for Wright, someone could come in here and move a motion to reject the education union's attack on private schools, especially local parish schools, where parents work hard to come up with the fees

to pay for their children's education. One has to ask the question: why is the member for Wright so passionate about this motion in a federal election year?

As I said from the outset, I support the public education system, and I am aware of its important role and the values that it teaches. I am also aware that representatives of some schools have been offended by comments in the media and the debate that has taken place. I am a member of the Norwood Morialta school council, and I am aware that the council has written a letter to the Prime Minister in which it expresses that sentiment. I fully support the representatives of any school writing to the Prime Minister, the education union or any member of parliament when they are aggrieved by comments, but to come into this house and play pure politics and fuel the debate between state schools and public schools is, I think, cheap.

**Ms Rankine:** I didn't.

**Mr SCALZI:** The member says it is not, but it is cheap.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Caica):** Order! The member for Hartley will not be provocative by pointing his finger at the member for Wright, and the member for Wright will not retaliate in the way in which she has.

**Ms RANKINE:** Sir, I rise on a point of order. The member for Hartley said that I came in here and conducted a diversionary debate between public schools and private schools—

**Mr BRINDAL:** On a point of order—

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Wright, there is no point of order: it is debate. The member for Unley.

**Mr BRINDAL:** My point of order is this: when will the chair stop people from getting up under the guise of a point of order? The standing orders are quite clear: a member rises to their feet and takes a point of order. The member rose to her feet and debated the topic, and that is not allowed.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. I acknowledge the member for Unley's point. He is a prime example of exactly what he said occurs.

**Mr SCALZI:** Perhaps we need some value clarification here, because we should accept diversity. I was not pointing at the member for Wright. I was merely, because of my cultural background, using my hands. With my Italian background, it is quite logical that, when one speaks, one waves their hands. If the honourable member is offended by that, she contradicts what she is saying about accepting diversity. I am offended that she took a point of order when I merely stated a fact that I believe she is—

**Ms Rankine:** What did you say I was doing?

**Mr SCALZI:** Fuelling the debate between public schools and state schools.

**Ms Rankine:** I did not, and you know it. It's totally—

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr SCALZI:** I think the member for Wright protesteth too much. The reality is that the whole debate on funding ended up being public schools versus private schools, and she is perpetuating that in this chamber. As I have stated clearly, I have no problem with representatives of any school writing to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition when they feel they have been misrepresented. It is our democratic right and it is a value that the Prime Minister holds dear, and I am sure he will respond to the school council. I commend Mr Ebert and the whole school council, as well as the Principal of Norwood Morialta, Panayoula Parha, because the school does an excellent job. It attracts overseas students. And why? Because it does a good job and promotes values: it is not a values-free school.

I also note that East Marden Primary School was one of the first schools to participate in Remembrance Day on 11 November and Anzac Day, and I have attended many of its functions. Indeed, representatives from St Joseph's school (in Payneham in the member for Norwood's electorate) have also attended.

So, values teaching is not a monopoly held by either public or private schools, but there is misrepresentation of that debate by moving this type of motion in this place. I think we should commend the schools, the teachers and the school councils for the very hard work that they do and reject any politicisation of the public education system. I am a member of the AEU and a proud teacher. I am still a registered teacher and have taught for 18 years in the public education system and I know it first hand, and I commend the teachers. Members will be aware that I have consistently defended teachers and education in this place, and I will continue to do so. But the AEU misrepresents the importance of the private education system. It should be interested in promoting the professionalism of education.

Time expired.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** I guess we are speaking to the amendment now, but the two matters are inter-related. The first point I make is that I think the Prime Minister was unwise to make such a generalised comment about public schools. In South Australia there are more than 700 of them, and you can say almost anything because there will probably be one school that is doing something that will fit in with your generalisation. So, I think it was a silly thing to say.

I also disagree with the notion of being value neutral. I do not believe that is possible. You have values of one kind or another. You cannot be value neutral in a strict sense. I think that is silly. What we need in all schools, not just public schools, of which I am proud—and I am the product of public—

*Ms Rankine interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** We learned manners at the schools I went to. I am proud to have been to state schools, and I sent my children to state schools as well, but they can always be better. There is an element of political correctness, not only in the state system but also the private system. I use the term 'private' but one can ask: how Catholic is the Catholic school system? I have heard people of the Catholic faith saying that many of their schools are not really Catholic at all. In terms of the non-Catholic private schools which claim to be independent, when you receive a lot of your funding from the government you are hardly independent. That is another big issue.

The key thing, whether it is a public or private school, is that we are not as a community reinforcing and making explicit enough core values in those schools, and there should be no apology for it. We took religious education out of state schools. We do not have to go back to that format, but we must teach positive values—respect for the person, respect for others and respect for property. We must make those absolutely explicit, with no apology, from day one. Children in all our schools should be involved in community effort and helping others, because our society is now reaping the consequences of many years of promoting oneself against the interests of others.

That applies, as I say, not only to public schools but also to private schools. Basically, our values come from a Judaeo-Christian background, whether or not people like it. But most religions—in fact, I would say all religions—have core values

that are essential in a civilised society, and we should make no apology for teaching them and reinforcing them in whatever school we have. What we have now is observation of values. We have programs where young people learn about values, but there is no real commitment to them; it is observation. There is no passion or commitment in many instances, whether that be in the private or the public system.

People talk about multiculturalism, and one could argue whether our society is really multicultural or poly-ethnic, but the key element of the multicultural society, as I see it, is tolerance, which is a good thing. But that should not be at the expense of not recognising the contribution of pioneers, or the value in traditional Aboriginal culture or the contribution of people who gave their lives and put their lives at risk to serve this country. A lot of political correctness has crept in, which means that people are teaching history as if Australia began 20 years ago. Now, that is a load of nonsense, and that is part of this propaganda that goes on.

In fact, I would suggest that, in a lot of our schools (public and private), we do not have education as it should be. What we have is indoctrination or propaganda, and that is the antithesis of education. The educated person has a critical mind, can look at the issues and weigh them up. It is not someone who comes out at the end of a production line mouthing slogans, statements and views that have been inculcated by propagandists. And our system (private and public) is full of propagandists who fill children's heads with views and who do not encourage people to think for themselves and to be critical in their evaluation and their analysis, and that is what we want.

We want people who are tolerant, considerate of others, have respect for themselves and respect for other people's property and who are willing to serve others in the community. They are some of the values that we need to reinforce. Another critical aspect in terms of the value system is that we are still turning out people who can barely read or write and who have little understanding of basic arithmetic and mathematics. I am pleased that the government—and the minister assures me that she is determined to move down this path—is getting back to a curriculum that is structured so that when you are in year 4 at primary school you will be able to do particular things.

You will be able to spell certain words; you will have a level of comprehension. In the last 20 years we have moved away into a lot of mishmash and woolly thinking, and parents have been deceived because they have never been able to know what level their children are really at. I think that the community wants an educational system that is based on a curriculum that is structured so that they know how their children are performing or not performing; and, likewise, they want those positive values, which I have mentioned, taught.

I think that some of the blame for where we are at lies not simply with the people administering the system but also, I think, with some of the teachers unions. They have not helped because they have not distinguished between their industrial campaigns and a focus on educational objectives. They get the two mixed up in a way which is often not helpful. In their campaign for an industrial position they unwittingly denigrate the system in which many of their members work. We have in South Australia an excellent state school system—it could be a lot better. It used to be the best in the nation but it has been watered down and weakened.

It is critical that you have people running the system—principals of the schools—who can be real leaders and who have some authority. If you want to find a good school, look

for a good principal. We all know that. It is not rocket science. We have people getting into these positions who, often, can talk underwater but who are not necessarily good leaders. If the school is good, it is because the principal (male or female) is providing leadership—someone who makes the school really work, and they must have the authority to run the school. That is the lesson that has been learnt world wide, and it ties in with this notion of curriculum. We have had all this silly nonsense as a spin off from people who engage in paedophilia, which is an evil activity, to the point where you are not supposed to pick up a child in year 1 who falls on the asphalt, and that is a load of nonsense.

I believe that is what the Prime Minister is talking about. He may have got his sights a little bit off beam when he made his comments, but I think that is the sort of thing he is hinting at, even though I do not think he expressed it probably in the way in which he should have and it was generalised to the point that it gave offence to many good public schools. The system is riddled with a lot of politically correct nonsense about not picking up a child who has fallen on the bitumen and torn their knee—that is an element of human compassion and caring. It comes back to the point I made before: that we have values in many of our schools—public and private, obviously—but they are taught at a distance; you observe the value. What we need are people who practise the values, and that is a sort of message. I have said to people in the Salvation Army that it is great to have people who not only profess to being Christians but who actually practise it. I hear a lot of people talking about their religious belief, but I want to see people practising the elements of it in terms of care and compassion for others, respect for others, and so on.

I do not have a problem with this motion, because I think debate on topics of education is good; we do not have enough of it. We need more money going to our state schools: many of them are run down physically and they need a lot of funding put into them. The education department here has its own favourite schools. If they have visitors, they trot them out to certain high schools and primary schools, but they should be able to trot them out to all schools.

We need literally hundreds of millions of dollars spent on our state schools to bring them up to speed in terms of physical facilities. The commonwealth has poured a lot of money into private schools—and I do not have a problem with that—for physical facilities, but we need in the state schools an equivalent standard, because many of them are now lagging in terms of their physical standards.

I think this debate is worth while, but we should focus on the importance of explicit values, a good curriculum and leadership by principals, and not engage in simplistic generalisations which are unfair to the vast majority of people working in public schools—the teachers who are absolutely dedicated and committed to the children in their care and serving the wider community. Those teachers are the custodians of our values. We should recognise and value them and not denigrate them by simplistic comments which are not helpful and are not part of a sensible, sound debate.

**Mr BRINDAL (Unley):** My first point is that, if the Prime Minister of this nation cannot challenge the nation and speak about values and put something on the public agenda, who can? Point number two is that we saw something that most people in this house would consider very dangerous, and that was that Pauline Hanson got 10 per cent (or perhaps a bit more) of the Australian vote at one election, and everyone was shocked. But why should they have been shocked?

Political correctness in this chamber (and in most of the parliaments of this nation) is so slavishly adhered to that 10 per cent of the people voted for a party of which I presume none of us in this place would approve.

Most of us do not have the gumption to stand up in this place, or in any other place, and say the sorts of things the Prime Minister has said. Is the Prime Minister right or is the Prime Minister wrong, and does it matter? It is the Prime Minister's job to lead and challenge the nation and to make sure that we are giving this nation the best we can give it. However, we get in reply to the Prime Minister not reasoned, sensible debate: we get political correctness—a slavish adherence to a dogma that you can hear every day. I can turn on ABC 891 any time I want to and get all the phrases of that speech. It is the complicity of the middle classes—the so-called educated classes—of this nation: they decide what is politically correct and adhere to it.

Where I think the Prime Minister was right was in maintaining that political correctness has subverted the very education system which is supposed to give breadth and understanding to the developing people of this nation. I am appalled that the same people can come in here and sanctimoniously prate on about multiculturalism, when last week, in an issue concerning multiculturalism, they chose to take a mainstream argument and say, 'Well, we can have multiculturalism so long as it does not offend the mainstream. We won't have this and we will have that, and we'll choose the fancy little bits of multiculturalism that don't offend the good members opposite. They can do their cultural dances and they can have their quaint languages. They can do all sorts of things.'

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**Mr BRINDAL:** I am speaking as a private member in this parliament and, member for West Torrens, I do not care who supported what. I notice that you supported the proposition last week and I do not think that shows you as multicultural at all. I think it shows you as bigoted—but that is a personal opinion.

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** I rise on point of order, sir. I think that is unparliamentary and I ask the member to withdraw it.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I fulsomely apologise and withdraw. The member for Fisher makes a very important point about values taught at a distance. Some years ago I remember an orthodox priest coming to see me on the grounds that witchcraft and satanism were being taught in our schools. Like the member for Hartley, I have been a teacher for many years and I thought that this would be an appalling 45 minutes listening to something that was not correct. But it was interesting when this priest came to see me with a number of members of his congregation. He put the following proposition (and I remember doing this as teacher): he said, 'Look, in our primary schools we have themes and we might have halloween or witchcraft as a theme, and the children do projects and make spells and it is all good fun.' He also said that when we have a school system which lacks an underpinning value and does not proselytise an underpinning value—which is what the member for Fisher said, that is, values at a distance—and when it puts up ranges of values, and within those ranges of values it includes things such as witchcraft and satanism, in the lack of the proselytisation of a direct set of values against which this can be measured, there is a danger the children will take whatever values are placed in front of them. Whether that argument is correct or incorrect—and the

priest concerned came from the Premier's electorate, not mine—I think it is a most interesting argument.

I think that political correctness has gone mad within our schooling system. As the member for Fisher said, our schools were the best in this nation; the teachers knew what the nation stood for and they were not afraid to put forward in everything the school did some of the core values of the school.

*Ms Rankine interjecting:*

**Mr BRINDAL:** The member opposite, who has become an instant expert on education and who tells us that we all should go into schools, had better go into some schools herself and talk to some of my friends who are teachers about why they do not teach things. The member for Fisher said that this nation is built on the Judaeo-Christian ethic, and many teachers will no longer teach, even as a mythological story, either the Christmas story or the Easter story. If they do teach the Christmas story or the Easter story they have to ensure they teach this festival and that festival or some other festival so it gets lost—

*Ms Rankine interjecting:*

**Mr BRINDAL:** The member interjects (I should not take up an interjection, though many do), but I am not denying that; neither is the member for Fisher nor the member for Hartley. Our system is as good as it is because of the many good teachers who are still in the system. It is not as good as it is because of the dictates of successive ministers of education who have tried to load the system until it becomes, as the member for Fisher very rightly said, values at a distance. The system can only be good if, as the Prime Minister said, it has values, not the value of political correctness, not the value of everyone's right, but core values believed in by this nation. If this parliament was less concerned with the consumption of animal meat and more concerned with what the values of the South Australian education system should be, then I would be prepared more to vote with some of my colleagues on such matters. But we come in here with trite, irrelevant trivia and do not address the core values of our schools.

In so far as the Prime Minister raised this issue and has given us all the chance to air some of these issues today, he is to be applauded. In her contribution, the member talked about elite, high fee paying private schools. I challenge members opposite, I challenge the big L in Canberra, to come out and say that these people who pay the same taxes as every other Australian have no right to an education for their kids unless they pay for it themselves. I thought the state aid debate was over in this nation 30 years ago. Mr Latham is reintroducing the same sort of crass, green-eyed elitism that gave rise to that debate. If it is the pleasure of the Labor Party to take all funding from private schools, let them say so, but let them not denigrate people who choose to send their children to private schools.

While we are hearing further contributions to this debate which suggest that private schools are elite and charge high fees—although some of them certainly do that—this chamber needs to ask itself why so many Australian parents (average parents without lots of money) make the additional effort to send their children to private schools. It might also ask how many members opposite choose to send their children to private schools. I do not say that as a put-down; I say that because, if you ask some members opposite why they choose to send their children to private schools, it is because private schools have a set of agreed values which are taught, which

are implicit in the teaching of the school, and which everybody knows.

I, therefore, totally support the amendment of the member for Hartley. I also stand unashamedly to support the Prime Minister. That does not denigrate teachers or our public school system—far from it; but it takes up the point of the member for Fisher, which I believe is this: it is about time we as a parliament showed responsibility to our kids, to our teachers, and to what was the best system in this nation and got back to some agreed values and some focused curricula, as the member for Fisher said. Stop loading down. Every time this parliament has a problem, we rush through here and say, 'Let the teachers teach it in schools'. Teachers for the last 30 years have been expected by successive chambers of this parliament to solve every single human ill that we can find in South Australia. They are not Mandrake the Magician; they are just teachers trying to do a good job for our kids. If this house exerted more of its responsibility and put less on teachers, we would have the system that the member for Fisher, myself and the member for Hartley were so proud to serve.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** I hope I can bring some reason to this debate, as we have heard very little of it from the other side. If anyone has politicised the issue of values in Australian education, it is the Prime Minister. He made some extraordinary statements about public schools. I would like to be able to say that everything that happens in every state school is perfect, but I cannot, and I do not know who could. We are continuously striving for improvement in our schools. When we listen to what we have just heard members opposite say, it is no wonder there have been problems in our state schools over the last 10 years.

One of the values that I like to see expressed in schools is commitment to education; yet, over the last 10 years (during the 1990s) we saw an incredible decline in the retention rate of children in our state schools. This was a disgrace which the previous government allowed to continue, and it was one of the first issues addressed by the incoming Labor government. Of course, there are political issues involved in the matter of education.

Some values we all share; others we do not. Some values we place greater emphasis on at different periods in our history. Discussing values is a continuing debate, and I am personally very pleased that that debate continues in both the state schools and the private schools in my electorate. My electorate is certainly not full of elite private schools. Some of the private schools have as many people on school card as the state schools. What I see in both sets of schools is teachers and leaders trying to support their communities and the education of the children within their schools.

There are some differences. One of the things that I have noticed is that private schools seem to have more opportunity to engage the parents. Maybe that is because more of the parents have made a decision to be more engaged in their child's education in the choice that they have made. However, I now find that many of the state schools in my electorate are also working extremely hard to engage the parents. Members have said that, over the past 20, 30 years, we have loaded the curriculum with all sorts of societal issues. We have, and we have made mistakes in that. Perhaps what we should have been doing is offering more support to parents to assist them in the more complex job that parenting is now than it was in the 1950s and 1960s. There are many parents who find it very difficult to undertake their task of

parenting. They find it very difficult to participate in the life of a school because they do not quite understand what is going on, and I am extremely pleased that schools such as the Lonsdale cluster are now working with parents on the challenging issue of the education of boys.

These schools are living the values that I like to see in all education. They are recognising a problem; that is, there is a difficulty being experienced by boys in schools and in our community—not all boys of course, but many boys: we know it—and they are working with the parents to overcome that difficulty. I am very sorry that I will not be able to attend the session that they are holding next Tuesday night on the educational and developmental needs of boys. They are holding it at the South Adelaide Football Club, so they are expecting quite a number of parents to attend. I congratulate Denise Lane, the principal of the Lonsdale Heights School, who has been leading this initiative, and all the principals in the Lonsdale cluster of schools. This is what we expect from our schools: meeting the changing needs, valuing their community and now increasingly working with many aspects of young people and their families to help them do better in our society. That is what I see in my schools.

What does the Prime Minister see? This debate was started really with an article in *The Age* by Annabel Crabb and Orietta Guerrera on 20 January 2004. The article says:

Parents are moving their children out of government schools because the state system is 'too politically correct and too values-neutral', according to Prime Minister John Howard.

That is a confusing statement to start with, because surely being politically correct is a value statement. I am not sure what the Prime Minister means by being politically correct, but I often find that it is a term of abuse which is hurled at people who try to demonstrate the values of respect, tolerance and inclusion, and not denigrate people because they have different values. 'Politically correct' is a value statement, so we start off with a Prime Minister who is confused. The article continues:

His comment on the schools funding debate comes at the beginning of an election year in which the government is planning to introduce legislation expected to inject tens of billions of dollars into the coffers of private schools, while Labor campaigns to strengthen the public system.

Where did this political debate come from? The article further says:

When *The Age* interviewed Mr Howard at the weekend, he said the growth of private school enrolments partly resulted from parents being frustrated with the lack of traditional values in public schools and an 'incredibly antiseptic view taken about a whole range of things'.

He continues with the hoary old chestnut that some schools think you offend people by having Nativity plays. Well, maybe some schools do think that you offend some people by having Nativity plays; many do not. Mr Howard said that he was happy with the existing school funding model and happy to fight an election on increased funding for private schools. He also said:

My judgment is that the envy line they—presumably meaning the Labor Party—

ran at the last election fell on its face very badly because people understand that once you start compromising the principles that we now have embedded in the system, it's the thin end of the wedge.

Well, what an amazing statement! I would discuss it if I could understand it. It is so all over the place that it indicates a Prime Minister desperate to find a new agenda and to grab back a few of the headlines. He has been used to having them

all to himself for too long, and he does not know what to do when he is not getting the attention. Perhaps he has a slight case of attention deficit disorder, which we all know from the behaviour in this place at times is not something to be admired. The Prime Minister found that some of his backbenchers were a little amazed at some of his statements and were busy distancing themselves—and that, indeed, is good to see.

I have a couple of examples of values in the public schools in my electorate and the way in which they live those values. This is an email that I received from a high school in my electorate. It is from the Deputy Principal of Morphett Vale High School to all staff, and the subject is school values:

Morning All. It is imperative that during Tuesday's extended PG, time is spent exploring the school values of RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, HONESTY, COMMUNICATION & TEAMWORK. These values were arrived at after considerable consultation involving students, parents and teachers across the John Morphett Campus.

This activity is best approached by using group work, with each group in the class discussing, recording and sharing their ideas.

To help reinforce the school values it is expected that the group work will be displayed in the classroom. Glossy coloured posters will appear at a later stage.

Students in years 9 to 12 can begin to develop a common understanding of how each of the values relates to BEHAVIOUR, RELATIONSHIPS & SCHOOL WORK.

He then goes on to indicate some more educational tools that are available to help PG teachers to work through an exercise on values in the first weeks of school. He refers to the fact that in year 8 students can start talking about what it 'looks like, sounds like and feels like'. They live values in state schools. The Prime Minister needs to find out about it.

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen):** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr Brindal:** Acting Deputy Speaker.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Koutsantonis):** Order!

**Mrs REDMOND:** And a very effective Acting Speaker, may I say, sir! I want to start my contribution by saying that I have no doubt whatsoever that the public schools in this state—and, indeed, all the schools in this state—do have values. They teach values and, as I read the weekly newsletters from the 14 primary schools and the various other schools in my electorate, they indeed publish those values. I do not know whether the Prime Minister's comments have been the source of that publication and the reason for it, but certainly the newsletters indicate the values of the school. They include a whole range of very good values such as honesty, integrity, compassion, caring and respect.

The members for Fisher and Unley hit the nail on the head in their contributions. I think that what the Prime Minister really was saying when he made this comment was that, whilst they are good values, if you want your child to be taught Christian values, the state schools in this state are not allowed to teach them. They can teach good generic values that may be based on a Judaeo-Christian ethic, and they may well teach Christian values in amongst other values when examining Buddhism or Hinduism and so on.

I make no complaint about that: personally I have no difficulty with it. However, if you want your child raised with an education based on Christian values, to do that most people will find that they need to go to a private school, be that a little Catholic parish school or a high fee paying private school. Specifically, Christian values were taught in public schools when I attended them, but no longer are taught because there has been a quite definite shift over the past 20 or 30 years (and I do not blame any particular government as

it has been a general community shift). Schools say that, rather than having Christian values in a school and teaching a Christian ethic, it is time to recognise that there are other members of the community whose values we should respect and value and we have now stopped teaching our own values.

The member for Unley was right in raising the issue of the debate we had earlier in the past couple of weeks about eating dogs and cats. I include in the ambit of my comments the debate about the proposal to have pubs open for an extra two hours on Maundy Thursday. It is about the community discussion we have not had about multiculturalism in our society. We all accept that we have a diverse cultural make up in this country. There are many different community groups, but as a community we have not come to a landing about the boundaries.

