

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday 22 March 2004

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

RIVER MURRAY LEVY

A petition signed by 4 980 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to remove the requirement to pay the River Murray Levy from SA Water clients who do not use River Murray water on the Eyre Peninsula and in the Stuart electorate, was presented by the Hon. G.M. Gunn and Mrs Penfold.

Petition received.

HOSPITALS, REPATRIATION GENERAL

A petition signed by 664 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the Minister for Health to maintain the General Repatriation Hospital as an independent hospital, to serve the particular needs of veterans and for the Hospital to retain its board and receive its funding directly from the Minister for Health, was presented by the Hon. Dean Brown.

Petition received.

HOSPITALS, WALLAROO

A petition signed by 1 751 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to immediately make additional funding available to the Wallaroo Hospital (Northern Yorke Peninsula Health Service) to allow joint replacement surgery and other essential health services to continue, was presented by Mr Meier.

Petition received.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Report of the Public Works Committee entitled Mawson Connector—Section 2 which has been received and published pursuant to section 17(7) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991.

Pursuant to Section 131 of the Local Government Act 1999 the following reports of Local Councils for 2002-03

District Council of Robe
Flinders Ranges Council

By the Treasurer (Hon. K.O. Foley)—

Land Management Corporation Charter Report

By the Attorney-General (Hon. M.J. Atkinson)—

Dangerous Area Declarations—For the Period 1 October 2003 to 31 December 2003

Road Block Establishment Authorisations—For the Period 1 October 2003 to 31 December 2003

Supreme Court of South Australia, Report of the Judges of the—Report 2002-03

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

Pika Wiya Health Service Inc.—Report 2002-03
Regulations under the following Act—
Chiropractors—Fees

By the Minister for Science and Information Economy (Hon. P.L. White)—

Information Industries Development Centre Charter Report
By the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. S.W. Key)—

Training and Skills Commission—Report 2003

By the Minister for Education and Children's Services (Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith)—

Australasia Railway Corporation—Report 2002-03

By the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Hon. R.J. McEwen)—

Langhorne Creek Wine Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

Marine Scalefish Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

Riverland Wine Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

South Australian Apiary Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

South Australian Cattle Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

South Australian Deer Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

South Australian Pig Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

South Australian Sheep Industry Fund—Report 2002-03

MERCURY 04

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: South Australia is currently playing an active role in Australia's largest and most ambitious multijurisdictional counterterrorism exercise called Mercury 04. It is about testing readiness, testing coordination, sorting out chain command issues. This exercise, like a war game, involving Army, Navy and Air Force, will test our response to possible terrorist attacks by trialing our National Counter-Terrorism Plan and State Disaster Plan. There is no cause for any public alarm or anxiety. I repeat, this is an exercise.

Our involvement in the 10-day exercise started this morning with the South Australian government and South Australian police advised of the hypothetical attack on the North Endeavour oil rig, 500 nautical miles north of Darwin. This morning I convened a meeting of South Australia's Emergency Management Council to receive a briefing from the commissioner and discuss any implications for South Australia, such as sending some of our police to Darwin to provide assistance.

I have been further advised that, hypothetically, during the exercise: two diplomatic representatives from the 'Tarajaran' government and the 'Yelstar' government were attacked in an Adelaide restaurant by two assailants at 9.35 this morning. Fortunately, armed Star Force officers were on hand, killing one attacker and wounding another who is now under guard at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. The two officials who were attacked were not believed to be hurt. Police are treating the incident as a possible terrorist situation that may require the declaration of a national terrorist situation. The commonwealth government will almost certainly consider revising the nation's terrorist alert level, under the hypothetical scenario through this exercise.

These scenarios have prompted a range of government responses in South Australia, including the delivery of appropriate government notifications, protection and information sharing for the fictitious government delegations, advice to key gas and oil critical infrastructure providers, and activation of the State Crisis Centre. More responses are being implemented as the exercise evolves. Hourly teleconferences are being held between police commissioners.

Mercury 04 is the first counterterrorism exercise to be held in a range of states and territories simultaneously. The

Northern Territory and Tasmania are playing a central role, but also South Australia and Victoria are involved. Of course, the Commonwealth government, led by Prime Minister Howard is also intimately involved in these exercises.

A wide range of new and more complex scenarios are expected to be incorporated over the remaining days, including chemical, biological and possibly radiological threats. This exercise has been given the highest priority by participating governments, given the present world situation.

To emphasise how serious we are about preparing for this very real threat, this afternoon I will take part in a telephone conference with the Prime Minister, the premiers of Victoria and Tasmania and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory to test our joint decision-making links in a large scale crisis. This is about testing how we would deal with a real live crisis, as happens during war games.