For some people, taken to its extreme, multiculturalism means an absolute acceptance of everybody's right to live their particular cultural heritage and belief system within our society. We need to have this debate as it is important in order for us to come to some sort of landing on what are the boundaries on which we base our multicultural society. Largely we accept the right for everyone to practice their own religion, and the right to freedom of religion is instilled in the federal constitution, but that does not mean we will accept the right of people of certain beliefs to stone their wife or a female to death because she commits adultery. It does not mean we will accept the right of someone to practice female circumcision or accept the right of other cultures to eat the family pet. That is where the common thread runs through the debate we have been having in this house, which has provoked a considerable amount of passion and is a good thing.

It is appropriate for us to have the debate in this house and in the wider community about what are the boundaries within which we accept everybody's culture. I do not think we have had the debate. It is appropriate for us to discuss where we draw the line. The member for Unley and I differ on the issue of dogs and cats. He says that for him it is culturally acceptable for someone to say, 'I will eat dog or cat because it is my culture or preference and I want to do that.' He does not have a problem with that. I would say that in Australian society it is not acceptable to eat domestic pets and I draw the line at a different point. However, it is important that we have the discussion as a community and come to some landing about where we will put the line for what is acceptable.

As the member for Fisher said, we have come from a history of a Judaeo-Christian ethic and we need to come to some conclusion about at what point we say that we are still of primarily Judaeo-Christian ethic and that everyone else can operate within their own belief system, but with some limits. That is what the debate is really about. I applaud the Prime Minister for having raised the debate. I have not read the article, so I cannot say precisely what was the context, but I suspect that he was saying essentially what I said at the beginning of my comments, namely, that if you want your children to be raised within a solid framework of Christianity you can no longer achieve that within the public system and it is necessary to go to a private school if you want a specific set of values, such as Christianity, taught to your children during their education.

We have not yet had the debate in this country that has been raised in France, for instance, where there is a very set separation of church and state—and by and large I think that is a good thing. But, when you then get the debate that has gone on there about the right to wear a headdress or crosses

and so on, then you start to get to the really fundamental issue of to what extent is church and state separated. Here it is very much separated and that is why, all those years ago, we moved away from teaching religion in schools, and teaching Christianity in particular. But somehow we have shifted, and I think that is the reference to political correctness in the Prime Minister's comments. We have shifted to this because of the move by people who are politically correct to keep us moving in a certain direction without our ever stopping to think about what we are doing, where we are going and how we got there. I applaud the Prime Minister for raising the debate, because I think it is a very healthy debate. I am pleased that it has come up today at the end of this two-week session so that we can have the discussion about what the articles are that we have really been debating in dog and cat legislation, rights to sell liquor and all those other things, and the place of other values in what has been until now primarily a Judaeo-Christian society.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I am pleased to support the motion moved by my friend and colleague the member for Wright.

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The minister sat quietly and listened to your contribution; I think the member for Heysen should do the same.

**An honourable member:** She wasn't here.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** She was.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** This is an important motion, which reaffirms our appreciation of the values education that is inherent in our public schools. I wish to reflect a little on the member for Heysen's previous comments. When she asked the question she stated that she was not sure what the Prime Minister's comments were and that she presumed his comments were that if you wanted a Christian education then you should go to a Christian school. That was not the Prime Minister's comment at all. The Prime Minister's comment was that our public schools had become, in his words, too 'politically correct' and 'values neutral'. He made that comment on a day when pressure was mounting on him over the Federal government's under-funding of public education and when thousands of South Australian university students were finding out that they had not got a place in a South Australian university. It was a desperate attempt by the Prime Minister to direct attention from the inadequacy of commonwealth funding for our public schools towards what he thought at the time would be a non-funding issue. And what better to pick than values?

The statement that he made upset public schools right around the nation, and no more so than here in South Australia. I was quite upset by the statement too because I spend every day of my working life visiting those public schools, seeing those values up on the walls, seeing those values taught implicitly and explicitly right throughout the curriculum. Contrary to what the member for Heysen said about their not being Christian values, I ask you: what is not Christian about the values being taught in our schools such as respect, inclusiveness, cooperation, excellence, honesty and compassion? What is not Christian about those values? They are values held in high esteem. Charity—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** These values are taught in our public schools; they are taught implicitly and explicitly as well. On top of that, some of our programs in public schools are all about values. What do people think is at the core of the

new curriculum that we have introduced in government schools this year into year six and seven primary school classes? The curriculum about crime prevention has at its core the concept of teaching children about the expectations that the community has for them, making sure that they make responsible decisions and that they do not slip down paths of risky behaviours that take them into a life of crime. It has at its core plenty of good values that are shared by our community.

This year we introduced into schools a program called Dicey Dealings, a gambling education strategy (a prevention program) that is far-reaching. It is aimed at students in years 6 to 12 and focuses on promoting responsible attitudes towards gambling. It is all about students evaluating values. We have drug strategy education in our schools, which is all about the examination of the sorts of values that the community holds dear and equipping students with the skills they need to ensure that they do not fall into those sorts of behaviours.

Our schools develop a whole-of-school approach to drug education and issues. Currently, some 380 government schools have a whole-of-school drug strategy and the rest are in the process of developing and implementing those strategies. So, on a whole range of fronts, both at a systematic level with some of the curriculums in our schools but also at an individual level, we have values education in our schools. And it is good values education: it underpins the curriculum and it often underpins the behaviour management of children in schools.

I was very disappointed to see a newspaper article recently in which federal education minister Brendan Nelson was taking a potshot at schools on this issue—and he went to a South Australian school, Modbury High School. There was a picture of him with the principal and students of Modbury Primary School, which I thought was very unfortunate in this article about values-neutral public schools, because this particular school happens to have won a national award for its quality schooling. This school has values implicitly and explicitly displayed in the foyer and in classrooms which underpin its whole behaviour management strategy. When children misbehave at this school they are asked about which values they are not adhering to. It is so explicit that it was very unfortunate that that picture, and that school, was associated with an article of that nature, because it was so undeserving of that blight. But that school is typical of many.

I challenge members of this house who have not been to public schools for a while to go and have a look, to talk to the school leaders and the classroom teachers about the values education in their school. What they will find is that all through their electorates schools go to great lengths on this, and some schools actually consult their whole school community and parents about what values are appropriate for their school. Before coming up with their values statements and the list of values that they are going to use to underpin their educational program, they actually ask their community, so they are the values of their particular community.

Values education in our public schools exists, and it is strong. Anyone who says that our public schools are values-neutral, which is what the Prime Minister said, has not been into a school for perhaps more than a wave and a quick visit in many years. These days, modern classrooms—and I go into many of them every single day of my working life—have a strong emphasis on the teaching of values and the explicit identification of values.

They permeate throughout the culture of the school and they underpin much of the education program. Obviously,



different schools do different things, but they are there and I ask members to take a fresh look.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I certainly agree with the first half of the motion but I do not agree with the second, so I support the amendment. The first half of the motion states:

This house recognises the important contribution of South Australian public schools in teaching their students important and diverse values.

I add to that 'diverse curriculum'. I do not mind people of different political persuasions to mine, but I abhor hypocrites. I do not like hypocrites. I appreciate that the minister has just spoken and is still in the chamber so I hope she gets to hear this, because I have a bit to say with a bit of feeling and heat. I have some prime examples of the same hypocrisy in my electorate and I will give members the best possible example. I am a strong supporter of public schools, and I am on the record as saying that. I also support the right of parents to take their pick between the two. I am fortunate enough to have arguably the best of both in my electorate. The second-largest country public school in our state is the Nuriootpa High School, and it is a brilliant school. Just down the road is the Lutheran Faith Secondary College. They are two very good schools in competition with each other and they give the best standard of education in Australia.

I would like to raise a matter which really annoys me. Nuriootpa High School offers the most diverse curriculum of any school in Australia, probably the world. It is out there forging new perimeters in children's education. We all know that today's children demand more than just the three Rs. Here is a school offering everything from racehorse training to wineries and stock handling; everything is available at that school. In particular, the school has the most fantastic wine curriculum. It is difficult to have students manufacturing an alcoholic product with some sort of safety, and then getting away with all the requirements of the Liquor Licensing Act, and everything else, but Nuriootpa High School did it eight years ago. They have been leading the world in this area. Everyone who comes to the Nuriootpa High School door is now copying their curriculum.

Over the past two years I have been lobbying the minister—I notice that the minister has now left the chamber—because this really annoys me. I have been asking the minister for some financial support to back up this wine program because, not only does this school have an excellent curriculum, it is making world quality wines. The Americans cannot get enough of it and they will pay big dollars for it. I could not get any money from the minister. That is fair enough because there are budgetary pressures, but what really got up my nose is when I said to the minister, 'Well okay this school is going to go out and try to attract some private money for this. Can you give them some verbal support?' I have the letter from the minister and I cannot believe that she would not give verbal support to this program so that we could go out to private people and say that this has ministerial approval. She would not do it, and I have it in writing. I have it if members would like to see the letter. I am absolutely disgusted that the minister would not accept that the program exists, that it is successful and is worthy of finance. Okay, not this time, but she would not even say anything to support it. It even came down to the point—

**Ms RANKINE:** I rise on a point of order. The member for Schubert is debating the funding of one of his schools, not the teaching of values within the schools.

**THE ACTING SPEAKER:** The member will come back to the substance of the debate.

**Mr VENNING:** The substance of this debate basically is private schools versus public schools. I am backing the public schools here. I am giving you examples of what public schools can and should do. To diffuse that part of the argument, the school is going ahead and is seeking private funding which is coming in—they will do it irrespective of that.

**Ms RANKINE:** A point of order—the member for Schubert has just completely defied your order.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I have been listening closely to the member for Schubert's remarks and I ask him to please return to the substance of the debate because I know that he is a man of honour.

**Mr VENNING:** Sir, if you look at the motion, it states 'diverse values' which is what I am talking about. This is a public school with diverse values. I cannot hack this interjection from the other side. I am talking about a very important issue which is on the subject of public schools matching it with the best of the private schools, giving them a chance to match it and putting some relevance back into the public and private school systems. I will continue to say that we have some very good teachers in the public school system, particularly Kevin Hoskin, who led this new wine program. He was Winemaker of the Year in 2003—a real landmark for public schools. They are going ahead with this. But I just could not hack the fact that the minister could not say to me, 'Yeah, look, they've got a great program; I support this.'

**Ms RANKINE:** Point of order, Mr Acting Speaker: the member for Schubert is directly defying your order.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I have been listening to the member for Schubert and I am tending to agree with the member for Wright that he is defying the chair. I ask the member for Schubert to please come back to the substance of the debate.

**Mr VENNING:** I accept that ruling, but I am talking about valuing the standard of state education. I want to go on to what the members for Fisher and Unley said about values in our schools. We talked about core values and also values at a distance. This is most important. I believe that this is a Christian country. Most people in this country are Christians. So, why then do we have this so-called neutrality? In his comments, the Prime Minister alluded to there being too much political correctness. As some other members said, this is how we saw the rise of Hansonism; purely because people have had enough of this so-called political correctness in schools, particularly when they are not allowed to act out a nativity play, because you have to have equal time. Certainly, I think we should get out of our public schools' way and let them decide. As the minister alluded to just moments ago, let the curriculum choice be made at the local level. Is that not P21 all over again? Is that not P21 as it was?

I believe that we have made a lot of bad decisions over the last few years, particularly when we saw affirmative action coming in to our schools which gave us an imbalance of female teachers. Of course, now we have the problem of boys in public schools and the need for role models to mentor them. It is very important because these students have not had the opportunities that most of us have had at home. A lot of them come from single parent families and if they cannot have role models or mentors during their schooling, they will not get it. We know the problems. There is a big problem here in South Australia, particularly in the level of youth

suicide amongst our young people, namely our boys. It is a very serious matter and it all starts in the school system.

I certainly agree with the first half of this motion; I do agree with the member for Hartley's amendment. At Kapunda High School, there is a similar problem where there is a dire need for upgrades. I hope the minister is addressing that. The rhetoric is just that—rhetoric. Unless we get this right, in this public versus private school debate, people will vote with their feet and already are. People will go to no end of trouble. They will go to great sacrifice to put their children into a school that they see as best for them. We certainly need to be aware of that and make sure that this is always the case. I agree with the member for Hartley to take out the political sting of this debate. I agree with the first part of the member for Wright's motion. It is quite correct. Give our public schools a go. I am a strong supporter of them. We need the system to be like this: there is nothing better than competition in education.

I have a prime example of it in the Barossa, and members are invited to look at the Nuriootpa High School and the Faith Secondary School. A wine program is now being carried out at the Faith school, and guess where the curriculum ideas came from? From the public school down the road, Nuriootpa High School facilities. It brought the program to fruition but it has not had the money to build the facilities to become a world showcase for wine education.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** I commend the member for bringing the motion before the house, which I assume she has done with the best of intentions. I agree with the first part of the motion, which recognises the important contribution of South Australian schools in teaching their students important and diverse values. Most public schools do just that; not all, but most. I think nearly all would try. The question is how can we help them to do better and how can we help them to be better public schools.

The second part of the motion is purely political and is meant to have a swipe at the Prime Minister, who, when asked by the media if he could give his point of view as to why parents were flooding to private schools at an increasing rate, offered a couple of ideas. He suggested that perhaps it was because some public schools were too politically correct and values-neutral. I take the point raised by some of my colleagues that prime ministers should challenge and provoke. Prime ministers should proffer questions and we should be debating this issue. If the Prime Minister had not made those remarks we might not be having this debate today, and a lot of it has been constructive.

As members of parliament, we ought to be addressing the question as to how we can make our public schools better. There will always be people who want to take their children to private schools. I was not one who had the good fortune to go to a private school: we could not afford it. I dreamt about having an opportunity to go to a private school. I must say that, as a student, I perceived that I would receive a better education at that time. I do not know whether I would have or not, but it was totally out of the question for my family in our socioeconomic circumstances. I had the great pleasure of going through state primary schools and high schools in my electorate and I feel that I had a wonderful education, made great friends and met fantastic teachers. Frankly, I do not think it did me one iota of harm, but I question whether the standard of the schools today is exactly the same as it was then. Maybe in some cases it is better; maybe in some cases it is not, but we ought always to be striving to make it better.

The reality is, and the Prime Minister made this point, that people are going to private schools because they seek a better outcome. The debate about education in this country and this state needs to be about outcomes. We need to stop talking about inputs. We need to stop raving about the amount of money that we are spending on education. We need to stop making issues about pay and conditions for teachers the main focus. It is important but it is not the main focus. We need to stop insisting that facilities at schools is the most important single issue. None of those things is the most important single issue. The most important single issue for schools is the quality of outcomes that we are delivering to the children who attend them. We really need to spend more time debating curriculum, assessment and testing, and from that assessment and testing how we might revisit curriculum and make it better. If you do not evaluate training as you conduct it, you cannot go back to the drawing board and make it better. I would like to see more debate on outcomes.

Most importantly, and I think this motion and many of the contributions have made this clear, we need to talk about values. We need to talk about the underlying values that we are delivering to children through our schooling system, and that is the crux of this issue. The Prime Minister is right to say, through his remarks, that perhaps we could do better. Perhaps that is the reason that the public school system is not as well supported as it was when I went to school.

It would be very interesting (and I speak not only as a member of parliament but also as a product of the public school system and someone who, in my former life, was a proprietor of child-care centres) to see what would happen if the financial model used to fund child care was extended to the public school system, parents were given money on a means tested basis and could choose either a private school or a public school, and schools had to compete for that business. If the child assistance model was used in the public education system (some call it the voucher system—and I am not suggesting that it should be instantly implemented, because I can see problems with it), it would be interesting to see the outcome. I expect that all schools would have to sharpen up if they had to compete for their customers, and there might be a profound change in the culture in schools. But I also suspect that a lot more might shift to the private school system. That alarms me, because it makes me wonder what we could be doing better in the public system so that people do not abandon it.

A number of my colleagues have raised the subject of religious education. When I went to school we had religious education, I think, once or twice a week. I enjoyed it: I benefited from it enormously. There was no question about its being indoctrination. If I remember correctly, the Catholics went to one class, the Anglicans went to another and the other Protestant denominations went to another, and if there happened to be Muslim or Hindu students at the school they attended their own religious instruction. I cannot see the problem. I ask the question: why not (rather than why) reintroduce religious instruction to all our public schools?

I also raise the question as to whether, by removing it, we have diminished both our secular and our multicultural communities. By saying to schools that they should conduct religious instruction and provide for the various religious denominations and creeds in their school, would we not encourage students to learn more about other religious groups, to exchange views, to debate and to discover that most of these religions have more in common than what separates them? I really think that, by trying to secularise

schools and remove religion from them, we may have not only disappointed the customers—that is, the children and their parents who support them—but also diminished our society as a whole. If there is one bold step that I think this community, this government and this state could take, it would be to look at the reintroduction of religious education in schools as part of a broader based reintroduction to education of values based training.

There are other issues to do with values that I think could be addressed within this broader based approach. Parents raise with me issues about discipline in schools, dress standards and expectations in regard to homework and study discipline, and routines. All those issues are connected to values, and I ask whether we ought to be supporting our teachers and our principals more by adopting a broader approach to ensure that we help them with discipline in schools, with uniforms and with a values based foundation to what they are doing. The teachers in the public schools in my electorate—and I am talking about schools such as Unley High School, Mitcham Girls High, Pasadena (which was previously Daws Road, my former high school), and the primary schools, Colonel Light Gardens and Clapham)—would welcome support, I think, in regard to discipline, routines, uniforms and curriculum advancement. They would welcome anything that improved the values approach to teaching within those schools. They are all trying to do these things to a very high standard, and they are extraordinarily dedicated. We need to be looking at ways in which to make it easier and better for them.

The Prime Minister was right to challenge us on this matter. I do not agree with everything the Prime Minister says, but I agree with his right to get out there and stir the pot and to get us thinking and asking questions about how we can improve the public system. Because, if we do not, people will continue to flood to the private system that provides the sort of outcomes that they seek.

In summary, let's get away from a debate about inputs and let's get away from the debate about how much we need to spend on teachers' salaries, on building a bigger and better education department or providing widgets in schools. Let's get the whole debate around to the customer (the child) and a better outcome and, if a values approach to education will deliver a better outcome, then I am all for it. Let's get back to basics and make some fundamental changes to the way we do things. Maybe we can better involve the whole community in the quality of education.

Time expired.

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg):** In November last year the Hon. Brendan Nelson delivered an address in relation to taking schools to the next level. In doing so, he set out his objectives for a national education framework for schools. He outlined 10 important principles and directions in which he saw education in schools could advance for the betterment of all Australian children. They included: supporting the professional standing of teachers; attracting the best to the profession; national consistency in schooling; giving more autonomy to school principals; intolerance of poorly performing schools; providing meaningful information to parents; making values a core part of schooling; creating safer schools; accelerating indigenous education programs; and creating smooth transitions from school to carer. That was in November last year.

In that address, in relation to making values a core part of schooling, it was fundamental that the honourable member

recognised Ralph Waldo Emerson's statement when he said, 'Character is higher than intellect.' He made it clear in that address that Australian society has a shared sense of values such as tolerance, trustworthiness, mutual respect, courage, compassion and honesty. Courtesy and doing one's best are part of Australia's democratic way of life, and every Australian child needs to have an understanding of these values as part of their schooling. He said, in particular:

For some time I have been concerned that while all Australian schools (government and non-government) teach values, some do so more explicitly than others. Following an investment by the Australian government of nearly \$600 000, 69 schools across the country have completed innovative studies into values education and those studies will be built into a framework for improved values education in Australian schools. I will be seeking the endorsement of state and territory education ministers for the adoption of this national framework.

Many schools have the values they teach as part of their educational planning. Many schools market themselves to parents on the basis of these values. I would like to see every Australian school have values embedded in their curriculum and approach.

The minister was making absolutely clear at that time that values exist in our schools as a core of curricula but, clearly, it was not sufficient to say that it was at a level that was explicit enough to actually give benefit. He made a very clear statement in November last year calling upon state ministers to join with him in ensuring that this objective would be supported.

It seems to me to be a very concerning situation when we have in this state parliament an argument about the Prime Minister's alleged statements, because not one honourable member specifically quoted what he said. They know, as we all know, that the Prime Minister raised values as an issue for this country to look at, and that was entirely consistent with the federal minister's statement. It is an important issue and one for which he is seeking support from state ministers, not this crass debate in relation to politicising this issue.

I think it is important that this matter is on the federal government's agenda. This is a very important issue for families. This is critical for children, and it is time that state governments and state parliaments, with our support, make sure that this comes to fruition at the national level. It is clearly on the agenda. What is important to the debate is that it has highlighted, I think very clearly, that some schools do need assistance to bring this up to a satisfactory standard. I commend the Prime Minister for highlighting that fact.

It is very clear—and we know this from last week's national survey which has been published and which has been referred to in the media in South Australia—that there is a migration of children who are currently in state schools but whose parents are enrolling them in either home, independent or catholic education, and it is quite important to look at that data to understand why. There are a variety of reasons, but one reason which the Prime Minister highlighted is that parents were looking for values-based education. This was very high on the list of issues important to them.

We need to appreciate that that must be the priority here. There were some other issues, but importantly of significance to those parents was quality teaching, and some smaller issues, if I can put them in that category, of assuming that children would have better protection in the shade. So, some issues came onto the agenda about which we had not been familiar. This was a high priority for parents and it remains a high priority for parents. This debate would be well served if we were to focus, as has been rightly pointed out by the member for Waite, on the outcomes of education and not get

bogged down in petty political debate, which has been the case to date. I support the motion as proposed to be amended by the member for Hartley.

**Mr CAICA (Colton):** I support the original motion as moved by the member for Wright, and I congratulate her on bringing it before the house. I made a grievance speech recently on the comments made by the Prime Minister, but I will try to reinforce a few matters I touched on at that time. The Prime Minister's comments that public schools have become antiseptic or value free in regard to social values seems to have raised a lot of confusion in terms of what he meant, particularly when one follows the subsequent public arguments. It seems that very many people are confused but, in my view, I have no doubt whatsoever as to the Prime Minister's motivation with respect to raising this issue at the time he did.

I do not think that he is interested in objective debate and, in this chamber, we have had objective debate; and I do congratulate all those members who have made a contribution. I believe that the Prime Minister is looking for a Tampa-type issue. He is looking for a landmine to divert public debate and to generate divisiveness within the electorate. We have heard the debate today and, in my view, it has been reasonably balanced. There is a pattern here from the Prime Minister. We had core and non-core promises, the Tampa crisis, the children overboard issue, the refugee crisis, weapons of mass destruction, Iraq's association with Al Qaeda and the claim for a safer Australia.

It is the politics of fear. Effectively, the Prime Minister is hijacking an objective debate and pushing things to the margin. The Prime Minister appears very happy to ruffle the feathers of his backbench. I understand that, despite the members on the other side standing in support and singing his praises, quite a few on his backbench have been a little cranky that the Prime Minister made those comments and have been contradictory in their response to his somewhat measured remarks.

From what I can see, the Prime Minister has left it to Mr Costello and, indeed, the federal health minister, Mr Abbott, to run the argument and he has backed off, as you would expect the Prime Minister to do and as he has done on occasions. The Prime Minister's comments are very intemperate and, indeed, incorrect comments, despite what was said by the member for Bragg. What is generally clear is that the comments from the teachers in the public and private domain, and from the principals, and from the federated bodies, in fact, confirm that the current argument about the values shows little understanding of the reality of what actually happens in public schools. I do not know how often the Prime Minister attends public schools in his day-to-day business, but, certainly, his comments are at clear odds with what the reality is.