We will receive a simulated intelligence briefing before considering the sorts of issues that we as heads of government might have to deal with, should the worst ever happen in real life. This includes special measures, such as:

- possible declaration of a national terrorist situation that would involve the Prime Minister and the premiers;
- protecting critical infrastructure;
- a coordinated approach to public information; and
- questions about the sharing of resources between jurisdictions.

On the ground, the Mercury 04 exercise offers a great opportunity to enhance coordination between participating government agencies and also their senior officials who, in a real national crisis, would have to work together to coordinate a myriad of decisions across state and territory borders. In some jurisdictions, Defence Force personnel are also involved in technical operations with police. Importantly, this experience also helps practise real-time deployment of resources, with the assistance of the South Australia Police, fire and ambulance staff expected to be required interstate.

Mercury 04 is the first of four major exercises planned within Australia this year to provide valuable insight into our preparedness and cooperative capabilities. Participating in this exercise is part of the government's commitment to the protection of the community and to the maintenance of the highest standards in emergency management. This exercise has my full support, the Prime Minister's full support and, I am sure, the full support of every member of this parliament.

REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I advise the house that, on 26 February 2004, Her Excellency the Governor, in Executive Council, signed proclamations for the dissolution of the boards of most metropolitan based public hospitals and health services and the establishment of three new health authorities to take over the running of these health services by 1 July 2004.

These proclamations were in accordance with section 27 of the South Australian Health Commission Act 1976. Members are aware of the government's Generational Health Review of the South Australian health system. One of the principal recommendations of the review report, released on 19 June 2003, was reform of governance. The report recommended a move away from separate boards for stand-alone hospitals and health services and a regional approach for the

delivery of services. The review saw this as a vital way of improving coordination and the continuum of care across all levels of the health system.

This was not a radical proposal. It encouraged South Australia to learn from developments around the world over the last 20 years, and the government accepted this recommendation for services in the metropolitan area. The boards of our metropolitan hospitals and health services also accepted the benefits offered by this commonsense proposal and voluntarily agreed to dissolve their incorporations and move their operations into the newly created entities of the Central North Adelaide Health Service, the Southern Adelaide Health Service, and the Child Youth and Women's Health Service. It is significant that the boards which made the decisions to dissolve represent our most iconic health institutions. They include: the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Women's and Children's Hospital, Child and Youth Health, the Flinders Medical Centre, the Lyell McEwin Health Service, the Modbury Public Hospital, the South Australian Dental Service, Drug and Alcohol Services and the Adelaide Central and the Northern Metropolitan Community Health Services.

The Repatriation General Hospital is completing a detailed consultation process with veterans before making a decision whether to accept the government's invitation to join the new southern regional health service. The new regional boards will be headed by distinguished Australians. The chair of the Central Northern Adelaide Health Service will be Mr Ray Grigg, recently retired as the president of General Motors for Asia-Pacific and a former CEO of General Motors Japan. The chair of the Southern Adelaide Health Service will be Mr Basil Scarsella, chief executive and general manager of ETSA Utilities. The chair of the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service will be the Hon. Carolyn Pickles, currently chair of the board of Child and Youth Health.

Together, the new organisations will be responsible for approximately \$1.3 billion of capital assets and over \$1.5 billion in recurrent expenditure, and employ over 13 000 staff to provide health services to the vast majority of South Australians. In one step we are establishing the fundamental conditions for sustained health reform and modern health service delivery. We are fulfilling a recommendation of the Economic Development Board to streamline governance in our public health system. However, this is only the first step in reforming and improving our health system. I will continue to keep the house informed of these developments as the reform effort quickens its pace.

ANANGU PITJANTJATJARA LANDS

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: In public office there arises from time to time an issue of such importance that it demands an extraordinary response—an issue of such significance that it calls for measures reserved for times of state emergency. That response may be unpopular with some people and it may result in criticism. However, as political leaders, we are obliged to do what needs to be done in the interests of all our citizens. The recent tragic events that have happened on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands in the past three weeks have prompted this government into decisive action.

Mr Brokenshire: Did you talk to Terry?

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has leave.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Thank you, sir. It is untenable to stand by and do little when four young people died and eight others attempted to take their own lives in the space of two weeks earlier this month. I have recently been briefed on the deterioration of conditions on the lands by the Commissioner of Police, senior health officers and the Chief Executive of the Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.

An honourable member: Have you been there?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I have, actually, yes. I have been told that there are increasing health problems associated with substance abuse, in particular, petrol sniffing. I am also aware that mental health problems are reaching alarming levels, which is why the Director of Mental Health, Jonathon Phillips, was sent into the lands last week to determine a future strategy to deal with that problem. I am also told of increasing acts of violence by some that have contributed to a breaking down of family and community life.