I talked earlier about what the Prime Minister's view was, or why he was raising this issue, and I stand by those remarks. However, it also seems, from my perspective, that the argument about what the government really intends is to constrain debate, foster confusion and peddle misinformation about furthering the agenda for private education in general. So, again, they want to have the debate about one over the other and the advantages of one over the other.

The tertiary sector has suffered over many years from the vandalism of deregulation and structural change, and this is what this is attempting to do. If the federal government has its way, public schools will be vandalised. It might be a poor

comparison, but we have seen what has happened to the tertiary system, and we have seen what has happened to the public health system at the expense of the continual promotion of private health. We are going to see the same within the education system over a period of time, and it is up to us to make sure that that does not occur. I know that many in this chamber have been the recipients of an outstanding education provided by the public school system. It is a matter of actually raising the bar. I have no problems with people going to a private school—or independent schools, as some people like to call them—there should be a choice. My wife teaches at an independent school—at the Dominican school down at Semaphore—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr CAICA:** It is an excellent school. People can send their children to any school they so ever wish. However, I do not believe there need be situations that prevail in Australia that actually diminish the value of proper support that is provided for public education, because that is where the majority of people are going to find their way into the system—that is, that people have a choice to send their children to wherever they may wish to send them. However, some people do not have a choice about where they can send their children. Some people have no choice whatsoever but to send their children to schools within the public system. For that reason, we have to make sure that the bar is raised to the extent that it is the equivalent of—if not better—private schools with respect to the delivery of educational outcomes it achieves. We know that, for a variety of reasons, not the least being the funding that goes to independent schools and the money it costs to send children there, there will never be that same type of out-of-curricula resources available. Indeed, it might be argued that there are not even those resources that will deliver as good an outcome with respect to the curriculum as might be at private schools. That is why it is important that we ensure that we continue to raise the bar with respect to educational outcomes that are achieved at public schools.

As I have said, if the Prime Minister is trying to heighten debate at all, it is about private versus public, and I did mention briefly the funding. I would just like to say that public schools in the period of the Howard government have been facing two hurdles: (1) the change in federal funding to redefine the foundations of public education, and education in general, and (2) the accompanying push to change public perception, especially in regard to public schools. There has been no increased federal funding for public schools above those arising from indexation in the time of the Howard government.

By comparison, the increase in funding to elite private schools—because that is what they are—has increased on average by over 200 per cent in that time. The comparison in funding between these elite schools and the public sector, as I believe the majority in this chamber would agree, is alarming. I support the comments made by the member for Reynell, I think, who talked about Brendan Nelson's being at Modbury High School and the unfortunate Modbury Primary School.

*Ms Thompson interjecting:*

**Mr CAICA:** It was a very unfortunate circumstance, and I thank the member for Reynell for correcting me. The matter of political correctness has been spoken about a lot here.

*Mr Rau interjecting:*

**Mr CAICA:** I know there are those, as the member for Enfield says, who find it very disturbing. I talked about some of the examples. I would not call it political correctness but,

rather, the values some people have. I do not think political correctness is ensuring that a standard of behaviour is reached where equity prevails. It is respect, tolerance and endeavour. My old school's motto was: 'To strive, to seek and not to yield'. I know that has served the member for Bright very well, as it has the member for Cheltenham and many others who attended that fine school. I think the matter of political correctness is a diversion. The Prime Minister is looking for something in the lead-up to the election, something that will divert attention: 'What will be my Tampa crisis? What will be my children overboard?' It is not really about political correctness.

As members of parliament we have to ensure that we collectively deliver the best possible education outcomes for people in public schools and not be diverted by someone who has politicised the debate. The matter of a funding is a legitimate argument which needs to be debated. I conclude with comments made by Brendan Nelson: 'Education is at the root of, I think, a civil and orderly society'—with which everyone agrees—and, further, 'We have this big argument all the time, public and private. All this nonsense.' The fact is that that actually sums up Brendan Nelson's attitude. He thinks it is nonsense, but I do not think it is nonsense at all.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** The member for Bright.

*Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:*

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Kavel will sit in his seat quietly. The member for Bright has the call.

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright):** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I rise to oppose this motion in its intended format, as moved by the member opposite. I also indicate to the house that I will support the amendment put to the motion by my erstwhile colleague the member for Hartley. I had the privilege of receiving a very good public education. Indeed, the member for Colton and I went to the same school, as did the member for Enfield and the member for Cheltenham (now the Minister for Administrative Services). In fact, the member for Colton and I often shared the same class and knew each other well during our school days. I also had the privilege of a university education. It was an education which has served me well and which provided a good set of values. I was also taught to count particularly well, for I defeated my Year 12 mathematics teacher for my place here in this house, so there has been a strong connection between the school and this parliament. Indeed, there are two other members of the parliament, one in this house and one in the other house, who likewise attended the same school.

It distresses me that there are members of parliament, be it federal or this state, or indeed those of other jurisdictions, who would seek to create a divisive argument between private and public schools. That is a divisive argument that serves no-one well. It was obvious when the Prime Minister raised legitimate concerns about negative changes that have occurred in public schools. The Labor Party sought to seize upon it to ensure that it did not strike that chord with the Australian public and sought to turn it into a denigrating political argument and brought in their mates from the Teachers' Union to then denigrate it further.

To illustrate the concern that this has caused, I am going to read into the record an article that was printed on the front page of one school newsletter. The article was written by a community religious leader. Because I have not sought his permission to quote his name into the record I will not do so,

but I am sure that he would be proud to have his words read into the record. His article starts:

It's on again. The recurring national discussion about non-government versus government schooling. The needlessly divisive point scoring and empty rhetoric which seeks to denigrate rather than inform, to sally forth with an eye to the forthcoming election rather than to present facts which might at least provide an adequate basis for useful discernment. The debate has happened under many guises before. From Henry Parkes, in the 1880s, proclaiming the need for free, compulsory and secular education, down to Sir Robert Menzies and Gough Whitlam who, in the 1960s, pushed through policy in the Liberal and Labor Parties respectively, which supported the principle of 'state aid' for non-government schools. The historic and dramatic events in Goulburn in 1962, where Catholic schools were closed because they were unable to continue without government funding. The subsequent appearance of all the city's Catholic school children at the doors of state schools, which found themselves unable to deal with the influx, was probably a defining moment and should give pause to those who would do away with government funded choice in education.

That, sir, is a point upon which at least some members of the Labor party who have adverse views might like to reflect. It is certainly a point on which the left-wing Teachers' Union might also like to reflect. The article continues:

Even if for no other reason than that the enormous savings which parents who send their children to non-government schools provide for governments, changing public policy to deny such schools access to government support would be to deny fundamental logic. But try nevertheless they do. Some still trot out the hoary annual that more federal money goes to the non-government sector, proponents of this argument conveniently forgetting that the states provide enormous amounts of finance to state schools, most of which comes from federal funds anyway. That is an important point. The article continues:

And now we have new antagonisms based on fallacy. That government schools are value-free and that our own schools are the sole repositories of values.

It is not the Prime Minister who has defined schools as being value free: it is the extra spin by the Labor Party that has endeavoured to strike that chord. The article continues:

To assert this runs in the fact of the strongly proclaimed and fine human values which state school staff proudly proclaim. Ideals such as respect for the individual, human freedom, valuing truth, gender equity and many more are foundational in state schools. Those who seek to erect a distinction on the basis of values need to reflect some more.

Moreover, these people might also consider the reason for the commitment which our church community has to our schools. Primarily it is that the Gospel might be proclaimed and that an holistic education based on the person of Jesus might be provided. The values are so often the same as found in state schools. It is the source of these values which Catholic and other Christian schools have as central to their philosophy. It is the person of Jesus who can be focused upon, not only in academic learning but in terms of a faith to be lived. It is the ability of these schools to choose staff who can support the principles. In this lies the distinction between the schools.

Sir, that is an important distinction. The private schools have the ability to choose their staff, state schools at this stage not a great enough ability, although certainly through Partnership 21 that ability has been increased, although somewhat stymied under this Labor government. The article concludes:

In times like today, when prejudice clouds reason, it is incumbent on us both to pray for light, for ourselves and others, and to quietly but firmly assert the respect that needs to be given to the principle of freedom of choice in education and the obligation of governments to provide funding which makes the exercise of this right financially possible.

Indeed, sir, these are very wise words from a man who obviously put very deep thought into the words that he put to

paper. My own children did start their education in a state school and, indeed, it was a particularly good school. However, regrettably, my wife and I were left with no choice but to move them as a consequence of the first teacher pay dispute with the former Liberal government. My eldest daughter who, at the time I think was about nine or 10 years of age, was subjected to unacceptable treatment by her teacher, and the principal of the school failed to discipline that teacher. The teacher told the primary school students that they were going on strike because the dreadful government was going to have more than 50 students in the class, and the teachers worked very hard and were not being given a pay rise and were deserving of one—

**Ms RANKINE:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a point of order. What relevance does an industrial dispute against a dreadful government, as mentioned by the member for Bright, have to do with values taught in our schools?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. I understand that the honourable member is trying to put an argument, but I ask him to return to the substance of the debate, even though I have upheld the point of order.

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My point is quite simple: the values taken into that classroom by that union led teacher were such that she would seek to pass information to students which was untrue; and my daughter upon saying, 'I'm sorry, teacher, that is not true', was lined up in front of the class and the teacher said, 'Of course, her father is one who sits around the government cabinet table and is part of this process.'

**Ms RANKINE:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Wright has a point of order.

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** That is an example of the disgusting union tactics that are—

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! When the chair asks the honourable member to come to order, he will sit down immediately.

**Ms RANKINE:** The member for Bright is clearly defying the chair's ruling.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I think the member for Bright has moved on.

**The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, he has indeed, and he can well understand why Labor members do not want these points put on the public record, because the Prime Minister's statements to which they claim to object also focus very strongly on unionism and the way the unions have an effect on the values within our schools. The unions have been running roughshod over many schools in our system, and time and again when parents move their students from the state system to the private system they tell me that it is as a result of the political agenda by the unions within our schools endeavouring to manipulate students. That is scurrilous. For the member to condone that sort of behaviour does neither her, her party, her government, nor this place proud. Had she let me finish, maybe she would not have jumped in.

That is a fundamental difference between the two sectors and it is that to which the Prime Minister strongly alluded. The union involvement in our schools is corrupting many of the values, and it is important that those unions are drawn into line and that their behaviour is held to account. Too often they hold the public to ransom, and that is a level of complaint from many parents.

Time expired.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Administrative Services):** I have great pleasure in supporting the motion put forward to this house by the member for Wright because it is important that this resolution is carried. Essentially, the motion seeks to congratulate and recognise the value of our public school system in contrast with the negative and destructive approach that has been taken by members of the opposition and, indeed, by the Prime Minister of our country in promoting these divisive ideas. It certainly will be a legacy of this Prime Minister when he leaves office later this year that his period of time in government has been characterised by a willingness to divide the Australian community, to separate those of us who are already here from those of us who want to come here, people who have different coloured skin from those of us who have white skin; and a willingness to separate the richer and poorer elements of our society and public and private schools. Much of what will characterise his time in government is separating people and taking opportunities to isolate one group of the community from another in a very destructive and unhelpful way. Once again this debate highlights another way in which he seeks to divide the community.

I do not want to dwell on the negative aspects of this debate, because I think that they have been well documented by other speakers. I want to talk about something positive, that is, the primary and high schools in my electorate—namely, the Le Fevre High School, which is just outside the electorate but draws in a number of students from my electorate; Findon High School, which is just outside the electorate; Woodville High School, which is in the middle of the electorate; Pennington Junior Primary School; Seaton Park Primary School; Hendon Primary School; Port Adelaide Primary School; Alberton Primary School; and, of course, the Woodville Special School.

These are all wonderful schools, but I want particularly to focus on two schools: Woodville High School and Pennington Junior Primary School. These schools have the great opportunity to draw students from a range of different ethnic backgrounds. At every public function I have attended, these schools have demonstrated unfailingly their commitment to the value of tolerance. If we are to debate values, the Prime Minister of this country does a disservice to those schools if he suggests that they are value neutral. In fact, the values that they promote are those of tolerance and of respect for people—no matter their background. In fact, they go further: they celebrate that diversity and seek to allow children to come to school and express a range of cultural activities. These schools go to enormous lengths to educate each child about the value of their schoolmates' culture and allow opportunities for those to be displayed and developed.

This is most heart-warming, because it clearly builds connections and relationships amongst the children and adds incalculable value to the cohesion of our suburbs when those children become adults, because they have grown up in an environment in which they were taught to respect one another. No doubt they will carry those values with them throughout their life. These schools knit our future suburbs together with these values of tolerance and understanding.

For the Prime Minister to suggest that public schools are value free is a slap in the face to the teachers at those schools who do so much in this regard. It is offensive to those teachers, and they must feel incredibly let down by the Prime Minister of this country. They see teaching as a vocation, and their dedication to the children is incredibly powerful. Every time I visit one of these schools in my electorate, I cannot

help but feel that the future of those suburbs is in very good hands because of the way in which those schools are led and the way in which those children are educated.

Far from criticising those schools, I think that we should be doing all we possibly can to support them, such as providing additional funding from the federal government. We certainly have made an enormous contribution to improving the educational outcomes of those schools. I think I mentioned earlier in this place that, simply by placing additional teachers in Pennington Junior Primary School, we have reduced the class sizes from 30 to 18, and that can be the difference between, essentially, controlling a class and providing high-quality teaching to individual students. These are the sorts of things on which we should be focusing, but instead the Prime Minister has chosen to turn this into a destructive debate that seeks to play wedge politics, something for which he has become famous during his term of government. I ask all members to support the original resolution and show a measure of support and respect for our public school system.

**Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel):** A fair amount has been said about this motion and I speak in support of the amendment moved by the member for Hartley. I have only been in this place for two years, but I worked for a member previously for four years and when the house sat I used to listen to debate, particularly in this chamber, with interest. It has never ceased to amaze me that, whenever a debate comes on about our education system, it moves on to discussing issues surrounding public education versus private education and so on. For some reason the Labor Party members tend to turn it into what is regarded as a class war. For some reason they look at trying to promote a non-existent class structure in this state and country. Not growing up or having a lot to do with the UK, one assumes that it is one that is supposedly in place in the United Kingdom: working class, middle class and upper class. This seems to be something on which Labor members have a propensity to focus.

I had the opportunity of attending a private boys' school for my secondary education, one that my parents offered me, and I can tell members that the attitude instilled in every boy at the school that I attended was to promote an egalitarian society, one where you respected and showed dignity to every member of society, no matter from what socioeconomic or other background people came from. It did not matter who their parents were, where they went to school, what suburb they grew up in, what income their parents earned, whether they were scholastically good or good sports people. No matter who they were or what they were, every boy at the school I attended had instilled in them that you treat everybody equally, with the same amount of dignity and respect. For members opposite, or anybody in the community, to say that private schools teach their students that they are an elite group within society is totally wrong. I know that from first-hand experience.

My two children, a daughter and a son, have both attended the local public primary school and both my wife and I have been heavily involved in that school community. We have been strong supporters of the public school system. My wife has been involved in the parents and friends group and in the prime focus of fundraising at that primary school and I had the honour of being chairman for two years of that school's governing council. Even though I come from a private school background, with our two children attending the public

school system, both my wife and I have been strong supporters of that system.

Labor members seem to talk about the private school system as being elitist and, really, an education system that only the wealthy can afford. Well, I can also talk about this from experience. Before my father entered this place he was a schoolteacher, and during the day he taught at a high school and then went out at night to teach night classes in order to generate enough income to be able to afford the school fees for my sister and me to attend private schools. Again, that is a first-hand experience that refutes the claim that the wealthy are the only people who can afford to send their children to private schools.

My sister is the principal of a private girls school, and she tells me that some parents of students at the school enter into arrangements with the school to pay the fees on an instalment basis long after their daughters have left that school. It is pretty obvious what that means: the girls have completed their year 12 and moved on, but the parents have accumulated a debt from the school fees and have to pay it off, because they cannot afford to pay the fees in that year. So for the Labor Party to say that the private education system is the domain only of the wealthy is totally wrong.

In her contribution, the member for Wright was quoting the Prime Minister about schools' value systems being neutral, and the Prime Minister said that there seemed to be some focus on political correctness. I do not know whether that is the case—I read a little about it in the newspaper but I did not study it in depth, and there was a little discussion about it in some sections of the media. But I do not really know if the Prime Minister had the opportunity to fully explain what he meant. I listened to the journalists on ABC radio 891 talking to their Canberra correspondent, Tony Wright, about it and I think—from memory—that the Canberra journalist said that the Prime Minister has not really been given the opportunity to expand on those comments. I will not go into the reasons for that because that has been canvassed reasonably adequately by previous members in this debate. But there is a values system in the public education system here in South Australia. Maybe the Prime Minister was talking about examples that he knew of in Eastern States schools, where a value system may not be in place, or where there may be too much of an emphasis on political correctness. How would any of us know what goes on at Cabramatta High School or Parramatta High School or whoever?

But in the electorate of Kavel that I have the privilege of representing in this place there are 16 primary schools, two high schools, one area school and eight private schools—all of which I have visited. And I want to put on record that I regard the staff I have met in each and every one of those schools as professional educators. I think they really do a tremendous job, they are professional in the role that they undertake, and they are all to be commended for the contribution that they make to our education system, particularly in the electorate of Kavel. Over quite a number of years, some sections of the Education Department have been accused of social engineering. A recent example of that is the SHine program.

Time expired.

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** I rise to speak against the motion. There is an old and very true saying that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and I wish that government members would just look at the pudding and see the way it is being eaten. It is quite obvious to everyone that the public

of South Australia and Australia—the mums and dads and their kids—are marching as fast as they can away from the public education system. It is one thing for the members of the Labor Party to say what they should do and what we should have in terms of the education system in Australia, but for goodness' sake look at what is happening: there is a failure in the public education system in this country to deliver what parents want. That is demonstrated by the numbers of people who are marching as fast as they can away from the public sector.

I think it is right for the Prime Minister to ask whether the values that are being taught in our public school sector are the cause of parents taking their kids out of those schools, paying quite large fees and causing their family to go without other things they may use that money for to put their children into the private sector. You have to ask why they are doing it; why are tens of thousands of Australian parents doing that? The Labor Party would want us to continue in denial and to say, 'No; the public school system is fantastic and everyone loves it.' That is plain bunkum. Everyone does not love it, and those who can afford to and who can physically arrange it take their children out of there and put them into the private sector.

I spent all my own schooling in the public school system and I think I got a reasonably adequate education. Because I live in the country, all four of my children spent a couple of years away at boarding school, principally because they all wanted to go on to university. From my own experience I thought that, with the move from a country high school to establish themselves living in isolation from their family and coping with university studies at the same time, it would be more beneficial for their movement into the university sector if they spent a couple of years away from home in a boarding school. So, I sent my children to private schools for the last two years of their senior education. I do not believe that they got any better education at the schools. I do not believe the delivery of education was any better in those private schools.

What all four of my children did say to me was that, when they were in the public sector, when they were in the high school in our country town, if you strove to perform well academically your peers would look down on you whereas, when they went to boarding school and into the private sector, those who strove to perform academically were looked up to by their peers. They said that that was the difference between the public sector and the private sector. I would suggest that something to do with values was demonstrated in the experience that my children had in those two different sectors.

This motion is nothing more than a political stunt. I think that the Prime Minister has done the right thing to ask why tens of thousands of Australian families are leaving the public school sector and why people are spending a lot of their hard-earned money to put their children into the public sector. This government and the Labor Party just want to make political capital out of this. They will stay in denial. I will demonstrate the sort of things that the Labor Party in South Australia will have us believe about education. A number of members on that side of house talk about retention rates in South Australia. Only yesterday there was an article in *The Advertiser* that said that South Australia still had the lowest retention rate to year 12 in Australian high schools. The reality is that we do not. We have a low retention rate for full-time students. The article also stated:

Another key finding is that South Australia schools have the second the highest proportion of part-time students in Australia.

The reality is that when you add together the part-time and full-time students the retention rate in South Australia is equivalent to anywhere else, if not better than anywhere else in Australia. That is fact, but the minister, the government and Labor Party members in this state continue to distort it by ignoring the fact that South Australia allows students to do year 12 over two years. If you incorporate that into the statistics there is nothing wrong the retention rate in South Australia compared with other states. However, this government and the members of the Labor Party in South Australia, for their own political purposes, keep pushing that fallacy. They keep pushing that fallacy when they know that that is precisely what it is.

The same fallacy is used in funding for state and public schools. There are two funding sources for schools in Australia. One is through the states and the other is through the Commonwealth. If you bulk them together you get a true picture of the contribution that the taxpayer makes towards the education of students in either of those sectors. I cannot understand why the taxpayer would pay X dollars for a student who is attending one school and Y dollars for a student because they attend a different school. I believe every student deserves the same support from the taxpayer. I do not know why we discriminate against students who attend private schools. Some 69 per cent of enrolments in South Australia are in the public school sector, but 81 per cent of taxpayer funding going into education in this state goes to the public school sector. Some 31 per cent of enrolments are in the private sector, and only 19 per cent of the taxpayer dollars that are spent on education go to the private school sector. So those students that are in the private school sector are getting taxpayer funded to a level that is at least half of what they would get if they went into the public sector. If this government had its way and closed down the public schooling system education in this state would be a thing of the past. That is what they espouse that they would like to do.

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** What can one say in response to the member for McKillop's contribution? It is appalling and just goes to show the calibre of that particular member. Contributions today have strongly highlighted the fact that our public schools teach and promote values. The minister made the point that, how could you say that any of those values that have been highlighted today are non-Christian. You could not argue that they are against any particular religion. That is how it should be.

The house divided on the amendment:

AYES (21)

Brindal, M. K.	Brokenshire, R. L.
Brown, D. C.	Buckby, M. R.
Chapman, V. A.	Goldsworthy, R. M.
Gunn, G. M.	Hall, J. L.
Hamilton-Smith, M. L. J.	Kerin, R. G.
Kotz, D. C.	Matthew, W. A.
Maywald, K. A.	McEwen, R. J.
McFetridge, D.	Penfold, E. M.
Redmond, I. M.	Scalzi, G. (teller)
Such, R. B.	Venning, I. H.
Williams, M. R.	

NOES (18)

Atkinson, M. J.	Bedford, F. E.
Breuer, L. R.	Caica, P.
Ciccarello, V.	Conlon, P. F.
Geraghty, R. K.	Hanna, K.
Hill, J. D.	Koutsantonis, T.



## NOES (cont.)

O'Brien, M. F.	Rankine, J. M. (teller)
Rann, M. D.	Rau, J. R.
Snelling, J. J.	Thompson, M. G.
Weatherill, J. W.	Wright, M. J.

Majority of 3 for the ayes.  
Amendment thus carried.  
Motion as amended carried.

*[Sitting suspended from 1.06 p.m. to 2 p.m.]*

## VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA

A petition signed by 397 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to reject voluntary euthanasia legislation; ensure all hospital medical staff receive proper palliative care training and provide adequate funding of palliative care procedures for all terminally ill patients, was presented by Mr Scalzi.

Petition received.

## SHINE

A petition signed by 24 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. W.A. Matthew.

Petition received.

## MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

**The SPEAKER:** In connection with the questions of privilege that have been raised in the chamber by the honourable member for Davenport and the honourable member for Stuart, I find in both cases that there is a prima facie case warranting investigation. In the course of those deliberations, I have read widely and consulted with people I consider have something to offer. However, one of the main factors for my delays in endeavouring to determine the usefulness or otherwise of the process that might now be put on foot by the chamber, should it decide to take the chair's advice that there could have been a breach of privilege, is that in each instance when such a determination is made by the chair, the way in which the Privileges Committee, the duty of which is to determine what happened and report that to this chamber, is then constituted is determined in a prejudicial fashion by the house, according to who they consider might be the most effective advocates on one side of the argument or the other, when in fact the purposes of the Privileges Committee is not to contemplate such matters: that is for the house itself. The duty of the committee is to determine what happened.

## MOOMBA GAS CRISIS

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I wish to advise the house of the current status of the Moomba gas crisis. I was proposing to table a report that I have prepared but, because of typographical errors, I will do that at the end of question time. The report outlines the severity of the situation our state faced and the steps the government took to manage the crisis.

Members will be pleased to note that ministerial directions restricting the use of gas were lifted on 21 February at 6 a.m. Domestic users, emergency services, small businesses and small industrial users were not subject to restrictions at any time.

As members would be aware, at approximately 2.45 a.m. on New Year's Day there was an explosion and fire at the Moomba gas processing plant, rendering the plant out of action over the ensuing weeks. As the Minister for Energy, I set up a number of task forces and groups to ensure that the best advice was given to government and that all interests were represented. I have been pleasantly surprised and most appreciative of the way in which people have worked cooperatively, putting commercial interests aside for the benefit of the wider community. I would like to thank all within government who worked tirelessly from the time of the news of the explosion, particularly my staff, the Chief Executive of PIRSA, the Office of the Technical Regulator and the Chief Executive of the Office of Infrastructure Development.

I would like to thank the Workplace Services team, who are continuing their investigations into the explosion as well as Mr Hans Ohff, who has provided independent and remarkably accurate reports on the state of repair and the production capability of the Moomba plant. Mr Ohff continues to monitor the repair and the restoration of the plant. I would also like to thank all the workers at SANTOS who worked extremely long hours and, I might add, in extraordinarily difficult conditions, to get the supply of gas back into the MAP. I know that Roger Kennett and Keith Walker have done a tremendous job there, along with key members of the SANTOS management team, John Anderson, John Young and Paul Woodland. The cooperation of the energy companies AGL, Origin, Terra Gas Trader and TXU was outstanding, undertaking a series of gas swaps in the early stages, and TXU ensuring extra supplies from underground storage in Victoria. The cooperative work of South Australia's electricity generators has also been appreciated and, of course, without the marvellous work from SEA Gas, the state would have been in a much more dire situation.

The New South Wales government was most accommodating in assisting with allocations of gas, and the Victorian government readily helped with identifying infrastructure bottlenecks. I will table that report as soon as I have fixed a few typographical errors.

## PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

District Council of Coober Pedy—Report 2002-03

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

Modbury Hospital—Report 2002-03.

## QUESTION TIME

**The SPEAKER:** Before calling on questions without notice, can I advise the house that the Minister for Infrastructure will take the questions otherwise directed to the Deputy Premier, who is not with us just now.

## HOSPITALS, FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister for Health. How many surgical procedures at the Flinders Medical Centre have been can-

celled due to the shortage of anaesthetists? A woman with bowel cancer, who has just completed comprehensive treatment with radiation and chemotherapy to shrink her tumour, was due to have urgent surgery next Wednesday. The surgery was cancelled as part of a rolling cancellation of surgery, and the reason given was a shortage of anaesthetists. The woman has now had her surgery rescheduled for next week. Inquiries have revealed rolling cancellation of surgery at Flinders Medical Centre due to a shortage of anaesthetists.

**The SPEAKER:** For the duration of question time, such explanations of the kind the leader has made will not be tolerated. They are part and parcel of debate. The question itself stood alone and did not need elaboration with either anecdotal evidence or any other kind of comment. The Minister for Health.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** The issues in terms of surgery and any postponements of surgery because of staff shortages are of great concern. I do not have with me the exact number of cancellations, but I will endeavour to get that for the honourable member. But, issues in relation to work force shortages are impacting on the amount of work that we can do in our hospitals. We know that there are specific areas in terms of specialists, including anaesthetists and other specialty areas, where there are shortages, and we certainly know that there are shortages in terms of nurses, and I have spoken on many occasions in this house about the nurse shortages affecting our hospitals.

These work force shortages go right across the board in terms of those specialities, but they also go further than that: they go to the number of medical graduates coming out of our medical schools; they go to dentists and allied health workers. In fact, over the last few days I have indicated that I will be part of a delegation of state health ministers going to see the federal health minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott, and the federal Minister for Education, the Hon. Brendan Nelson, in the near future to discuss what might be done at a national level to address work force shortages across the board, and that will of course include the anaesthetists that the honourable member has referred to.

### FESTIVAL BRIDGE

**Ms RANKINE (Wright):** My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Arts. How will the new Festival Bridge between Station Road and the Festival Centre improve the use of the Riverbank precinct, especially during our internationally significant festival season?

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier):** Members opposite do not seem to regard the Adelaide Festival as good news. I thank the honourable member for the question. The Festival Bridge has just been completed, and less than an hour ago I officially opened it. The bridge, which is part of the \$3 million Riverbank stage 2 works program, creates a valuable link between North Terrace and the River Torrens which will encourage greater public use of Adelaide's beautiful Riverbank precinct and improve access to the arts, entertainment, leisure and recreational facilities as well as make it more attractive and safer for pedestrians.

The Riverbank precinct will be a hub of activity during the next few weeks, and the bridge will make it much easier for people to move around the various venues. I was pleased to hear today that people are already embracing the Adelaide Festival and, while some shows are sold out—including Circus Oz, the Blue Show and Bryn Terfel—there are still

seats available for many fantastic events. Almost 65 000 tickets have been sold so far. That is 15 per cent over the box office target for the whole festival. Members will remember that, last year, when we announced that WomAdelaide would be a yearly event rather than a biennial event, people said that going yearly would simply mean fewer people would come—it would be lost in the Adelaide Festival and that this would be the end of WOMAD as we know it.

**An honourable member:** Who said that?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Lots of people said it. Clearly, the member is not in touch with the arts scene. I can inform the house that WomAdelaide's ticket sales are up 20 per cent on last year, including the sale of more than double the number of interstate packages, and more than 36 000 tickets have been sold to Fringe shows. It is good to see that the Festival Bridge itself is also a work of art with its striking design which is in keeping with the angular theme of the Festival Centre. The architects have created a structure that respects the iconic architecture of the Adelaide Railway Station and the Adelaide Festival Centre and retains the views through the Festival Centre's public spaces. People have complained about the lack of access for decades; that there was no easy way to get from North Terrace to the Adelaide Festival Centre. There was this chasm.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I rise on a point of order, sir. The Premier appears to be giving the house evidence which the house already has possession of in the report of the select committee. This is evidence that was given to the select committee. It is therefore repetitious and, I ask you, sir, to rule him out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** If the material provided by the Premier is, indeed, contained in a report to the house. It is superfluous; he ought to move on.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Thank you, sir. I am not quite sure how this morning's ticket sales could have been in the select committee's report. These figures were given to me this morning. Seriously, the honourable member really does not like the arts. He wants to undermine anything positive that has happened. Perhaps if the shadow minister got off his phone and listened he would know that there is some great news: that WOMAD is bigger and better than ever and that Writers' Week will be the best ever. It will be a fantastic festival from Stephen Page. I am sure that people would be interested to know that, in the end, we decided not to name the Festival Bridge—

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The point of order is one of relevance. The question was about the opening of the bridge. We do not want a ministerial statement from the Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The member for Newland.

### HOSPITALS, WAITING LISTS

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland):** Will the Minister for Health advise the house why the wait for an appointment with an ear, nose and throat specialist at the Women's and Children's Hospital is now at least 18 months, with the wait for surgery beyond that? In December 2003 a constituent in my electorate received a letter from the Women's and Children's Hospital advising that her child had been placed on a waiting list for an appointment with an ear, nose and throat specialist. The letter from the hospital states:

We will send you an appointment letter in approximately 18 months time.

My constituent advised that her son is now nine years of age, and could well be 11 years of age before a determination is made on whether surgery is required.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** First, I would be very appreciative if the member for Newland would give me the details of the particular case. I would very much like to look into those details and follow through on that issue. I ask the member to provide me with those details to be able to do just that.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** Just listen; I will continue. As the house would know, and as I have explained on other occasions when I have spoken to the house about hospital activity, it is the clinicians who make the decision about the urgency or otherwise of a particular case. It is the clinicians, of course—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** Thank you, sir—who then place people on booking lists. Earlier this week on two occasions I explained to the house about the workload of our hospitals. On Monday I spoke to the house at length about the issue of emergency demand and that, on average, 4 000 more people per year are being admitted through our emergency departments.

On Tuesday I spoke at length about the issues of elective surgery and how we did more work with respect to our hospitals in the last 11 months of last year than at any time before. We have more work going through but demand is increasing. At the moment we have two major issues: emergency demand and elective surgery. There are major issues, and they are not new. There are concerns about waiting lists now just as there were during the time when the member for Finnis was minister.

I might just say that that is why the government in its last budget allocated an extra \$2.2 million above the budget to undertake additional elective procedures this year. The long-term answer to this issue will lie in the reform of the health system. The issue of managing galloping demand, so that we do not have the situation the member for Newland has raised today, is the aim of the health reform that this government is embracing and undertaking.

Finally, I was aware that the member for Finnis was doing a media release earlier today. I am not aware of the person the member for Finnis was highlighting in relation to a wait for a nine year old boy. However, I would appreciate always the names of people so that I can look into their situation. In relation to the matters the member for Finnis raised with the media, we did ring him at 1.10 p.m. asking for details so that we could get the information, but of course we were not given those details. I would appreciate that information from the member for Newland.

The final point is that during the negotiations for the Australian health agreement in the middle of last year, South Australia lost \$75 million over five years. We lost \$75 million, and the amazing thing is that the offer from the federal government was supported by both the member for Finnis and the Leader of the Opposition. That loss of \$75 million over five years at \$4 000 a procedure means that we lost almost 19 000 elective surgery procedures, thanks to the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Finnis.

## EVERY CHANCE FOR EVERY CHILD

**Mr SNELLING (Playford):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the government provided support to non-government services to respond to specific needs of local families under the government's program Every Chance for Every Child.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** I am very pleased to be able to talk about Every Chance for Every Child, a major policy initiative coming out of the generational health review to develop early childhood services. As members may recall, on 29 November last year the government committed \$16 million over four years to implement the universal home visiting programs to all new mothers and, also, to follow up with sustained home visiting for those who need it. This home visiting program for every newborn baby in South Australia is a commitment to early intervention that provides support to parents where they need it most—in their own homes. I am also able to inform the house that on 25 December (Christmas Day), I also announced that a further \$900 000 had been allocated to three non-government organisations with a special focus on parenting or children over five years.

As well, 117 community grants totalling \$90 000 are being awarded to local groups across the state as part of the annual Parenting SA grants scheme. Parenting SA grants will be used to promote a wide range of community activities, such as parents' support groups, child-care workers (which will allow parents to attend parenting education sessions), educational toys and playgroup equipment, breastfeeding education and first aid courses for parents. This funding will provide stability for these associations which in the past have had to rely on short-term grants or one-off commonwealth start-up funding. The three organisations to benefit from the \$900 000 are \$80 000 for Salisbury Connect, a project of Good Beginnings Australia, located at Salisbury North Primary school; \$40 000 per year for the Hope for the Children Foundation, a Rotary initiative in the north-eastern suburbs; and \$60 000 per year for Kidsafe South Australia, part of a national network.

On 9 January 2004 I received a letter from Miss Barbara Wellesley, the national director of Good Beginnings Australia, in which she thanked the government for its visionary approach through assistance with the Salisbury North Connect program being run by her organisation. Our commitment is to provide support for parents where they need it most—as I said, at home. These funds will help the community to help itself by community problem solving and supporting some excellent primary health care initiatives. It will also mean more support to the dedicated volunteers who contribute to these important community programs.

## HOSPITALS, WAITING LISTS

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is also to the Minister for Health. Is the minister aware that the wait for an urgent hip replacement at the Murray Bridge Soldiers Memorial Hospital is now two years and two months, even though the patient can hardly walk with the aid of a walking frame and is in constant pain? The specialist who placed the woman on the list for surgery in May 2003 and who has now told her that the surgery will be done in July 2005, has said in the letter to the woman:

Unfortunately, the number of operations I can perform are restricted by the hospital, presumably due to financial reasons. Any additional pressure you can apply to increase the funding will hopefully be helpful.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** I would just like to tell the house that, at 1.10 p.m. today, when my office received a media alert that the member for Finnis was doing a press conference on a number of important issues in relation to elective surgery, my office put in a call to the member for Finnis and it was not answered. My office then called the media adviser of the member for Finnis, who explained to my office that he was not aware of the names of these people. My chief of staff asked that we be informed so that we could get onto the issue and get to the bottom of it as soon as we possibly could. But, what a surprise! We have not had any information from the member for Finnis. Is this not something we see on such a regular basis in this house? Of course I am concerned to hear this issue. I would like to have the name of the person, member for Finnis, and I would like to have it today. If possible, you could walk across the house when I sit down and actually hand me the name of this person and the other people.

**Mr BRINDAL:** I rise on a point of order. Sir, you have ruled many times that members are supposed to direct their remarks through the chair. The minister is not doing that. She is trying to incite the member for Finnis and she should direct her remarks through the chair.

**The SPEAKER:** All honourable members know that the chair is to be addressed. I nonetheless commend the minister for the generous offer she has just made to the member for Finnis. I do not share the view that she is likely to incite (or excite) the member for Finnis. I trust it is not out of jealousy that the member for Unley makes the observation.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** Thank you for your guidance, sir. I would be very keen to receive the details, because I would also like to remind the house that just a few days ago the member for Finnis rose on an issue in relation to Victor Harbor. On investigation, we found that the situation was quite different from what he presented to the house. Perhaps it is time for the member for Finnis not to use people in his electorate and other people in this state for base political purposes. I am prepared to look at this issue. I will look into the issue of the Murray Bridge Hospital. Country health budgets were increased on average 4.83 per cent in the last budget. I have mentioned this in the house—and I wish the member for Mawson would listen and perhaps he would not have to make those remarks—

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mawson.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** If the member for Finnis, rather than rushing out and demanding that the current government sign up to an offer from the federal government that severely disadvantages us, perhaps he might think of the people to whom he refers. I will look into the matter as soon as I get the details.

## YOUTH TRAINING

**Ms BREUER (Giles):** My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What were the outcomes of a skills development program directed at young people in Whyalla and will the government continue to support this program? A skills development program was established last year in Whyalla to tackle a shortage of skilled workers in the engineering and allied trades. The program

also sought to promote training and job opportunities for young people. It was a very successful program and I am very interested in the minister's answer.

**The SPEAKER:** To help the member for Giles understand, what I said to members of the opposition also applies to her: gratuitous opinion in the course of making an explanation is highly disorderly.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Employment, Train and Further Education):** I thank the member for Giles, who has been a unremitting advocate for this pilot project in Whyalla, which works with the Whyalla youth alliance program. The pilot program she referred to last year was a success story in that it tailored, especially for young people, the opportunity to acquire training in areas of literacy, numeracy and job skills so they could apply for an apprenticeship in the engineering trades and other areas. The house would know that jobs are available in Whyalla for apprentices, but there is a lack of prevocational skills among the young people who might apply for the job. The innovative Whyalla youth alliance program was delivered in partnership between Spencer TAFE and the Edward John Eyre School, together with local industry. So far, more than 20 participants in the first program have been able to gain employment or are in further education and training. This number is expected to increase when outcomes from the remaining participants occur when they finish the program.

To build on the success of this pilot program, we are reinvesting again in Whyalla and will be working with the Economic Development Board in the Whyalla community as part of our new regions at work program. Regions at work is a major component of our South Australia works \$17.6 million skills for work package, aimed at building job opportunities by developing partnerships in local areas, so that individuals who have had a history of disadvantage have a better chance of learning skills and getting into employment.

The Whyalla youth alliance program is the first to be rolled out as part of the regions at work strategy and will account for \$180 000 and enable 30 young people over the next year to develop sufficient skills and enter apprenticeships in engineering related trades. The young people will gain a broad range of employment and skills formation opportunities, including locally based prevocational and mentoring support. The program will take young people who have been excluded from these opportunities and give them the basic skills they may not have acquired because of early school leaving. This will contribute to Whyalla's economic and social future. It has been an outstanding pilot program and we are pleased to support it in partnership with the Whyalla community. In particular, I commend the member for her interest in this program and say that it is one of those good partnerships that occurs between TAFE, schools, local industries and local communities, building futures for young people. In establishing the regional employment and skills networks it is important that local areas of success are commended and acted upon and extended to other regions.

## HOSPITALS, LYELL McEWIN

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Will the Minister for Health explain why the family of a terminally ill patient was asked by the Lyell McEwin Hospital to bring its own urinary tract catheters and sterilising solution to the hospital when the hospital ran out? A patient with a terminal illness was admitted to the Lyell

McEwin Hospital and stayed seven days before returning home. For the first five days after his admission the hospital provided the urinary tract catheters before it ran out, then the family of the patient was asked to provide its own catheters. The family was also asked to bring sterilising liquid, that is, Milton solution, for the catheters, even though the hospital admitted having sterilising liquid available in the obstetrics ward.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** I am very concerned to hear what the deputy leader has just said. I am aware that that was one of the set of cases that the deputy leader had spoken to the media about before question time, and it was certainly one of the cases that I asked for details about so that I could immediately follow it up. I am very concerned to hear this allegation. I will be looking into it immediately but, deputy leader, I would like the name.

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg):** As a supplementary question, in the event that it is accurate, I would ask the minister to give an undertaking to ensure that it will not happen to any other patients at the Lyell McEwin Hospital.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** I give an undertaking to this house that, when the deputy leader—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** We have already phoned the hospital. They are incredulous and they are checking, but they have no name. When the deputy leader provides me with a name, as I have said for four different examples today, I will immediately look into this issue and have it remedied.

#### HOSPITALS, REPATRIATION GENERAL

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Will the Minister for Health explain how \$28 000 in cash has gone missing from the administration office of the Repatriation Hospital, and will the minister assure the house that surgery at the hospital is not cut by a further 14 major operations to make up for the lost cash?

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** I was not aware that \$28 000 had gone missing from the Repat Hospital. I will immediately have that looked into. May I ask through you, sir, that if the deputy leader has any information that could help us resolve this matter he hand it over to me?

#### PORT WILLUNGA FORESHORE PRECINCT

**Mrs HALL (Morialta):** Does the Minister for the Southern Suburbs share the concerns of the Friends of Port Willunga and environmentalists who have expressed hostile opposition to a proposal to redevelop the Star of Greece/Port Willunga foreshore precinct? In June 2001 Planning SA committed \$500 000 towards a project to redevelop the Willunga foreshore and car park in the vicinity of the Star of Greece restaurant as part of the Coast Park Concept Plan developed by Planning SA and local government. Following a period of public consultation, a proposal for the development is now being promoted that is significantly different from the concept plan that was put forward during the community consultation process.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for the Southern Suburbs):** I thank the member for Morialta for her interest in the southern suburbs. No doubt she travels and visits there on occasion with some of her constituents who have holiday houses within my electorate. This issue has been one of some moment in the Port Willunga community over recent months.

There is a proposition to redevelop the foreshore at Port Willunga near the wonderful Star of Greece restaurant. That restaurant is surrounded by, I guess, fairly inadequate car parking facilities. It is not marked 'car park' and it looks pretty daggy, and it is too close to the coast. So, there is a whole range of reasons for trying to restore it.

The council undertook a study into this matter and, as the member said, a few years ago it consulted with the community about a particular proposal. The planning authority has undertaken to put some money towards the redevelopment if it meets certain criteria based on the coastal park that my colleague the Minister for Urban Development and Planning is promoting, and the local council has promoted this project. It also has gone out to talk to the local representatives of the Kaurna people, the traditional owners, about what they would like to see on that piece of land, and the Kaurna people have come up a particular preference. When you put that together with the local community, there have been some concerns about the reduction in car parks that may occur and the impact on some of the coast south of where the Star of Greece is situated.

I have been trying to resolve the concerns expressed by members of the community by working with them and the council and, to that end, I have given advice to both parties and organised a facilitator, Mr Ian Dixon (who has experience working with Aboriginal people and who has quite a vast background in local government administration), to try to work through the issues. I understand there have been a couple of reasonably successful meetings to try to get the parties talking about this issue and resolve it in a way which satisfies the needs of the local community, the council (with its aspirations to get funding from the state government) and, of course, the traditional owners. As with all these kinds of complex neighbourhood style disputes about what should happen, a lot of time will need to be put into it and compromise on behalf, I think, of all the parties. I think that a mature approach will be taken by all those parties, and I am confident that it will be resolved.

**Mrs HALL (Morialta):** My question is to the Minister for Urban Development and Planning. Is the minister aware that the proposal to redevelop the popular Port Willunga foreshore precinct will reduce the number of car parking spaces available by more than 50?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** I will take that question. It really follows on from the question asked by the member previously, and I think I alluded to that aspect in my answer to the former question. The number of car parking spaces would be reduced if the proposition that the council is still proposing were to go ahead. The proposition that the council is proposing involves having a reconciliation park, or centre, at the most northern part of the car park closest to the access to the beach, including extra car parking spaces on the southern part of the site in an area which is just rough roadway where cars informally park now. It is true, I think, that many members of the community—not necessarily all of them, but perhaps the majority—are concerned about the reduction in car parking and the impact that that might have on local streets, and so on, and the traffic issues that might result.

As I said before, these issues are being worked through, but it is true that the council's proposition involves a reduction of car parking spaces. I am not sure exactly how many. The member quoted a figure, and that might be right.

I cannot guarantee that. We are trying to work through this issue in an appropriate way.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Light):** Is the Minister for Environment and Conservation aware that the proposal to redevelop the Star of Greece precinct at Port Willunga involves, firstly, bulldozing approximately 60 metres of the cliff top south of the restaurant to create a new car park and, secondly, has been described by the Friends of Port Willunga as 'environmental vandalism'?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** I am really pleased that the member for Light is asking questions. I did not realise that he had constituents who holidayed in my electorate as well. But I am delighted that they do. I know that Port Willunga attracts many people from all over the state, because it is one of the crown jewels on the southern coast. In fact, I recall now that I was tipped off by one of my constituents that this matter would be raised in parliament—I thought it would be last week, so it has taken a little while for the message to get through the various channels. And I know what the channels are, because the constituent who told me this was pretty frank about what was going on.

I am aware that the Onkaparinga council proposes to remove some earth from a particular area. It was proposing to have a car park on the southern side of the Star of Greece and have cars parked at a relatively low level so that the sight lines would not be affected for those who have holiday houses opposite the car park. As I said, the Friends of Port Willunga certainly oppose this and are in debate and dispute with the local council over this issue. As I have also said, I am working with both parties to try to get a resolution which satisfies the interests of the local community as well as the indigenous traditional owners and the council. To that end, I have been speaking with both the community and the council and offering advice, and I have suggested the name of somebody to act as a facilitator. Both those parties have accepted that offer and the facilitator is working through the issues with them. I hope it is resolved in a way which satisfies everyone.

However, if the community continues to oppose the development, I do not believe the council will impose it upon them, which will mean a fairly rudimentary development of the car parking site, but that is really in the hands of local government. This is, in effect, a local government issue, so I am amazed that time has been taken up in question time today dealing with three questions about it; but I am more than happy to answer those three questions and any others that are put to me.

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY:** My question is again to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. What action will the minister take to protect the Willunga cliffs coastline from what has been described by the Friends of Port Willunga as environmental vandalism? This section of the Willunga cliffs is included on the National Heritage Register because of its 'geological significance and pristine nature'. The commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage states that amendments to the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 make it a criminal offence for any person to take action that has or is likely to have a significant impact on the national heritage values of a listed place without commonwealth approval.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** This is a fabulous fourth follow-up question. My answer to one question really anticipates the

question about to be asked. The proposal that is before the community is based on an overall proposition put forward by my colleague, the minister for planning, to develop a coastal park. One of the things that that coastal park—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** It was started by the former government. One of the requirements of that is to protect the coast by increasing the amount of coastal reserve and reducing the amount of car parking space. So, I find it strange that the proposition has been put that reducing car parking (which was the basis of the question put by the member for Morialta) is somehow contrary to environmental protection. In fact, what is being planned—and the local community certainly supports this—is to bring the car park back from where it is in relation to the cliff face. It is, in fact, far too close to the cliff face. There are toilets that are inappropriately placed and, under any of the proposals, it would be pulled back from the cliff face. There is a proposition, as I have said, to remove some soil on the southern side of the Star of Greece and have car parking put at a lower level so the line of sight is not interfered with. I think the local community is opposed to this for a range of reasons, but that is being worked through with the local community now.

The local council is very keen to have some sort of place where reconciliation can be focused upon and, certainly, it has been in the process of negotiating with the Kaurna people. That is one of the issues that needs to be worked through—how can it do that without losing too many car parking spaces? It is a matter of trying to put all the issues together to get a good outcome. I am confident that, in due course, wise heads will be able to achieve that.

#### JETSTAR

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** My question is directed to the Minister for Tourism. What action did the minister take over the past year to encourage the low cost airline Jetstar to service South Australia? The airline has announced that Adelaide is not to be included in the cheap deals arrangement, which will apply from 25 May for flights between eastern states capitals, including Tasmania.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism):** I thank the member for Waite for his question relating to flights into Adelaide on the new Qantas airline. One of the issues Adelaide faces is its relative inaccessibility, and we have been very anxious to get both domestic and international inbound seats into our city. One of our problems is that, currently, South Australia has 48 000 inbound domestic seats per week. Of course, that is substantially less than previously occurred when both regional airlines and Ansett airlines were coming into South Australia. In addition—

**Mr BROKENSHERE:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. Again, my point of order relates to relevance. The question was specific: what action did the minister take to ensure that South Australia got cheap airfares at the same time as the other states? That was the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Notwithstanding the member for Mawson's restatement of the question, the explanation provided by the member for Waite did not add to an understanding of the question, in my judgment, but certainly widened the ambit of the subject matter the minister could address. I am thinking that if you want to be as elegant as a pony then don't put down a camel's foot.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** Thank you for that analogy, Mr Speaker. When it has eventually rolled out its

whole program, the new Jetstar low-cost airline Qantas is introducing will substantially support South Australia and the rest of the country. Currently, in the first tranche of airline flights, Adelaide is not receiving extra seats into Adelaide and, of course, that is a disappointment. However, I can understand the economics of the matter in relation to the east coast where, for instance, I believe there are 240 000 inbound international seats compared to 3 300 inbound international seats into Adelaide, which therefore allows a larger market share for domestic travel in the first tranche of roll-outs. We have been in negotiation—

*Mr Brokenshire interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mawson must understand that the minister does not own the airline or the airport; and, presumably, the member for Mawson is not urging the government to take an equity position in either of those pieces of real property.

**Mr BROKENSHIRE:** No, I am not, sir, only some action to help the South Australian community fly.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Mawson, short of growing feathers, is unlikely to be able to do anything about it any more or less than the minister.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** In order to enhance the number of inbound flight seats both internationally and domestically we have, of course, been in constant negotiation with both Virgin and Qantas airlines. In fact, we have sought assurances from Qantas that we will not be forgotten in the next tranche of domestic flights from Jetstar. The problem is that Jetstar has insufficient aeroplanes to roll out the whole of its program at this time; and, in discussion, Qantas has explained to us that new aeroplanes have to be sought from overseas.

In relation to whether or not low-cost flights will advantage South Australia or disadvantage it, I think that the answer is not entirely certain, because one of the problems with domestic travel is that, where one has more accessible cheap cut-rate flights, you are just likely to get South Australians leaving South Australia as you are to get cheap flight pick-up coming towards us.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for West Torrens must have something other than nicotinic acid in his patches.

#### COMPANY DEED OF SETTLEMENT

**Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood):** My question is to the Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts. Who owns the South Australian Company Deed of Settlement and will there ever be an opportunity for this historic record to be displayed in South Australia?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts):** I note the honourable member's interest as a former librarian in this matter. I am delighted to inform the house that the state's most historic record of European settlement will come home to South Australia at about 4 p.m.—one hour's time. This will be the first time ever the South Australian Company Deed of Settlement will be in South Australia. It was signed, as members would know, in London by directors of the company—George Fife Angas, Thomas Smith and Henry Kingscote, and the 300 or so other shareholders of the South Australian Company—on 27 June 1836. For the past 30 years, a private collector in Melbourne has owned the deed: its rightful home, of course, is here in South Australia in Adelaide.

Past attempts to secure the historic record, including in 1982 when the deed was offered for sale at \$250 000, have been unsuccessful. At about 7.30 p.m. last night in Melbourne the deed was purchased by the State Library for \$300 000 plus fees of \$35 750. The purchase was made possible after the Premier approved state government funds, with the support of a private benefactor and commonwealth heritage funding. At this time the benefactor wishes to remain anonymous. However, an announcement about that person's generosity will be made when the deed is publicly unveiled at the State Library.

The Deed of Settlement consists of 20 leaves ruled in red, each with a five shilling revenue stamp in the margin. The register of some 300 shareholders and their holdings is on 12 leaves, with seals on silk ribbons, most shareholders signing in person. It is bound in calf with a large blue morocco gilt label on the front board. An extract from the deed describes the purpose of the South Australian Company within the colony of South Australia as follows:

... that a company should be established for the purpose of purchasing and renting land within the said colony and of erecting wharfs, warehouses, dwelling houses and other buildings upon part of the land purchased in the said colony and letting the same to the colonists. . .

The move to establish South Australia as a colony had not been without controversy. Throughout the 1820s various interests in Britain battled the colonial office to establish such a colony. Each plan was rejected on the basis that it would pave the way for a republic. In 1829 Edward Gibbon Wakefield wrote an article called, 'A sketch of a proposal to colonise Australasia'. At the time Wakefield was serving a three-year sentence in London's infamous New-Gate Prison for abducting an heiress who was thought to be under age.

It was not until 1833, when the South Australian Association of London was formed, that the idea for a colony gained momentum, resulting in the South Australian act and the deed. South Australia, as we all know, has a rich history and that is why we had to bring home the deed. It will take pride of place along the Treasures Wall of the State Library.

#### SOUTH-EAST RAIL PROJECT

**The Hon. M.R. BUCKBY (Light):** My question is to the Minister for Transport. Can the minister advise the house how much money is currently in the rail transport facilitation fund; and, considering the government is not going ahead with the South-East rail project, where will the money be spent? On 12 December 2003 the minister announced that the government will not proceed with the South-East rail project and, subsequently, has closed the tender process without accepting any tender. It has been put to me that the funds earmarked for the rail project could go towards upgrading roads in the South-East.

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Transport):** I thank the member for Light for his question. I will bring back the detail about the first part of his question, but certainly, in regard to the second part, the government still remains committed to trying to ensure that money that is in that fund is used for rail. That is our priority. It was a disappointment, of course, that the announcement that the government had previously made did not come to fruition, because, of course, the corporate player ultimately decided not to proceed with it. There are still discussions going on in regard to South-East Rail, but also other projects. It is heartening that the Victorians have now shown some interest in a rail project down in

the South-East area. The Green Triangle is one potential on which further work is being done. It is important that we do explore all options with regard to rail and we will continue to do so.

### HOSPITALS, REPATRIATION GENERAL

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Could the minister provide the house with details of a burglary at the Repat Hospital?

**The SPEAKER:** If this question relates to the matter raised by the member for Finnis and the Deputy Leader, quite properly the minister should seek to make a statement or a personal explanation at the end of question time and provide the information in that manner. Burglaries are burglaries and there is more than a dozen a day. The minister.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am very pleased to provide this information and I am very pleased to see that the member for Finnis has returned to the house. My office has contacted the Repat Hospital and I provide the following information to the house. The loss of \$28 000, referred to by the member for Finnis in a question earlier, was as a result of a burglary overnight on Tuesday 17 February. This burglary was reported to the police immediately. I would suggest that, if the member for Finnis has any more information about the matter, he provide that to the police.

The member for Finnis in asking that question failed to tell the house the circumstances of the loss of that money. He failed to tell the house the circumstances, because he was attempting to suggest a link between it and the management of patient care at the hospital. That is outrageous.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The patches are in activity again.

**The Hon. L. STEVENS:** I must say, it just says again and proves again that the member for Finnis has no credibility, will do or say anything for a headline, and certainly deserves his new name of 'Bad News Brown.' I just might add that I still have not got the names of the people who he raised earlier, so that I can actually do something about it. He will do anything for a headline. No credibility, no policy, no plan, no future, get a life.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, WORKCOVER CLAIMS

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Has there been any increase in departmental WorkCover claims made between 2001-02 and 2002-03? If so, what are the details of that increase? Has there been any change to the WorkCover rating and, if so, why?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I am not aware of any change to the WorkCover rating.

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** An increase in the rating—an improvement in the rating? I heard the last part of the member's question as being whether there had been any change to the WorkCover rating—was that the question?

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** She then indicated that there had been an increase. I would have thought that that was an improvement, so I am not following her train of thought.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** For the benefit of the minister I will repeat the question. Has there been any increase in departmental WorkCover claims made between 2001-02 and 2002-03 and, if so, what are the details? Has there been any change to the WorkCover rating and, if so, why?

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** I am not aware of any change to the rating, but I will check that piece of information with my department.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Will the minister address the house rather than engage in a private conversation across the chamber? If the minister has no desire to address the question of changes in the number of claims, then let the record stand accordingly, but if the minister intends to do so she should say so.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Sir, I indicated to the house that I would check with my department.

### CHILD ABUSE

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens):** My question is to the Minister for Social Justice. How is the government ensuring that children and young people under the guardianship of the minister are protected from abuse and neglect whilst in care?

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Social Justice):** I thank the member for West Torrens for his question. A number of different strategies have been employed to ensure that children and young people under the guardianship of the minister, in this case me, have the best protection and support. One of the initiatives I have established is a special investigations unit. This unit will undertake independent consideration and investigation of any allegations of harm or abuse by a registered carer, staff member or volunteer towards a child or young person in the care of the minister. This special investigations unit was recommended by Robyn Layton in the report 'Our Best Investment'. The unit is now headed up by Mr Steve Eglington, who previously served as the superintendent of police in Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory, and he brings some impressive credentials to this job.

In the past there have been many investigations of this nature, and I am sure many members in this place have received complaints via their constituencies. Quite often these investigations take time to follow up. They are lengthy and quite often disruptive to the children and young people themselves. That is why we felt it important to have an investigations unit independent of the investigations conducted through Family and Youth Services. The special investigations unit is separate from FAYS to ensure true independence in investigating concerns of abuse and neglect in care. It is expected that approximately 50 to 60 investigations by the unit will take place every year, and the investigative work is already under way.

As the minister and guardian of these children and young people I have stressed the need for the work of the special investigations unit to respond speedily to allegations of abuse and harm. The Layton review pointed out the need for us to shift from a reactive system to a pro-active system of child protection. This is why the special investigations unit is yet another part of our armoury with regard to the government's commitment to protecting our children.



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### MOOMBA GAS CRISIS

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I apologise to the house that I neglected the short third page of my earlier ministerial statement. In regard to the Moomba situation, I also recognise that Kathy Bowden from Business SA and Stephen Myatt from the Engineering Employers Association attended many of those meetings and were of great assistance in representing the interests of business. Ongoing monitoring of the repair to the Moomba plant and gas injected into storage will be carried out to ensure that market arrangements provide sufficient gas to meet South Australia's needs, particularly winter peak demands. I table a report into the Moomba gas crisis.

### SCHOOL CARD

**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:** On 24 February the member for Newland asked a question in the house about the progress of an application for School Card from one of her constituents. Within an hour of being provided with the name and contact details of the applicant, my department was able to investigate the status of the application and resolve the matter. I am advised by the School Card section of my department that a School Card application from the parent in question was received by the School Card section in term 4 and forwarded with all other term 4 applications to Centrelink on 17 November 2003. The applicant was initially found to be ineligible on the information originally provided and was advised by letter sent on 3 December 2003 that she was ineligible but that she could have her financial circumstances reconsidered by filling out an enclosed form and returning it in the reply paid envelope provided.

The parent has now supplied that information and, on the basis of the new information about her changed circumstances, has been deemed eligible for School Card in 2003. The School Card section had already received the relevant School Card grants on behalf of her children. Any parents who are advised that they are ineligible for School Card are automatically provided with the form to have their financial circumstances reconsidered. Tens of thousands of applications for School Card are received each year and eligibility is determined through an auditing and verification process by Centrelink. School principals also have the authority to waive school fees or enable parents to pay by instalments where a family is experiencing financial hardship.

### DECS REPORT

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

Leave granted.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Yesterday the member for Bragg asked me about the release of a report prepared by a DECS employee two years ago. At the time I was unclear what document she was talking about and the department has not been able to find a report prepared around the beginning of 2002. However, my department has identified a document prepared later in the year, which I believe is the one to which she refers. It is an internal working document not meant for public distribution but, nevertheless, I will put it in the mail to her.

### PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable minister, in making the first ministerial statement, alluded to a question asked in the chamber. I understand from the member for Newland, however, that the member was not contacted again. Had the usual respect been paid by the minister's department to any and all members of parliament, they would have at least taken the trouble to let her know not only of the course of action that they had followed but also the outcome before any remark about it was made publicly. In the absence of any statement made by the minister, had the member for Newland chosen to raise the question as a matter of privilege, the chair would have been compelled on the face of it to agree that privilege had been breached in that the trust taken by the constituent in approaching the member of parliament is undermined where the department, upon being advised by the minister of the circumstances, then simply goes about fixing the problem—commendably—but ignoring the fact that their duty and responsibility is to parliament, which has the delegated authority of the constituent and the trust of all our citizens to ensure that they and their interests are properly protected.

My point, as chair in this place, is to ensure that proper respect is paid by executive government—and, more particularly, its bureaucracy—to the role and function of parliament in society. The practice 20 years ago, when I first came here, would have caused uproar in this chamber had it been drawn to the attention of honourable members, and I guess it was the wipe-out of 1993 that brought about the ignorance which there appears to be in consequence of the changes that have occurred not only in this chamber but also in the wider structures of the bureaucracy. Further indifference by a bureaucracy and a minister to the role and function of parliament might bring some fairly swift and unpleasant consequences.

**The Hon. P.L. WHITE:** Sir, I am not sure I understand. Yesterday, I asked the honourable member to supply me with the details so I could follow up with the constituent, and that is exactly what I did, and I am reporting back to the house that I have followed up.

**The SPEAKER:** That is acknowledged. The chair understands what the minister has done and, by doing it, the minister has avoided the necessity for the member for Newland to make a formal complaint. Had the minister not done that, and if by chance before this moment the member for Newland had complained of what had occurred, the chair would have had no alternative but to acknowledge that a breach of privilege had occurred. It is a particular kind of privilege, but it is at the very root of the reason why parliament itself exists. If the minister does not understand that, may I respectfully suggest that a little time with Erskine May before bed will help.

**Mr BRINDAL:** Mr Speaker, all your rulings are important, but that was a very important ruling. Could I most respectfully suggest that you explain further to members by way of a letter? I think it touches on some fundamental issues. You obviously do, too, and I think some people do not quite understand what you are getting at. I just suggest that, if you write to members, it might be helpful to us all.

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

### STATE ISSUES

**The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition):** I rise today to raise the issue of the priorities of this government and the way in which debate on political issues is currently being conducted in the state. Last week and this week within this house some of the legislation that we have dealt with would not really rate as of great importance. For instance, last week, with the cat and dog bill, we saw the Attorney-General go out and make a huge issue of what was perhaps at the minor end of things, to mask the proper debate that should have taken place about employment.

I would have thought that the Labor Party cared about jobs. When I asked the minister questions about employment last week, the member for West Torrens (who is also the President of the Labor Party) said, 'Haven't you got more important issues to ask about?' When we are running the state and we see that the consumption of cats and dogs is more important than employment, I think there are some pretty serious questions to ask. We spent last week talking about the consumption of cats and dogs, and we probably saw more enthusiasm and passion about that than we did with respect to the answers about jobs that we received. The Attorney-General gave us one instance as to why we needed to pass that legislation, and what we have now discovered is that that particular circumstance is not even covered by the bill. I am told that the cat was actually a fox! It just shows that the Attorney-General tried to dominate the media for two days last week on something which he had drummed up and which was not correct, to hide the fact that unemployment figures were floating around which were very uncomfortable.

We saw the same thing today. With respect to health, the minister basically very much signalled to us that she is interested in addressing only the issues that are going to be raised in the media—'If it's going to be in the media, give me the name and we'll race out and fix that one. We won't do anything about the system.' The message to the minister is: get on and fix the system. Do not just worry about finding out which issue is going to be raised, what their name is, what their son's name is, or whatever, so they can go and cover the bases. The government should fix the system. If they are going to respond only to matters that will become media issues, it says a lot about the way in which this government operates and how it is not fair dinkum on the big picture.

Last week the minister for employment was asked questions about employment, and they were very important questions. The right to work is one of the most important rights that people have. The state was going very well when this government took over, and that momentum continued. But what has been hidden by this government is what has happened with unemployment. In July, Australia was 6 per cent and South Australia was 6 per cent. Since then, we have gone up to 6.5 per cent and Australia has gone down to 5.6 per cent. We have heard the Premier say, 'Never have so

many South Australians been employed as now.' That is rubbish; that is totally out of date. For seven months in a row we have lost jobs. In the last one the minister made half an admission. All of a sudden, she said that the job market had been flat. Well, Montefiore Hill is also flat—it must be flat, because for seven months in a row we have lost jobs.

I do not know whether the minister has had the opportunity to look at the monthly figures. I certainly have, as has the member for Unley. What we see is really alarming. In Australia, 171 000 jobs have been created in that time; in South Australia, there were 4 000 fewer jobs. For women, 12 000 full-time jobs have disappeared in this state over the last seven or eight months. That has taken the number of women employed full time from 166 000 to 154 000. One in every 14 women in this state employed full time in April now has not got a job.

The minister has blamed globalisation and skill shortages. Last week she said it was all about a lack of skilled people. I encourage the minister to look at the figures that were released today because they show that skilled vacancies across Australia are going up. Skilled vacancies in South Australia are falling. The jobs are just not there. Basically, this government has covered up the whole unemployment story. The facts are more important.

Time expired.

### HEFFERAN, Ms K.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** I rise to pay tribute to an important volunteer leader in the southern community. Tomorrow marks the last day in employment of Kay Hefferan of the Fleurieu Volunteer Resource Centre Incorporated. We spend much time in this parliament paying attention to our volunteers, and well we should. One of my criticisms of the current system of Australian honours is that it is very difficult for hardworking community members to be recognised, so it is therefore necessary that we devote time in this place to pay tribute to them.

Kay Hefferan has been associated with the Fleurieu Volunteer Resource Centre almost since its inception. The centre commenced in December 1983 when a subcommittee was formed to apply for funding. In 1984, coordinator Trish Meldrum commenced working part time for the Noarlunga Volunteer Service, as it was then called. It opened an office in Football House, Gawler Street, Port Noarlunga and held its first annual general meeting in August 1985. At that time, there were 90 registered volunteers and 27 registered organisations.

In December 1985, it had grown so much that it needed to move, and the new location was Dyson Road, Christies Beach. In April 1986, Kay Hefferan was appointed as coordinator. This was a paid position, working with one volunteer. Kay set about the task with professionalism, commitment, passion and equity, which she has maintained for nearly 20 years. It was not long before she started introducing new programs to supplement the basic function of the centre.

The centre's main function is to recruit volunteers, to match them with appropriate volunteer organisations and to support both the organisations in managing their volunteers and the volunteers themselves in being able to undertake their important community role, with even greater effectiveness. One of the first programs introduced in Kay's time was Leisure Buddy, which was a pilot program to support young disabled people. Things were growing again, so in October

1991 the Noarlunga Volunteer Service moved with 11 office volunteers to the Noarlunga Health Village and shared a small office space with the Healthy Cities Program. The Noarlunga Volunteer Service at that stage had 950 registered volunteers.

In January 1992, again under Kay's leadership, the Community Visitors Scheme was commenced. In February 1992 an important milestone was reached when the 1 000th volunteer registered. In 1992, the first conference hosted by the then Noarlunga Volunteer Service, 'Unemployment and Volunteering, Facing the Challenge' was held. In January 1993, the Volunteer Management Program commenced, and that was under a national network funded by the federal Department of Family and Community Services.

Growth continued. In May 1993 there were two new part-time staff, a liaison officer and a public relations officer, and they ventured into computerisation with good old Windows 3.1. A new program was commenced in July 1993, the Colonnades Shopping Buddies Program, and in 1994 the service celebrated the 10th annual general meeting. In January 1997 the name changed to the Fleurieu Volunteer Resource Centre, which reflected the fact that the reach of this admirable organisation was extending throughout the Fleurieu to all places between Noarlunga and Victor Harbor. In June 1998 the centre celebrated its first car. In April 1999 it received a delegation from Japan, which was researching a regional centre. Kay Hefferan has contributed much to the Onkaparinga community. The Minister for the Southern Suburbs joins me in wishing her well in her retirement.

### SALINE SLUG

**Mr BRINDAL (Unley):** In this morning's *Advertiser* there appeared a very small article that should have alarmed all South Australians. Irrigators are being alerted to a saline slug that is coming down the river as a result of expected inflows into the Menindee Lakes. The house should understand that the Menindee Lakes are not solely the property of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. The lakes were in existence even prior to the Federation of the Commonwealth of Australia and therefore the genesis of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission. Some time since the commission's inception, the retaining walls of the lakes have been added to and heightened. That means that the lakes have a unique position in that—and I am not sure of the exact figures, the minister can inform the house—the bottom quarter, third or even half of the lakes is the property of the government and the people of New South Wales.

The only waters controlled by the commission are those in the lake after it reaches the level at which the New South Wales government ceases ownership; then, in effect, the commission becomes custodian. Recently, the minister hoped (rather futilely) that we would get a benefit from the recent rains in Queensland. I say 'futilely' because, if you check with the commission, there are 200 gegalitres of water estimated to be coming from Queensland towards the Menindee Lakes, but the Menindee Lakes are so low at present that the complete inflow of that water will not raise the water in the lakes to a level at which the Murray-Darling Basin Commission can exercise control. It is not bad news, because at least there will be some water back in the Menindee Lakes; at least they are not going to cart water by train from Adelaide to Broken Hill and draw water from this end of the river because Broken Hill was virtually without water supplies. So, the fact that there is some water there is good.

The bad story, though, is that, in preparation for the sweet freshwater coming into the Menindee Lakes, the government of New South Wales is about to release highly saline water down the Darling River. I believe this will have a severe environmental impact on the anabranches of the Darling, on the Darling itself and on the State of South Australia. This is not commission water: this is New South Wales water, the salinity of which I think is currently above 3 000 ECs. It is highly saline water that cannot be used, but the New South Wales government is about to use the Darling River system as a drain to flush away water it does not want into South Australia. Our irrigators have been warned that there is a saline slug coming down the river. The member for Finnis will be particularly unamused, I would think, because at the end of this system is the lakes system (Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert), which have been hovering at unacceptable saline levels for most of the last two years because of the lack of flows in the system. None of that is the commission's fault, the minister's fault, or anybody's fault apart from God, who did not let enough water flow into the system.

This problem needs resolving. I do not think it is good enough. Our EPA, as the member for Colton knows, says to SA Water, 'You cannot put that sewerage water into the gulf any more, because there are too many phosphates and nitrates in it', and we spend millions of dollars on a recycling scheme in Whyalla because of unacceptable consequences to the environment of discharging sewerage water directly into the gulf. Yet the New South Wales government can, apparently with impunity, discharge highly saline water into a system simply because it wants to and we, the downstream state, have to bear the consequences—every irrigator along the way has to bear the consequences and every householder in Adelaide may well have to bear a consequence.

**Mr Caica:** What is the point of intercepting it?

**Mr BRINDAL:** Yes. I think this is unacceptable. I think it is intolerable that the New South Wales government can do this to the people of South Australia. It is not a commission problem alone, but the Premier of this state, who supposedly gets cooperation from his interstate counterparts, should go to Bob Carr and say, 'Why is the member for Finnis being given a huge slug of highly saline water from the Menindee Lakes when it is a highly unacceptable environmental practice?'

### STRATA MANAGERS

**Mr RAU (Enfield):** Today I want to inform the house of some work I have been doing recently in relation to strata titles and community titles and to advise what my investigations have revealed. In the last couple of years I have been involved with issues arising from real estate and the way members of the public are feeling themselves aggrieved by the real estate industry. A side issue that came out of this is complaints by people about strata and community titles and the legislation governing them.

In August of last year, I placed an advertisement in *The Advertiser* indicating that I was conducting an inquiry in relation to this matter and that anybody who had anything to say on the subject would be welcome to make submissions. In the event, I received something in excess of 50 written submissions from people throughout South Australia, and a number of those individuals also contacted me personally and came and saw me to further relate details of the matters that they put in their written submissions, and I am very grateful to those individuals. Also, coincidentally, at a similar time,

the Attorney-General's Department published and distributed a discussion paper dealing with strata and community titles. I found that discussion paper very helpful, because it touched on a number of subjects which were drawn to my attention by various members of the public who contacted me, and it set up some useful framework for a discussion of this topic. I also place on record my appreciation of the efforts of Dr Coral Baines in the Parliamentary Library who did a splendid job assisting me with some of the research in relation to this matter.

I hope that the parliament will, in the fullness of time, have an opportunity to consider the recommendations that came out of this inquiry in the form of legislation. These changes that I would like to see parliament consider fall into a few broad categories, which I will run through.

First, there should be greater supervision of strata managers. At the moment there is a disconnection between strata managers and, for example, real estate agents. Real estate agents presently have to be registered, there is a licensing regime and there is some modest supervision of them through the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (although certainly not enough supervision). There are other people involved in real estate such as property managers and strata title managers who are not subject to any legislative code at all, in effect, and, because they are not licensed and not subject to having their licences removed, there is very little effective supervision of these people by the government or any external authority. As a consequence, they are, to a large degree, a law unto themselves. There are many strata managers in the marketplace who do an excellent job, but my inquiry has revealed that there are many who are not doing a good job, and those unit holders who are aggrieved by the conduct of these people have virtually nowhere to go. They wind up effectively talking to themselves and it is an extremely frustrating experience for these people. Many of them are elderly people who do not have the resources or skills to take on these people, and it makes their lives a misery. Undoubtedly, we need to have both registration and licensing of strata managers and a code of conduct which is enforceable by individuals who feel themselves to be aggrieved.

Greater accountability of strata managers is the second broader topic, and this deals not just with their responsiveness to the needs of unit holders but also goes to questions of how they discharge their broader functions. Do they conduct meetings of strata title corporations according to the law? Do they ensure that adequate insurance policies are held and retained on behalf of strata title corporations? Do they deal with issues relating to sinking funds and so forth? Unfortunately, in many cases, the answer to all those questions is: no, they do not. Another important area that needs to be looked at, and I will touch on this briefly, is conflicts of interest. My inquiries reveal that there are many instances where there is a conflict of interest between the strata manager, the individual unit holders for whom the strata manager is supposed to be providing a service and associated providers of services such as repair operations and maintenance operations which may, in fact, be an offshoot of the same strata manager. This needs to be looked at very carefully.

Time expired.

### CONSCIENCE VOTE

**Mr SCALZI (Hartley):** Today I wish to talk about the conscience vote, and I want to refer to an article which

appeared in *Il Globo* and which is entitled, 'Rann chiede 'voto di coscienza' per ridurre il numero dell pokies.' I read that in Italian in the spirit of multiculturalism because what it says here is that, for the first time in Australia's history, the Premier Mike Rann, is seeking a conscience vote from all members to reduce the number of poker machines by 3 000.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Has the member for Hartley, in that last sentence, just quoted an article?

**Mr SCALZI:** I am paraphrasing.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable member knows that he must refer to the Premier either by his electorate name or by his title.

**Mr SCALZI:** I am translating, as best I can, from the Italian text. I understand that the Premier is seeking to reduce by 3 000 the number of poker machines, from 16 000 to 13 000. Obviously, *Il Globo* is reporting this great initiative and support for the conscience vote by the Premier. I support the reduction of poker machines. What concerns me is that the Premier, as champion of the conscience vote, really is shown to be inconsistent in not telling the Australian/Italian community where he stands on all the other issues. I think it is time that we were open and up-front with the different communities and not spin one story in one section and then spin another.

The community wants to know where the Premier stands, for example, on the liquor licensing legislation that we passed a few days ago, which allowed hotels to open from 12 a.m. to 2 a.m. on Good Friday. I am sure that the Italian community would have wanted to know that the Premier did not give a conscience vote to his colleagues. One has only to look only at *Hansard* and the contributions made by the members for Playford and West Torrens and, indeed, the Attorney-General on the issue. Obviously, the Premier, the champion, the great supporter of the conscience vote in Australia, did not allow a conscience vote on something that matters to the community.

Equally, when will he give a conscience vote with respect to smoking in gaming rooms? I note that he did not allow a conscience vote with respect to legislation relating to the casino and the same sex superannuation bill, which was introduced by the member for Florey in this chamber. There was no conscience vote. I continuously questioned the Premier and he said that he would check to see whether he had received correspondence from community groups—no conscience vote. So, it is about time the Premier allowed the whole community to know where he stands on these issues.

The reduction in poker machine numbers by 3 000, obviously, is welcome but, I am sure, the Australian/ Italian community, indeed, the whole community, would want a conscience vote on superannuation for same sex couples, stamp duty, superannuation and the other 54 pieces of legislation. It is no good going to Carnivale, and all those functions the Premier supports, and then let us down where it counts on these important moral issues because he does not allow his colleagues a conscience vote. I thought that, when I read this newspaper article, it was a bit rich to see the headline referring to the Premier.

In an article in today's *Advertiser* entitled 'Matters of Social Conscience Apply their Pressure', my former lecturer and tutor, Professor Dean Jaensch, states:

For once, members have to individually decide what to do, and carry the can for their decision. Each member that is to decide without the protection of a party line, and each member, especially in 'hung' parliaments, has to bear up against intense pressure and personally explain their decision.

The Premier should explain to the Italian community about his inconsistency on things that matter to them.

Time expired.

### BEACH LITTER

**Mr CAICA (Colton):** I want to speak today about litter and, in particular, litter along our local beaches. It has been an issue for a long while, and not just in my area. I guess that Australia is a coastline of beaches and it is a problem where ever humans congregate. A gentleman in my area, Simon Holmes, along with others, walks along the beach in the morning and picks up an enormous amount of rubbish, and I congratulate him for doing that. Lately Mr Holmes has got a little cranky as a consequence of his belief that the local council is not playing its role in cleaning up the beaches as well as it could and he dumped a whole host of rubbish on the council chamber's doorstep.

He certainly made his point and made it very well. As I said, he dumped that rubbish at the council chambers of the City of Charles Sturt. Perhaps he was right, that the council does not put enough effort into cleaning up the beaches but, of course, if you focus on the litter and pollution that occurs at the beach, it is quite often the case that those people using the beaches are not necessarily the sole cause of that rubbish on the beach. Of course, if a person throws rubbish into the gutters at Unley, for example, it will find its way to the beach, and that is the case for most parts of metropolitan Adelaide.

The Charles Sturt Council, certainly, is not averse to issuing expiation notices when it comes to people parking incorrectly. Indeed, it does an excellent job of ensuring that people comply with the laws and regulations relating to walking dogs along the beach. Mr Holmes is arguing that, perhaps, expiation notices ought to apply to those people who are on the beach and polluting at that time, and that might well be one strategy that needs to be looked at. An important person in the past once said that if you shoot one you educate 1 000, and I know that those people who were fined for walking dogs without leads along the beach certainly set the scene for others to comply with the regulations that apply to walking dogs along the beach.

I hope that the Charles Sturt Council will seriously consider the role it will play in regard to litter solutions. However, I return to the point I was attempting to make, namely, that it is not just the people who use the beach who are the sole cause of any litter and pollution. Certainly, in recent times, those people who have been using jetties and catching crabs have been throwing rubbish and other offal into the sea, and I have raised that with several ministers previously.

*The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:*

**Mr CAICA:** It is certainly off that they are doing such a thing, that is for sure. The interesting scenario about jetties is that where the problem might be on, say, the Henley or Grange jetties it is a Transport SA responsibility; when the rubbish goes into the water it is either an environmental issue or a PIRSA issue; and by the time it finds its way to the shore it is a council issue. So, when the rubbish hits the shore it becomes a council issue. Pollution, litter and cleaning up is a whole of community responsibility, and we need an approach where everyone takes responsibility for the rubbish and the litter that is created in this state.

There are many solutions and the best of them is to make sure that we do not throw rubbish into the streets, because every river and every little outlet is the city's anus and any

rubbish in those rivers and outlets finds its way to the areas in which we live. It is in those drains and in the water that comes—

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**Mr CAICA:** Thank you; I appreciate the assistance of the minister. All the rubbish finishes up at the western beaches, and it is not appropriate. We need to make sure that that type of pollution litter does not go into the system. It requires a whole of community approach and a whole of government approach, as well as all levels of government, to ensure that that does not happen. This is only the stuff we see, of course; a lot of stuff we cannot see, and that creates damage as well. I want to congratulate Mr Holmes for his work in heightening awareness of the problem.

He has brought the problem to people's attention. I will work closely with Mr Holmes and others in terms of our beaches and areas elsewhere that create and cause pollution, so that there will not be as much litter as there has been and, in fact, there will not be any at all. There are many solutions, and we need to work collectively to resolve the issue.

Time expired.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Newland would know that when such an inquiry is made, the honourable member may not leave the chamber. The member for Newland will return to the chamber.

*A quorum having been formed:*

### PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE: WORKCOVER CORPORATION

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I move:

That a Privileges Committee be established to examine the evidence of the privileged matter raised by the member for Davenport, that the committee report back to the parliament by the next sitting day, or as soon as possible thereafter, and that the committee report back to the house on whether there has been a breach of privilege.

The member for Davenport last week raised a matter of privilege in relation to WorkCover. In summary, the issue was whether WorkCover had breached the privileges of this parliament by the use of letters from members of parliament for other purposes. Mr Speaker, I know the matter was referred to you. You have come back to the house today and said that there is a prima facie case to be investigated. I believe the next appropriate step is that we establish a committee of the house to investigate the evidence in order to cross-examine any witnesses who may be called, to make sure there is a thorough and in-depth investigation and to report back to the parliament on the findings of that investigation. Therefore, I move this motion for the house to consider.

Subsequently, I will move that the Privileges Committee consist of two members from either side of the house and that it be chaired by the Speaker of the house. It is probably inappropriate at this stage to name those members, but my very strong view is that this needs to be investigated by a committee of five, and it is appropriate to have two members from either side of the house and you, sir, as chair of the Privileges Committee.

**The SPEAKER:** The deputy leader is quite correct. It is not competent for the house or the chair to even contemplate accepting nominations to a committee that does not exist, until and unless the house so resolves.

Motion carried.

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Davenport or any other honourable member wish to nominate how the committee will be comprised?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** I move:

That the committee consist of five members of this house to be chaired by the Speaker and that the members from the opposition benches be the members for Bragg and Heysen.

**The SPEAKER:** Are there any further nominations?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Infrastructure):** It would ordinarily be courtesy for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to let us have time to consider who would be on the committee but, as it appears courtesy has fled, I nominate the Attorney-General (member for Croydon) and the Minister for Administrative Services (member for Cheltenham).

**The SPEAKER:** There being no further nominations, I declare the committee be comprised of the five members nominated by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Infrastructure (Leader of the Government Business in the House).

#### PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT BOARDS

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Mr Speaker, you ruled on two matters of privilege today. I appreciated being able to deal with that committee first. I now rise on the second matter. I move:

That a Privileges Committee be established to examine the evidence on the privilege matter raised by the member for Stuart, that the committee report back to the parliament by the next sitting day or as soon as possible, and that the committee report back to the house on whether there has been a breach of privilege.

Any member may raise a matter of privilege in this house. It is then a matter for the Speaker to assess whether there is a prima facie case. Mr Speaker, in this case you have reported back to the house that in your view there is a prima facie case. Clearly, the house needs to investigate that matter further. I think this is a very important step in terms of upholding the principles of the house. If in fact you had reported back that there was no prima facie case, then I would see no need to proceed further. But, as you have reported back there could be such evidence, I believe there is an established practice of this parliament that a Privileges Committee should be established. Therefore, I so move.

**The SPEAKER:** In the context of the proposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has relied upon the remarks made by the member for Stuart, which were general. The words chosen by the member for Stuart and my clear recollection were not that there was a contempt of parliament but, rather, that parliament had been held in contempt. The two are distinctly different. The factors which caused me to believe that, prima facie, there was the need to investigate it are somewhat wider than whether that advertisement provided to me by the member for Stuart took the parliament for granted and, therefore, held it in some measure in contempt; but rather to discover by what process the bureaucracy came to such conclusions as would enable it to undertake the course of action of which it did.

If the honourable member for Finnis intends that to be so then the house needs to understand this point. If, on the other hand, the honourable member for Finnis is restricting the inquiry to what he may have thought the member for Stuart

said was a contempt of the parliament, then, of course, that does not have legs. The chair chooses in this instance to understand the member for Finnis and the member for Stuart to have meant that it was the prospect of a wider malaise through ignorance, giving rise to the offence to which he adverted in his remarks that enabled the chair to conclude that, prima facie, there was a necessity to establish what happened and report that back to the house with any such recommendations as the committee may make, in the event that such committee were formed. Is that so?

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Mr Speaker, that is exactly so. In fact, that was always my understanding of the very point that the member for Stuart raised.

**The SPEAKER:** Can I therefore invite the Deputy Leader to construct a form of words, and I assure him that he will have an adequate measure of time to do that, which properly allows the house to, in the event that it seeks to do so or wishes to do so, debate the matter in the proposition that he puts to us. The form of words is what is important. Would he mind writing that out, thereby ensuring that nobody is ambiguous about it, nobody has any misunderstanding. Can I invite him to do that now, assuring him that he has the patience of the chair in hand.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Yes, certainly.

**The SPEAKER:** Whilst the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is doing that may I point out to all honourable members that they ought not to raise questions of privilege or points of order which might go to a motion unless they have in hand a proposition to put to the house at the time. It is still part of the practices of this house. It used to be explicitly spelled out in section standing order 138. However, that standing order somehow or other got overlooked in the revision of 1990 and probably ought to be reinstated to ensure that members do not go off on frivolous points of order and inquiries of a kind which merely delay the house or otherwise interrupt the member speaking at the time, and thereby put a measure of rigour and discipline into the way in which members do conduct themselves when seeking to clarify the way in which the house undertakes its business. We are not here to try and have a free for all within the standing orders. We are here to conduct business in the public interest. I repeat: we are not here to make friends or enemies; we are here to make improvements.

**Mr Brindal:** Exactly right.

**Ms Breuer:** Oh, hypocrite.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! In light of the remark I just made, I do hope the member for Unley has something on paper.

**Mr BRINDAL:** No, sir. I was just called a hypocrite across the chamber and I object to that and I ask the member to withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** Whoever it was that called the member for Unley a hypocrite, the honourable member involved must withdraw. It is undesirable to refer to even the behaviour of a member as being hypocritical; that is so close to the line it does not matter. But to say that a member is a hypocrite is unparliamentary and has been for a very, very long time—longer, can I tell the house, than it has been unparliamentary to call a member a bastard. Whichever member said that—they are not named by the member for Unley—I will invite to simply withdraw.

**Ms BREUER:** Mr Speaker, in view of the comments that you made, I withdraw my statement in calling the member for Unley a hypocrite.

**The SPEAKER:** The honourable member for Giles has withdrawn without any condition and the chair accepts that explanation and I trust the member for Unley will too. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Mr Speaker, my understanding of the matter as raised by the member for Stuart is as follows:

That the matter of privilege is that the action of advertising for board positions under the name of a proposed act which has still not been debated or passed by the parliament has therefore been in contempt of the parliament and its right to decide the matter before such action is taken.

**The SPEAKER:** Can I tell the honourable member that in my deliberations, long and tedious, at no time did I contemplate that any such action constituted a contempt. I was asked to rule on whether there was, *prima facie*, a case for privilege, and that is a different matter, where the privileges of the parliament, without fear or prejudice being imposed on it as an institution or any member of it, can proceed to determine what change, if any, to law should be made. I, therefore, would tell the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that if that were his motion it would not receive my support. He may choose to recast it so that it seeks to examine the manner in which the decisions were made in order to discover whether the privilege of parliament, without it having been unduly influenced by such advertisements, was infringed in its future deliberations of the legislation upon which the advertisement, at public expense, relies or refers.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Mr Speaker, in light of the point that you have made, I am only too happy to modify the wording slightly which is as follows:

That the matter of privilege is that the action of the advertising of the board positions under the name of a proposed act, which has still not been debated or passed by the parliament, has therefore breached the privilege—and I am using the words I have modified this to be—of the parliament and its right to decide the matter before such action is taken.

You yourself used the words that the action was ‘contemptuous’ of the parliament and that is why I used the word ‘contempt’, but I am only too happy in light of the fact of what you have just said to use the words ‘therefore breached the privilege of the parliament’, which is what I believe, and I believe we are talking about exactly the same point. It was a matter of words.

**The SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded?

**Honourable members:** Yes, sir.

**The SPEAKER:** Is there any speaker for the motion? I take it that the remarks made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition are in support of the motion. Any opposition to the motion? The honourable the minister.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. You, earlier today, found there was a *prima facie* case which, in effect, means a case to answer. I would like to answer that case.

On Wednesday 18 February the member for Stuart raised a point of order, as he described it. He made two claims in relation to the ad being described: first, that the advertisement assumes that the parliament will rubber stamp this and is holding the parliament in contempt; and, secondly, whether or not the parliament had approved the necessary funding for these advertisements to be placed in the newspapers.

I will read elements of the advertisement because a close reading of it makes clear that there is no contempt of this parliament and no intention to undermine the role of the parliament. This advertisement was placed in preparation for legislation being passed through this house so that we would have a seamless move to the new arrangements. My department has been going through this exercise for close to two years. We have a unit operating within my department planning for this reform. This is a part of that reform process, and that whole unit has been acting before the legislation has been brought in, in anticipation of that legislation being passed through this house. This advertisement is merely a continuation of that effort. We make plain in the ad that the membership of the board is contingent on that legislation passing. I will table the ad now, and copies are available to be circulated amongst members. Paragraph 2 provides:

Once enacted, the *Natural Resource Management Act* will establish regional boards.

The key sentence is:

Roles, terms and conditions are subject to the passage of the Bill through the South Australian Parliament.

It makes it absolutely plain that the applications for membership of that board are contingent on the legislation going through the parliament, as is appropriate. It also makes plain that there will be a second round of advertisements once the legislation is passed, so we are not cutting off opportunities for any members. We merely wanted to get the process going so we would have a seamless transition, because the community has been anticipating this legislative change for some time and does not want a hiatus between the existing and new arrangements, as it would be to the detriment of people in rural South Australia. That is why we put the ad in the paper. It was done with my authority, which answers the question of how and why it was done. My name appears on the bottom of the ad, which makes plain that it is my priority.

I also point out a precedent for this action. When the former government was in power—and I think the leader, the member for Frome, was the responsible minister at the time—the former government established NRM boards using taxpayers’ money. It put ads in the paper calling for nominations for those boards, as I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will agree, in anticipation of legislation going through this parliament. The word ‘hypocrisy’ has been used today. It is incredibly ridiculous for the opposition to complain about a situation exactly parallel to what it did in regard to natural resource management arrangements when in government.

In addition, on coming to government and becoming a minister I established an NRM council to give me advice about this reform process. A council will be established under this legislation. That council I guess is the anticipatory body for that council to be established eventually under legislation. That has been operating now for almost two years and there has been no objection to that process. It is completely consistent with getting through the reform process. It is essential for governments to anticipate the outcomes of legislation, otherwise we would never be able to do anything and the whole system would grind to a halt.

Another point raised by the member for Stuart was whether or not I had supply. I certainly have supply, and I table a page from this year’s budget documents. On page 9.57 of Portfolio 2003-04, Budget Paper No. 4, Volume 3 under ‘Payments’, the line ‘supplies and services’ has a budget of \$47.126 million. That is the line under which I have authority

to make these arrangements in relation to the NRM reform—a very important piece of reform for this state, which will put us ahead of every other part of Australia in relation to management of our natural resources.

That is my answer to the question of whether there is a case to answer. There is no case to answer, and if there is I have answered it. I refer briefly to the practice which you, sir, referred to in your remarks about members coming in here and raising matters of privilege on the basis of frivolous information. The member for Stuart came in here with a piece of paper—a half formed argument—and made allegations about contempt and, as a result of that, the matter was taken aside by you, sir. A week and a half later this matter is being addressed by the house. As a result of his statements there was a article in *The Advertiser* that referred to this matter and related it to me. It is easy for a member to come in here and slander another member under the guise of setting up a privileges committee or asking whether one should be established. That gets into the media and a week or two weeks later the matter is resolved. It is an outrageous abuse of parliamentary process for a member to be able to do that without a substantive case being put, and I sincerely believe that this whole issue of privileges needs to be reformed urgently by this parliament.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Infrastructure):** Mr Speaker—

**Mr Brindal:** Are you speaking for the motion?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I am amending it.

**Mr Brindal:** Well, you have to wait until somebody speaks for it before you amend it—I'm sorry!

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** Democracy is about people having certainty in relation to applications and advertisements put forward by government.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** This debate has been heard in silence and I will insist upon that.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** This process has been long and drawn out.

*The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Attorney-General.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** This process has been long and drawn out and the parliament makes a decision in relation to who and how people are selected. I further quote from the advertisement. The minister did not quote the first paragraph, which provides:

First nominations are sought from suitably skilled people to serve as members of regional Natural Resources Management (NRM) Boards in South Australia.

It then goes on, for the benefit of the Attorney-General, and says:

Nominees are urged to read the Nominee Information Pack available from the address below.

How can they be accurate and informed if the parliament has not made its final determination of what the content of the legislation will be? They cannot, and therefore my argument in relation to this matter is that the parliament has been taken for granted. I say to the minister that I am not responsible for what was in *The Advertiser*. I did what was my right, because this is not the first advertisement that has been in the newspaper. There have been advertisements around the whole state on a regular basis and I have discussed this matter at length with people. I purely raised the matter with you, Mr Speaker, as is my right. It is clear and proper to do so,

because this proposal is attracting wide public discussion and controversy in the community.

*The Hon. J.W. Weatherill interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I am fortunate enough not to have had gallstones at this stage. I have every right to raise this matter and seek your ruling in relation to it, sir, as I do not believe it is appropriate to advertise these positions until the parliament has made a judgment one way or the other. I discussed the matter with you, Mr Speaker. There are considerable degrees of concern about aspects of this proposed legislation and it will be vigorously debated in the parliament for a long period of time. Therefore, those people who may be inclined to put their names forward are not aware of the terms and conditions.

Therefore, they cannot be properly informed and people are making assumptions about how the parliament will deal with this matter, and I believe that it is a most unsatisfactory course of action. It is a process that should not take place again and, hopefully, this action that is being taken here will ensure that it does not take place again, so that people are not sent out information packs that do not contain all the facts and information because the people who are sending out this information, unless they have divine guidance, cannot be aware of what the parliament will eventually do. I think that this matter has been raised in the public interest and, if it does not do anything else, I hope that it will prevent this sort of activity in the future.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** I have had a close look at this advertisement and I do not support the motion of the deputy leader. If members read it closely, first it says in bold, 'First call for nominations.' We are not talking about appointments. It says, 'once enacted', which implies that it has not happened, and then, talking about the act, it says:

Established regional boards, roles, terms and conditions are subject to the passage of the bill through the South Australian parliament.

That is not pre-empting. The person who drafted this obviously does not understand parliamentary practice, because it says 'under the bill the Governor'. The Governor does not to my knowledge operate under bills of this parliament, the Governor operates under an act. It says:

Under the bill the Governor will appoint a presiding member.

Then it says that people may also consider nominating for membership of the NRM council, 'which is intended to be formed when the act is passed by parliament.' That is not pre-empting parliament at all. This is a prudent act so that people can express an interest, and I do not believe that members should get too excited by the fact that here we have some public servants who are on the case, prudently operating, getting ready for when this is passed, if it is passed by parliament. It does not pre-empt parliament at all. It makes quite clear that it is subject to the passage of the bill through the South Australian parliament. That is not pre-empting the parliament.

As I understand it, the minister could establish these boards without reference to the act anyway. I am told that boards similar to this have already been established prior to what may happen as a result of this bill. So, the minister could establish boards, he could do it without the act, he could do it by regulation, so I am not sure what the big drama is about. I suspect it is more to do with the fact that some people may not like what is in the proposed legislation rather than to do with the process. Let us have the debate and hear about the substance of the act but not get carried away with



something that in the scheme of things is very minute. The ad is qualified, it is contingent, and it makes quite clear that it depends on the passage of the measure through the parliament. The expression is somewhat inaccurate because the person does not understand that the Governor does not operate under a bill through the house.

**The SPEAKER:** Without wanting to unduly embarrass the honourable member, can I disabuse him of his mistaken impression. The Governor indeed makes the appointments—the Governor in Executive Council—and equally, without the passage of the legislation, such boards cannot be appointed. We still operate under the rule of law in this state.

**Mr BRINDAL (Unley):** I believe that the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should be strongly supported and I do so for the following reasons. With great respect to you, Sir, I do not think that in the last two years there have been times when any member of this house would not have cause to not be your best friend! You have in your speaker-ship spent two years alternatively angering us all individually, but you would be the first to point out that it is not your job to win friends here but it is your job to uphold the rules and traditions of this house. The Speaker's ruling today sought to do that. While I have listened carefully to the minister and to the contribution of the member for Fisher, with respect to this house I would say that they are trying to pre-empt the very work that you, Sir, said *prima facie* needs to be done by the committee.

It is not that this house should not accept the word of the minister and they should not accept the word of the member for Fisher. It is our rights and privileges that you have ruled *prima facie* should be examined. I have heard you, Sir, not once but on many occasions in the last two years talk about the supremacy of this parliament and the need for this parliament to have accounted to it not only the ministers who serve on the Executive Government but the Public Service itself. If anything touches on privilege, that does. The members here who have the privilege of being in the Executive Government are in here to answer for the Executive Government but their status in here in many ways is the same as yours, sir, or mine: they are elected members of the parliament of South Australia and they answer in here for their responsibilities for the Executive Government.

The Public Service, whether it likes to admit it or not, whether the ministers like to admit it or not, is in a representative democracy subject to the will of this parliament. This parliament in both its parts is the only sovereign entity in this state. As I understand the ruling of the Speaker today, the Speaker is saying that *prima facie* what has happened may well trespass on the privileges of this parliament. It is a moot point whether it happened under us. Whether the Liberal Party transgressed in the same way is not the point, because it has been raised quite rightly by the member for Stuart. The Speaker has looked at this matter and says that this matter is worthy of the consideration of this house. I do not care what any honourable member thinks: I will put on the public record that I have enough respect for what the Speaker has tried to do for two years to believe that this motion should be supported.

That is what the Deputy Leader should be doing and that, frankly, is what the government should be doing. The Speaker is trying his best to lift the standards in this house. He says there is a *prima facie* case. We should respect his decision and uphold his ruling.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I wish to move an amendment. The amendment is to read:

Remove all words after 'that' and substitute:

... the explanation of the Minister for Environment and Heritage of the actions of the officers in question be accepted and no further action be taken by the parliament.

I actually did make an effort to understand your ruling on this matter of privilege, sir. As I understood it, your ruling was not a question about the action of the minister but why bureaucrats would have taken the attitude that they could advertise these positions when the parliament had not considered the bill. The explanation of the minister is absolutely clear: the officers in question did it with his express authority. If that is a breach of privilege, then that is a matter that may well be entertained by a privileges committee, but if the original concern about privilege was why officers should act this way, perhaps in disrespect of the parliament, then it has been answered: they acted this way with the express authority of the minister.

To the question 'Is the minister's express authority to run ads seeking nominations for boards conditional upon the passage of a bill, does that infringe the privileges of the parliament?' I would argue that the strongest argument that no privilege has been infringed came from the member for Stuart himself. There is absolutely nothing in this ad, as the member for Stuart made plain for us, that has coerced him, intimidated him into taking a different position; absolutely nothing in it.

There is absolutely nothing in this advertisement, said to be conditional upon the passage of the legislation, which will prevent any single member of this chamber from exercising their vote and their right to debate; it will not cause them to do it in any way differently. Can I suggest that possibly the only offence might be for those reading the advertisement who assume that it will be set up. I think one of the major complaints of the member for Stuart was that it would offend certain members of the public. Offending members of the public is not in itself a breach of the privilege of this place, and I would say they are fairly thin-skinned if they are, in fact, offended by this.

It comes down to a matter of very small compass. We know now why the officers acted. They acted on the express authority of the minister. The only question asked is: is the minister giving his express authority in these circumstances a matter of breach of privilege? I contend that, plainly, it is not. I think that to call this a storm in a teacup is rather to exaggerate. It is rather a storm in an espresso cup—a very small cup, indeed. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition made three attempts before he could articulate what he thought the breach of privilege was—and, might I say, three attempts only successful with your continuing assistance, sir. The fact that that is the case would lead me to say that, when we consider the entire compass of that which is in question, we now know why the officers acted. I would say that it would have been improper for them not to have acted once given the express authority of the minister. It all comes down to that one simple question: has the minister breached the privileges of this place by giving his express authorisation for the advertisement? If that is the standard, there are very many on the other side who would have fallen.

The minister has explained a very important matter of inquiry as to why the officers did it. I honestly do not believe, for all the rhetoric from the other side, that the member for Unley (for whom I unfortunately have some regard and who is occasionally imbued with commonsense) could really

consider the placing of that advertisement to be a breach of privilege or the express authority given by the minister. I ask the house to support the amendment. I would say that some good has come out of this, in any event. Not only do we understand why the officers acted as they did but also I think we have had a very good canvassing of the attitude of members of the parliament as to what I think, at its strongest, is a small discourtesy in suggesting that a bill might be passed. On a number of occasions in this place I have certainly said things that I would do once a bill was passed. If that is a breach of privilege, we are setting a standard that is, I would suggest, absurdly rigorous. It is certainly not one that has been met in the past—although I appreciate that that is not the answer. I think this debate has adequately disposed of the matter, and I urge the acceptance of the amendment.

**Mrs REDMOND:** Sir, I simply seek your ruling by way of clarification because of my ignorance of the procedures of this place. It seems to me that the amendment proposed by the Minister for Infrastructure runs directly contrary to the effect of the original motion, and I seek your ruling as to whether such an amendment is in order.

**The SPEAKER:** I say to the house and the member for Heysen that I was not aware that the Minister for Infrastructure had moved an amendment. I have a form of words in front of me which constitute an amendment and, if anyone proposed to move such words, I do apologise. I should have pointed out to the house then that the effect of the amendment is the negative of the motion and, accordingly, it is out of order. You are either for it or against it.

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop):** I rise in support of the motion. The matters contained in the bill, as a result of which we are having this debate, are of great moment to the people whom I represent in the seat of MacKillop. Over the previous few months, a lot of people have spoken to me about the provisions contained in the draft bill.

**Mr HANNA:** Sir, I rise on a point of order. My point of order is that the member for MacKillop is now discussing the merits of the bill. That is not before us at the moment. We are talking only about the motion that was put forward by the deputy leader.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Mitchell believes that the remarks being made by the member for MacKillop are in some way wide of the mark, in that they do not address the motion. The motion is, of course, to establish a Privileges Committee to discover whether or not the parliament's capacity to act objectively is in some way impaired by the placement of advertisements and such other actions as may have been taken by the department in promoting the bill in the manner in which that has obviously happened. The minister has already told the house of that fact. Because those processes refer to a bill—indeed, the advertisement refers to it several times—it is not improper to refer to the bill as a fact and the purpose that the bill seeks to serve should the bill eventually be debated in this chamber. It is, therefore, not disorderly for the member for MacKillop to go to that subject. He cannot, however, begin debating matters which may be contained in the bill as far as detail goes, or the merits of those matters, and I do not think that he is. I will listen carefully.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. You are exactly right: I have no intention of addressing matters contained in the bill. But I do want to address the concern of my constituents, who are at a loss to understand what I am doing here, when advertisements are placed in the paper

before the bill comes before the house, purporting to indicate that the house is going to approve of the bill. Might I read from the advertisement, as it is written, with its punctuation, that the minister has circulated to all members. In the second paragraph it states:

Once enacted, the Natural Resources Management Act will establish regional boards.

If that does not impinge on the privilege of this house to make those decisions, I do not know what does. It goes on and qualifies that the roles, terms and conditions are subject to the passage of the bill. But it states that the boards will be established.

I have taken the liberty to avail myself of one of the packs to which the advertisement refers, and I will now quote from a paper contained in that pack, which is headed 'Nomination guidelines for prospective regional NRM board members', as follows:

Your nomination for membership of a regional NRM board must contain the following information.

And it has a list of the information sought including name, gender, and so on. Point 10 states:

Details of ways in which you meet the criteria to qualify you for membership.

How can anyone possibly know what those criteria might be before the bill is even put before the house? Again, I would contend that at least my privilege, if not that of other members and the house as a whole, is seriously impinged upon by the action taken by the minister.

In speaking against this motion, the Minister for Infrastructure made the comment that the only way in which this could impinge upon anybody's privilege is if those reading the advertisement assume that the boards will be set up. I think I have just made the point that the advertisements say that the boards will be set up. So, the Minister for Infrastructure has absolutely convinced me that my privilege has been impinged upon. The only point that I think the minister made in speaking against this motion was that we now understand why the officers took this action. We do understand why they took the action. But that, I contend, goes no way towards exonerating those officers for impinging upon the privilege of this house. I support the motion and I commend it to all.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** This matter may go to a recorded vote, so I wish to place my reasons for my decision on the record. I start with the presumption that, if a Speaker of the house rules that there is a case to answer in respect of there being a privileges matter, it ought to be supported. I trust the Speaker of the day to adjudicate wisely when a matter is raised by one of the members as a potential matter of privilege, and I trust the Speaker to reject it out of hand if it is frivolous or otherwise wasting the time of the house. If it is something which does not merit the sort of discussion we have had over the last hour or so in this place, I expect that the Speaker of the day would rule that, in fact, there is no case to answer and we can get on with the business of the day.

There are two particular matters that concern me about this motion before the house, however. One is that, when the Speaker today gave his careful deliberations about why he thought there might be a case to answer in respect of the matter raised by the member for Stuart, the motion and the reasons behind it put forward by the deputy leader were not in accord with the deliberations of the Speaker. That gave me cause for thought. Secondly, the minister has tabled the

advertisement which is the subject of the controversy, and it is very difficult for me to see how that in any way could give rise to a case to answer as far as a matter of privilege is concerned. It is not a case where I can apply my mind and say the benefit of the doubt should be given to those who are in favour of the motion. It is a case where I cannot possibly see that there is a case to answer in the sense of the motion that was moved by the deputy leader; so I am not reflecting on the reasons given by the Speaker this afternoon.

I also object very strongly to the kind of debate that has been forced upon us for the last hour today. In my view, an ideal process would be for a matter to be referred immediately to a standing privileges committee when the Speaker of the day rules that there is a case to answer, thus circumventing all of this process we have had to go through this afternoon, because we go through the absurd process of the entire house debating the substance of the matter to be discussed by a proposed privileges committee and then refer it to a smaller committee of members to go over the same ground. So we have wasted our valuable time in that sense, and it is one of the items that I think ought to be reformed. I remind honourable members that it was nearly 2½ years ago that a well-considered and thorough proposal for procedural reform was put before the parliament, and that has been ignored by the Labor side of the house since then. It is very disappointing that the government has made no moves whatsoever to improve the parliamentary procedure since coming into office.

In respect of the amendment that was to be moved by the Minister for Infrastructure, the same arguments apply. I would not have supported that amendment but, at the same time, I cannot bring myself to support the motion for the reasons given.

**Mrs MAYWALD (Chaffey):** For the same reasons as given by the previous speaker, I would put my view on this matter on the record. Whilst I believe that the calling for nominations preceding the passage of legislation through the house might be pre-emptive, I do not believe that it actually has misled the public in any way, shape or form, nor will it have had any effect on the deliberations of this house, given that it clearly states that it is the first call for nominations. The advertisement does not say that the board will be appointed before the legislation is passed by the house. The paragraph that refers to the Governor quite correctly says that under the bill the Governor will appoint, so it is not referring to an act. It is saying that, if the bill gets through the parliament, they will be appointed. So it is not pre-empting that they will be appointed before the bill has passed.

Quite frankly, I think that the issue has a precedent in the previous parliament in that the Leader of the Opposition, who was then the minister responsible for the integrated natural resource management bill that was before this parliament, pre-empted the parliament also by establishing interim INRM committees, which are currently still functioning. There was no action taken at that time, and at that time I disapproved of that process, but I still do not believe that that process is a breach of the privilege of the parliament.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** In closing the debate, I say that I listened with interest particularly to the defence of the Minister for the Environment and also the Minister for Government Enterprises, and—

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** He wasn't defending himself. That was not a matter of privilege. That is something you didn't understand at any point.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** The minister's defence was trying to defend the actions of his department and the officers of the department who have, in fact, taken this step which breaches the privileges of this parliament.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** I ask that I be heard in silence on an important matter such as this, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The defence of the two ministers was particularly weak and tried to stand—and, in fact, did stand—only on the actual advertisement that appeared, whereas in fact what the Minister for Environment did not acknowledge (perhaps because he does not know) is that this appointment of people has gone well beyond just advertisements in the paper. For instance, the Local Government Association has asked certain individual councils to vote for and nominate people to this board. The councils have had actual votes. I understand one particular council has already had its vote and put forward a nomination. That has therefore created a huge expectation within that council, within that broader area of local government, that these are the people who will be on the boards. But, in fact, the parliament has not even decided whether or not there will be a representative of local government on the boards.

That is the very issue which I believe you quite rightly raised, sir, which I raised in the wording I put down and which showed that, in fact, there had been a breach of the privilege. There had been a building up of expectations that this parliament would pass this legislation in a particular form—such as the appointment of people from local government—because those people have already been nominated, at least in one case, by the respective council. I also understand that there are other groups that have been approached by the department to put forward specific names of people to serve on these boards.

This is clearly a case of this parliament's having its privileges breached by a group of people within the department who have said, almost as if we do not matter, 'This is what our draft bill says and this is what will go out there and be put into practice'. By the very nature of that, they are trying almost to embarrass the parliament into accepting certain types of people to be represented on the boards because they know very well that if the parliament amends the legislation there will be embarrassment because these people have already been nominated and their names have been put forward. And it is just not an individual putting forward their own name: it is a council, in one case, which has voted on whose name should go forward.

So I believe the case raised by the member for Stuart is a valid case. It was backed up by your assessment after careful consideration in terms of establishing a prima facie case and, therefore, I believe very strongly indeed that this parliament should establish a privileges committee.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I put the question, all of us need to recognise that we are in fairly uncharted waters. There have been some fairly strong excursions into those waters in recent times and, in one instance, that excursion resulted in a minister, of necessity, having to resign by admitting that he had, indeed, committed an offence against the parliament. When I contemplated both these questions I tried to separate the consequences in each case, yet I kept coming back to the basic principles that were involved. Before I go to that, first,

can I point out some of the things that need to be borne in mind in contemplating such a committee.

The most important aspect is that we ought to have, as other parliaments have, a panel of members, or a committee itself already established, being a panel from which the house would want the committees to be drawn and not come to a specific case in point in order to take the view that we must form an adversarial committee upon which there are combatants. That is not what most matters of privilege in other parliaments are about. Also, on that point, I wish to make it plain that the proposition to amend the motion was out of order not only because it was a direct negative of the motion but also because it drew into question whether the house has confidence in the minister, and that has nothing to do with the proposition which the house is now contemplating.

There is no mention in the motion of whether or not the minister enjoys the confidence of the house, and I would not want there to be. None of us in this place, to this point, have seen anything like adequate evidence of what might have occurred to bring us to this point. I go on, then, and point out I could simply have restricted the ambit of my examination of the subject to the narrow remarks to which the member for Stuart by standing orders was restricted when he raised it and in which he referred to holding the parliament in contempt, which is different (as I pointed out) from a contempt of the parliament. It is the same word, but it has an entirely different legalistic meaning in the reverse position. It would have been humbug for me as the chair to have come back to the house and told the house, including the member for Stuart, that, were he to widen the ambit of the area on which the question of privilege of parliament were to be examined, it could or would be upheld but that, on that narrow ambit of just holding the parliament in contempt, it may not succeed on the face of it. I agonised over that for a long time, and I shredded pages of stuff that I might have otherwise delivered here in an opinion based on a discussion about it. I decided not to engage in humbug or delay the house earlier today, as it were, outlining the case, which I believe members should be addressing in this instance.

And so I come to that and, in doing so, I mean no disrespect to the contribution made by the member for Mitchell when I point out to him that the purpose of a privileges committee is to discover the evidence relevant to the matter the house seeks to have investigated. The Speaker's job is to say whether an investigation is justified on the face of it. I have said that I believe it is. The committee's job is to investigate that. The Speaker's job is not to determine whether there is a case to answer. To that extent this is not a pre-trial; it is not a court of law determining whether or not there ought to be a trial. It is a court of opinion determining the ability of this house to debate objectively a measure yet to come before it. When or if that matter arrives here has been impaired by the actions that have been taken, as illustrated by but not restricted to that matter in the advertisement to which the member for Stuart drew attention. Some of the other material that the committee would need to examine in the event that the house chose to appoint it will, of course, have to go to an examination of how it came to be done, for what purpose it was done and what was in the mind of those who did it.

It is not proper for me at this point, however, to go further in that direction lest I prejudice the capacity of the committee to do its work properly because, as a committee of this parliament, like all other committees, it has the power (or will have, should it come into existence), to send for people and

papers, and the remarks of the chair ought not to prejudice its ability to do that. Its duty is to discover what happened in the course of its investigations. The house as a whole is too cumbersome to do that. The committee needs to be small and sharp in its focus and its process to get that information and present it to the house in a report. Attached to the report there may be recommendations, but that is not necessarily the case.

The committee's role, having not been clearly understood, I think, in the past, needs to be defined by someone. I have tried to do that on behalf of members by explaining it here. I think I have done that, in some measure, in light of what I have discovered in the course of my inquiry to try to find out whether on the face of it there is a case worthy of investigation, to see whether the capacity of the house to contemplate the legislation objectively has been in some way impaired, and that members may be influenced by expectations that may have been created or not created.

In Queensland, for instance, the matter could have gone to the Criminal Justice Commission. I say to the house that, just because—and the member for Chaffey drew attention to this in her remarks—I strongly disapproved of the action that was taken by the previous government in the interim boards that were established—because it presumed on the parliament and, in that context, I was, if you like, unable to do anything about it—it does not mean that I should demur and allow the same thing to continue to happen. To this point in the history of the 50th parliament, the Speaker enjoys the confidence of the house, and the Speaker's responsibility is to report to the house the sincere belief the Speaker has about such matters.

I feel just as strongly about the necessity to examine these matters now as I did then. In saying so to the chamber I do not presume that any member will necessarily agree with my assessment but, rather, I make the point to the chamber that if bureaucracy is allowed to make its own judgments about what it can expect parliament to do to suit its goals and purposes, and/or executive government to engage in the same process accordingly, then the day of parliament is finished. It is not just nearly over; it is not just changed; it is bloody irrelevant. And, for the sake of the observance of standing orders, I will seat myself and invite the minister, the leader of government business, to move the extension beyond 5 p.m.

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

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

Motion carried.

**The SPEAKER:** For as much as I can remember the notes that I have made from the discussions I have had and the reading I have done, I say to the house that it ought not to see, as I said earlier in my remarks, this as being a combatant appraisal of the material. Our job is pretty much like the grand jury's job in the American system, except that we have a privileges committee to discover what happened and report it with recommendations, if the committee in the main thinks that is appropriate.

I choose not to engage in humbug. I cannot for the life of me believe that the house has in its possession all the information which might enable it to be sure that its ability has been impaired or not. It was on that basis that I said *prima facie* there is a role for a privileges committee to investigate and determine what has happened and report that to the chamber. It is a matter for the chamber to now decide whether it wishes that course of action to be undertaken.

The house divided on the motion:

AYES (19)

Brindal, M. K.	Brokenshire, R. L.
Brown, D. C. (teller)	Buckby, M. R.
Chapman, V. A.	Goldsworthy, R. M.
Gunn, G. M.	Hall, J. L.
Hamilton-Smith, M. L. J.	Kerin, R. G.
Kotz, D. C.	Matthew, W. A.
McFetridge, D.	Meier, E. J.
Penfold, E. M.	Redmond, I. M.
Scalzi, G.	Venning, I. H.
Williams, M. R.	

NOES (25)

Atkinson, M. J.	Bedford, F. E.
Breuer, L. R.	Caica, P.
Ciccarello, V.	Conlon, P. F. (teller)
Geraghty, R. K.	Hanna, K.
Hill, J. D.	Key, S. W.
Koutsantonis, T.	Lomax-Smith, J. D.
Maywald, K. A.	McEwen, R. J.
O'Brien, M. F.	Rankine, J. M.
Rann, M. D.	Rau, J. R.
Snelling, J. J.	Stevens, L.
Such, R. B.	Thompson, M. G.
Weatherill, J. W.	White, P. L.
Wright, M. J.	

PAIR(S)

Evans, I. F.	Foley, K. O.
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Majority of 6 for the noes.

Motion thus negated.

**The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** In relation to the first privileges committee that was established, I move:

That the committee shall operate under the standing orders and practice for the conduct of select committees of this house; that it have power to send for persons, papers and records and to adjourn from place to place.

Motion carried.

#### TAFE PLACES

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** I undertook yesterday to bring back to the house figures in relation to TAFE places. I now advise that in 2003 the total number of individuals who benefited from the government's concession/rebate scheme was 12 231.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Members will take their place or be seated.

#### LIQUOR LICENSING (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

#### SUMMARY OFFENCES (OFFENSIVE WEAPONS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

#### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's message intimating that it had insisted on its amendments to which the House of Assembly had disagreed.

(Continued from 28 May 2003. Page 3189.)

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** I move:

That the House of Assembly's disagreement to the Legislative Council's amendments be insisted upon.

Motion carried.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** I move:

That a message be sent to the Legislative Council requesting a conference be granted to this house respecting certain amendments from the Legislative Council in the bill and that the Legislative Council be informed that, in the event of a conference being agreed to, this house will be represented at such conference by five managers, namely, Mr Koutsantonis, the Hons D.C. Kotz and I.P. Lewis, Mrs Redmond and the Hon. J.W. Weatherill.

Motion carried.

#### STATE PROCUREMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 12 November. Page 767.)

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ (Newland):** I rise to state the position of the opposition on the State Procurement Bill 2003 and to express our support for the bill. However, there are obviously areas that we do have some concerns with, and these will be expressed predominantly in committee. The government's stated intent to the introduction of this bill is to provide a governance framework for government procurement. This new legislation includes an object clause that clearly describes that the purpose of the legislation is to 'advance government priorities and objectives by a system of procurement for public authorities directed towards—and the explanation is in three clauses as follows:

- obtaining value in the expenditure of public money; and
- providing for ethical and fair treatment of participants; and
- ensuring probity, accountability and transparency in procurement operations.

The opposition recognises that these are all principled objects and is quite happy to see mention of the three objectives within this new act.

The Auditor-General, as most members would be aware, recently raised concerns relating to procurement processes. Some of the concerns raised are certainly significant for this government and the means by which this government will then address all of the issues relating to probity and procurement. The concerns raised also included the potential for a conflict of interest that may contaminate government contracts. The government suggests that this bill will address the Auditor-General's concerns and I will speak about that later.

The State Procurement Bill follows very much the same form and structure of the current State Supply Bill. Generally the amendments cover the areas I have spoken about such as the objects of the act, which are now in place within the State

Procurement Bill. In the area of interpretation the principle officer from the previous State Supply Bill now replaces 'chief executive officer' and another inclusion in interpretation has been 'the responsible minister'. The explanation is in relation to an authority. In most cases the minister responsible throughout the act is the minister responsible for the act, with the exception of 'if the authority is an administrative unit—the minister responsible for that administrative unit.' Again that is an area where the minister could clarify some of the issues we in opposition have with that inclusion.

Under 'Composition of Board' the board members have been increased from six to nine. The act enables the government to step down immediately the existing board on commencement of the act, with a new board appointed at that time. The previous legislation had a requirement that has also now been removed, namely, specific identification of a certain group which, within the State Supply Act, would sit on that board. That requirement has now been removed. It said 'one person nominated by the United Trades and Labor Council' and that area has been removed. The United Trades and Labor Council has not returned our phone calls, so we are silent on the comment that may have come from the Trades and Labor Council.

Under 'Disclosure of Interest', which was in the previous State Supply Act under section 11, the whole of that section in the new bill has been removed. However, although the clause has been removed from the new State Procurement Bill, it is the intent of government to establish disclosure of interest in one act only and by that action will look to repeal all other disclosure of interest legislation. The disclosure of interest regulation, according to the bill, will now sit within the Public Sector Management Act. The enabling legislation for this to occur is the Statutes Amendment (Honesty and Accountability in Government) Bill 2003, which has passed both houses but at this point remains unproclaimed.

I am also advised that the government intends to proceed with the State Procurement Bill as it is today, but on its anticipated passage through both houses will then look to introduce a further bill to repeal all disclosure of interest legislation across all statutes. Therefore the State Procurement Bill itself will not be proclaimed until both the honesty and accountability bill and disclosure of interest repeal bill have been proclaimed.

Under section 13 of the new bill on committees, the new clause enables what I can only consider to be quite a plethora of individuals to be appointed to advise the board to look to carry out functions on behalf of the board and as a committee they will have the right to determine their own procedures outside those procedures that are determined by the board. There are obviously questions to be raised in committee and I look forward to the minister's explanation.

Under 'Delegations' in clause 14, the current delegations are quite specific in the State Supply Act. They say at present that the board can delegate powers or functions to members of the board or an officer engaged in the administration of this act. However, the new delegations the government is seeking within the bill are certainly far more extensive than are the ones that currently apply under the State Supply Act. A delegation may be made to a member of the board, or a committee established by the board, or a member of staff of the board, or any other person engaged in the administration of this act.

The bill does not specify the numbers of members that might be expected to serve on a committee and therefore be issued with and assume the powers of delegation, should that

delegation be made by the board to an established committee of whatever number of people they so desire. The other extension, the delegations, is part of what I have read which says that 'any other person engaged in the administration of this act'. That could be very far-reaching and we will certainly discuss some of our concerns on that. The powers of delegation relating to functions and powers under this act, and the prescribed power to determine the committee's own conduct of business, begs the question in the immediacy of whether the committee could assume the mantle of a de facto board.

Under clause 15, relating to the board's procedures, five members will now constitute a quorum of the board. The bill introduces conference by telephone or electronic means between members of the board. Conditions have been placed within the legislation that would apply to enable a conference to have the status of a meeting such as 'notice to all members and participating members capable of interactive communication'. The bill at this point, although it establishes a quorum, has wording that could question whether the quorum that has been prescribed within the bill is a requirement when a conference is held. Again, that will be a matter for questioning of the minister. A proposed resolution will be accepted as a decision of the board, despite not being voted on at a meeting, if conditions under the act are fulfilled and members reply by fax, email or any other written communication.

The bill does state that the board must have accurate minutes kept of its meetings but, again, in that area perhaps it requires a bit of questioning as to how that will be effected should a resolution that accepts a decision of the board (which is not being voted on at a meeting but only if conditions under the act are fulfilled) actually fulfil the requirements of the bill that the board must have accurate minutes kept of its meetings. Under the common seal and execution of documents the delegation powers seem to be exceedingly broad and they too are a matter of concern. The opposition, as I stated earlier, is supporting the bill but with some reservations about some of the areas that I have just mentioned.

In the minister's second reading explanation on this bill he alluded to the reasons why the bill is now to modernise some of the language, which is quite appropriate with the moves that have been made over recent years into realms other than the initial interpretation of State Supply. We have no problems with that whatsoever. However, in terms of probity, of due diligence and of how this act will become the framework to ensure that those areas are going to be dealt with, considering the qualifications of the Auditor-General throughout this year and last with relation to probity, it would seem to me that there is nothing in the bill that deals with the strictness of probity and procurement and, obviously, it is not meant to. It is a framework that outlines a mechanism by which government policy can then direct the processes of procurement, of probity, of due diligence and of all the relative matters within a tendering and procurement process.

However, in the minister's second reading explanation he unfortunately chose to be somewhat political in promoting this new bill, and that is a shame, because the bill in its entirety is not necessarily an overall concern except for the few areas that I describe. But the minister presented the bill and then, in his second reading explanation, gave an outline of his opinion of why some of these changes are necessary which in effect look to bastardise some of the history of how the State Supply Board came about and how this board is now being set up through the new Procurement Bill. The minister

then questioned the previous government and spoke of the means by which this bill is to make sure that through honesty and accountability this government would not indulge in all sorts of spurious procurement processes which he suggests were previously corrupt and which previously showed favouritism to other people in a tendering process.

Although this is a robust framework, when the minister talks about corruption or other matters relative to a previous government and stands here and puts it in his second reading explanation without any evidence to back up the terms that he uses, then quite obviously it is necessary to question just a bit further how this government intends to conduct itself under probity conditions when the Auditor-General has already questioned the very means by which this government is conducting its procurement processes at this time.

I think members of this house are well aware that the government is in the process of tendering for huge contracts amounting to a billion dollars to be let across the board on behalf of the taxpayer and the government. The Auditor-General questions the means by which this process has been initiated so far and suggests that there are areas that the minister, his department and the government need to pull into place almost immediately to ensure that the tender processes are not contaminated. As late as December last year, I asked the minister questions about the Auditor-General's concerns. A series of questions was put to the minister seeking clarification of the actions he may have taken to secure probity and remove the suggested conflict of interest that the Auditor-General (in his memorandum to parliament) stated was there.

The Auditor-General made it very clear that he was not suggesting that there could be a conflict of interest; he stated that there was, in fact, a conflict of interest, because he said that several officers within the department held shares in some form of equities that may come under the tender process. In answer to each of those questions, the minister kept telling me that this government is definitely honest and accountable and that the procurement process must be absolutely clean and that he would attend to the problem. At no stage up until 3 December did the minister say that he had attended to the problem; he kept telling the house that it was something that 'will be' attended to. That does not give a great deal of assurance to the rest of us in this chamber that the minister or the government has taken into account the deep concerns of the Auditor-General in suggesting that some of the ICT tendering may be contaminated and therefore could cost this government significant financial losses if that process was not cleaned up.

The minister, in a newspaper article of 15 January (I think), advised the journalist asking questions that, on 13 January, cabinet had signed off on guidelines to probity issues which were to be the new guidelines that the government would work under to make sure that the instances of procurement (and therefore probity) would be attended to and would satisfy the Auditor-General and his questions. However, the minister did not say at the time he was speaking to the journalist that the first round of tenders were live and that they had a closing date of 22 January. While the minister was saying that cabinet had signed off on 15 January, on guidelines that would direct the government's means of attending to these serious questions about probity, tenders were already let—they must have been let and out by December to have a closing date of 22 January—but the minister, unfortunately, did not admit to the fact that those tenders were live. With the cabinet signing off on its probity

guidelines on 13 January, the process of tendering had already begun.

The process of tendering was already out there. There is not one answer that this minister has given to this house at this point in time that would establish the fact that he has taken action to make sure that any conflict of interest that may have been inherent within the system that the government was working on previously to the Auditor-General's comments has been complied with.

The minister also was asked in that article whether, in fact, the probity guidelines signed off by cabinet would be run past the Auditor-General so that he could assess whether they would cause any further problems for the government. And, of course, the minister advised that the Auditor-General had no role to play in assessing or advising on probity issues signed off on by cabinet. However, the minister went on to say:

Whether or not the probity measures are judged to be sufficient after the event is a matter for the Auditor-General to comment on in a future report to parliament.

In the current report, the Auditor-General stated that he feared the tender process exposed the government to serious financial losses. Why is this government afraid of the Auditor-General's assessment, in this instance, prior to the event—an assessment that could save the state from serious financial losses?

Members of this house would be aware that this government has placed every issue that has beleaguered government over the past two years into the hands of the Auditor-General for his revision and determination—and one of the examples was the MRI at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. However, in this instance, the minister now states that the Auditor-General has no role to play in assessing or advising on probity issues signed off by cabinet. It seems that the government is prepared to wait to see whether, in fact, there are any significant events that may be caused by this lack of action, and allow the Auditor-General to perhaps guide it in the future, but after the event—after the possibility that there could be serious flaws in the tendering process.

I would also like to comment again on the minister's second reading explanation, because of its political nature, which I probably would not have addressed if, in fact, the minister had not been stating it. However, as he has, I will make a few more comments. He was very disparaging about the manner in which the previous government had, in fact, used industry as a means of bringing new enterprise into the state. And, of course, it would now appear that the new minister seems to think that the very mention of Motorola would make all opposition members turn over and lay on their back and wait for their belly to be tickled because they would be too scared to do anything else.

I do not think there is one of us on this side of the chamber who would throw Motorola up and put it on the auction blocks, because the results and the successes of that company in this state have given back huge efficiencies to government, and huge amounts of money have come back into the coffers of the state. Employment has increased. Tens of millions of dollars have come in, not just from the employment and manufacturing processes that Motorola has undertaken in this state but also with respect to EDS. I am quite sure the minister would know the figures because, being a responsible minister, he would certainly want to know what advantages these companies have brought to the state and what they have delivered to the departments of the Crown because of their existence in the state.

In the case of EDS, you could count, without worrying too much about how correct you were, that the savings—therefore, the benefit—to government in this state have been in excess of \$10 million per year since the establishment of EDS. Those figures are there for this government to see in its own audited figures, let alone the assessments that have been undertaken by companies like Motorola and EDS in this state. Motorola, as I am sure members will remember, was established in 1994.

It started with two employees and it currently employs some 400 with extra staff being added this year because of its growth rate. The main product from Motorola now is software and they have a 100 per cent rate in exports. Tens of millions of dollars are brought into the South Australian economy each year. We have attracted skilled work forces, not just from South Australia but nationally and internationally. Motorola works very closely with South Australian universities. It ensures that course choices fit in with future work force needs for South Australian business. Motorola has also brought in intellectual property to South Australia. It has provided a kickstart to the local IT industry and highlighted South Australia's potential as an IT hub. Motorola has sponsored university students. It has run business programs at schools where students actually take a project from concept to design and run their own business including developing business plans, marketing, selling shares and actually creating a profit or loss on a real product. Some of those real products have included mouse mats and wine glasses. They have donated equipment to schools and the Investigator Science Centre. Perhaps the minister has forgotten, so I will remind him, but the South Australian Motorola Centre is the biggest of its kind in Australia.

EDS was started up in about 1995 and since that time, EDS's information technology sector has boosted the state economy by about \$750 million in 2002-03 dollars. It has boosted employment by about 8 000 FTE employees. EDS Financial Services sector has boosted the state economy by more than \$250 million, again in 2002-03 dollars, since November 2001. It has boosted employment by more than 3 700 FTE employees. Collectively, EDS operations in South Australia, since 1995, have boosted the state economy by around \$1 billion and has boosted employment by about 11 700 FTE employees. In the 2002-03 financial year information technology services and financial services to corporate clients, which did not include work for the South Australian government, provided a boost to the South Australian economy of \$347.1 million and increased employment by 4 025 full-time equivalent positions. That is around 1.7 per cent of employment and output in South Australia.

There are plenty of figures there to show the minister that those early enterprises, which the minister would like to politicise in his second reading speech, have actually been of immense benefit to the economy of South Australia, to the state and to the people in the state. The millions of dollars of benefits that have come in the form of savings to the South Australian government itself and all of its entities that use the technology that has been developed by these companies stand on their own record.

If the minister had not made his political (and quite nasty) little statement in his second reading speech then I probably would not be standing here reminding the minister of all of that at this point.

*Mr Hanna interjecting:*

**The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** Well, I could always go on, if the member wishes. What continues to concern me, of course, is

the tender process that was now live before the minister made his comments to the journalist in that article on 15 January. I note that, where we talk about expressions of interest or tenders being called, the government is now calling them an indication of capability. There are points there, too, that interest our side of the chamber because of the questions raised by the Auditor-General about the conflict of interest and the non-answer from the minister in being able to assure the house that he had taken action to ensure that the tender process was free of claims of conflict of interest.

If that is still the case and the minister has not taken action, those questions will concern who will sit on the assessment panel as the expressions of interest or the indications of capability are being received, and whether the senior officers identified by the Auditor-General had any part in that bidding process, in those tenders, that went out in December and closed on the 22nd. I will leave my comments at that point, because I am sure that the minister will be pleased to move on, and I will raise more of these questions in committee.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** I am speaking on behalf of the Greens in relation to the State Procurement Bill 2003. There are three issues that I wish to raise. Obviously it is essential for there to be a sound and sensible policy in relation to procurement for government, and honesty, accountability and getting value have to be the hallmarks. The first issue that I want to raise relates to the free trade agreement that Australia has entered into with the United States of America, or at least the federal Liberal government has signed up to it. A range of policies and arrangements that are in place currently might impinge upon the terms of that agreement.

Putting it briefly, I would like the minister to outline any potential policies or agreements that are in place in respect of state procurement that might need to be revised in light of the free trade agreement. I would like the minister to indicate the manner in which those policies or agreements might need to be revised and whether they look to be to the benefit or detriment of South Australia in light of the imposition of the free trade agreement.

Secondly, I would like to ask the minister about developments in relation to open source software. Is the minister taking up the challenge to explore alternatives to the arrangements that have been in place for such a long time with commercial corporations, monolithic corporations, selling their software and locking us into longstanding contracts to repeatedly renew those arrangements? I inform the house that I intend to move amendments that will compel consideration of open source software in terms of procurement, and I acknowledge the good work done by the Hon. Ian Gilfillan in introducing a bill into the other place on this very point. I have quite blatantly copied the provisions that he has put forward and I seek to incorporate them into this government bill for the good of South Australians in the future.

Thirdly, I note that the Hon. Michelle Lensink in another place raised questions about the community services sector, that is, the government sector, in relation to this bill and procurement. She asked a question recently which implied that government workers in that area had not been properly consulted in relation to this bill, suggesting that there were particular considerations to bear in mind in relation to services, in particular those intangible qualities that come with the human services and welfare sector. Obviously, there are different considerations to the procurement of nuts and bolts, and I wonder the extent to which our current policies



take that into account and the extent to which the minister consulted those relevant agencies in relation to those matters. So, after raising those concerns, I would welcome a response from the minister before we finish with the second reading debate. If it is not possible for the minister to give an immediate reply, I trust that when we next consider this legislation he will be able to do so in detail.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### **EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, WORKCOVER CLAIMS**

**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:** Earlier today in question time the member for Bragg asked me a question with regard to the Department of Education and WorkCover claims. Her question was: 'Has there been any increase in departmental WorkCover claims made between 2001-02 and 2002-03, and has there been any change to the WorkCover rating and, if so, why?' I have sought information from my department, and I have been provided with the following details. As to the question 'Has there been a change in the department's rating

between 2001-02 and 2002-03,' I am advised that the answer is no. As to the other part of the question about new workers' compensation claims, I have been advised by the department that there were 1 198 new workers' compensation claims for DECS staff in 2002-03 compared to 1 180 in 2001-02, which is a 1.5 per cent increase on the previous financial year but 12 per cent lower than in 2000-01.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 5.56 p.m. the house adjourned until Monday 22 March at 2 p.m.

#### *Corrigenda*

Page 1296—

Column 1—

Line 15—for 'trains' read 'trams'

Column 2—

Line 5—replace 'at least a double tramline for one tram' with 'a single tramline'

Line 12—replace 'looking to achieve' with 'provide'

Page 1334—

Column 1—

Line 13—for 'trains' read 'trams'

Column 2—

Line 15—Question 191 should read: 'What steps are being taken to phase out two-stroke motors on water craft used on the River Murray?'

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 23 February 2004

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

#### RECREATION AND SPORT, EXPENDITURE

134. **The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** What are the details of any Office of Recreation and Sport expenditure for 2002-03 in the following areas—grants programs, athlete and coach development, facilities management and agency operations?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** I am advised the following:

The 2002-03 expenditure for the grants program totalled approximately \$11 million.

Athlete and Coach development undertaken by the South Australian Sports Institute was \$4.370 million for 2002-03. This amount includes expenditure of the amounts contributed by the National and State sporting organisations and from athletes used in the delivery of sporting programs.

Expenditure relating to facilities management for 2002-03 totalled \$8.4 million.

Total agency operations were \$30.5 million for 2002-03.

#### RECREATION AND SPORT, GRANTS

138. **The Hon. D.C. KOTZ:** What are the current balances of the Community Sport and Recreation Grants Fund, SASI Talent Scholarship Program and the State Facilities Fund, and what are their respective funding arrangements for 2003-04?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** I am advised the following:

The Community Recreation and Sport Facilities Grants program has commitments of \$4.8 million as at 30 June 2003 from prior year calls.

The funds available through the CR&SFG for 2003-04 is \$3.297 million.

The SASI Talent Scholarship program is distributed on an annual basis and as such the carry forward of funds generally does not apply.

The funds available through the SASI Talent Scholarship program in 2003-04 is \$90,000.

The State Facilities Fund as at 30 June 2003 has a balance of \$1.3 million.

The funds available through the State Facilities Fund in 2003-04 is \$50,000.

#### GRAIN TRUCKS

194. **The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Are trucks delivering grain to deep sea ports in the Far West of the State being specifically targeted by Departmental Inspectors and if so, will compensation be paid to those unduly affected by late delivery?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** Transport SA undertook a campaign of on-road compliance in November to December 2003, the target of which was restricted access vehicles (RAV's) carting grain, farm gate to silo, during the grain harvest season in South Australia. The campaign occurred in all grain growing areas of the State.

The campaign is a direct result of numerous complaints received from the general community in relation to a perceived lack of on-road compliance of the heavy vehicle transport sector during previous grain harvest seasons.

The primary focus of this campaign was on vehicles that travel off route, for example, B-double grain trucks that travel illegally on roads that have not been assessed and gazetted and/or permitted as suitable to be used for RAV movement.

Prior to the grain harvest season beginning, Transport SA embarked on a series of media and educative initiatives including the printing and distribution of 10,000 flyers to customer service centres, road transport inspectors, silo and grain storage operators.

Many educational programs were conducted for farming groups and the general public in the lead up to harvest time, including speaking to seven agricultural groups and bureaus, and attending four agricultural field days. In addition, Road Transport Inspectors visited and worked with AUSBULK staff in a number of locations. A number of silo operators undertook their own individual campaigns to educate transport operators.

During the campaign, some transport operators may have experienced some minor inconvenience or delay with their normal grain transport operations. However, every effort was made by Transport SA to minimise the level of inconvenience and/or delay.

The minimal level of inconvenience and/or delay to grain transport operations far outweighed by the benefits to all road users of a safer road network during the grain harvest season.

#### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION

216. **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:**

1. Why was an external auditing firm not engaged by the South Australian Film Corporation in 2001/02?

2. What measures have been taken to improve the independent checking of the operation of the Corporation's disbursement service?

3. Is the Corporation holding any funds specifically earmarked for the 2005 Adelaide International Film Festival if so, how much?

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

1. This oversight occurred during a change in staff. Once the oversight was discovered, it was rectified immediately. The dates are now diarised and the SA Film Corporation is up to date on its external audits.

2. The operation of the disbursement service is checked regularly. The Manager Business Operations co-signs all cheques, checks the bank reconciliation and signs off on it monthly.

The Manager is advised when funds are received and will be disbursed. A report is provided monthly to the Chief Executive Officer and to all Board meetings, stating the amount of funds received, the amount disbursed by title and the fees received by the SA Film Corporation.

3. The SA Film Corporation holds \$200,000 (on behalf of the Office for Economic Development) for an equity investment in a feature film to be commissioned by SBSi for broadcast on SBS and to be delivered in time to premier at the 2005 Adelaide Film Festival.

Funding is subject to specific terms and conditions being met. It is expected that a project will soon be submitted for funding consideration.