Families are struggling to cope with the problems created by a family member being a chronic petrol sniffer. It is well known that these problems have existed on the AP lands and in a number of Aboriginal communities for many years. That it has gone on for so long is an indication that governments of both political persuasions have struggled to deal with it. The problem has recently escalated, and we must act—and we must act swiftly.

The NPY Women's Council, which provides essential human services to people on the lands, agrees with this strategy. In experiencing first-hand the problems faced by the community, the women's council shares the government's deep concern about the appalling situation that prevails on the lands at present. The council's chairwoman, Mrs Yanyi Bandicha, has said publicly:

The South Australian government has been honest and taken a hard look at what's going on. It would be irresponsible if it had not stepped in now.

The Hon. D.C. Kotz interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Newland!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Mr Speaker, I will take two years of responsibility for this government's inaction, and the members opposite can take eight years of responsibility for their inaction. Mrs Bandicha has also said that, in her belief, the government's response is not a threat to land rights or freehold indigenous title. She quite rightly recognises that the response is about good governance, making sure money is spent on useful programs and saving and improving lives. She is right.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Unley!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: You sat back and did nothing for eight years. We are prepared to take some action.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier has leave.

Dr McFetridge interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Morphet!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: As an immediate first step, the Commissioner of Police was given funding to deploy three more officers, including an inspector, to the lands. I am advised that those additional officers will be on the lands Wednesday of this week. On Monday last week, I announced the establishment of a task force to sort out the escalating crisis on the AP lands. The first priority of the task force is to urgently identify programs which can be delivered now or which can be fast tracked for delivery. I expect chief executive officers of government departments responsible for

the delivery of these services to ensure that programs are ready to commence without any further delay. My message to those government chief executive officers today is simply this: failure is not an option.

A central component of our response to this crisis was the appointment of former assistant police commissioner Jim Litster to act as a coordinator of state government services on the APY lands. Mr Litster this morning has informed the government that due to family and health issues he can stay on only as an interim coordinator. Mr Litster will soon visit the APY lands to help stabilise the conditions and report back to the government on the immediate problems and tasks at hand. Mr Litster will help us for the next month in coordinating government services, but the complexity of these problems and the significance of the job ahead cannot be underestimated. The government now has a short list of people experienced in delivering services to disadvantaged people in Australia and overseas for welfare and aid organisations who can step in as a longer term coordinator for this project.

This government intends to give every support and power necessary for the coordinator to do the job and to establish good, strong working partnerships with the APY executive and other indigenous organisations on the lands. This is not a permanent solution. Following elections and the stabilisation of conditions, and the government having confidence in the delivery of essential services, the role of the coordinator will cease. This week the government will introduce legislation to give the coordinator the statutory powers to carry out his or her functions. The government is serious about dealing with this issue, and that means the government's bill will contain strong measures. Any suggestion that the government's response is all about protecting or advancing mining interests and controlling the lands is wrong. This bill is about helping to save young lives, helping to reduce suffering and helping to reduce human misery.

Let me make quite clear that this is not about mining. This is not about controlling the lands. This is about the coordinator taking responsibility for the delivery of government services. The APY executive retains all the powers given to it under legislation to maintain and control the lands. The government intends to introduce a bill this week where the details of the proposal will be made clear and subject to full debate. Matters relating to future mining and economic opportunities for the lands will remain a decision for the APY executive. The government coordinator will have no power over any issue relating to mining. The government sincerely hopes that the opposition and Independent members will join with it to support legislation to make the coordinator as effective as possible.

The SPEAKER: Can I tell the house that, while I take seriously the substance of all ministerial statements—and no less in this instance—and acknowledge the role of other members in that, nonetheless I draw attention to the matters that I have mentioned previously in ministerial statements wherein such statements need to provide the house with facts and not engage in debate. The substance of the statement that has been prepared contains far too much material that is prerogative and provocative and can result in the house becoming unruly. If facts are provided, then the forums of the house in other forms in sessional orders provide for the debate of the matter and enable, thereby, ministers and other members to participate equally in presentation of opinion about appropriate policy. At present, it is unbalanced and

needs to be resolved in a way which will prevent disorderly conduct and enhance the way in which the public sees matters of policy properly pursued by the processes available to the chamber.

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: MURRAY
BRIDGE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

Mr CAICA (Colton): I bring up the 201st report of the committee, on the Murray Bridge Soldiers Memorial Hospital redevelopment.

Report received and ordered to be published.

QUESTION TIME

The SPEAKER: The chair advises the house that the Minister for Education and Children's Services will take questions for the Minister for Employment.

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): That is a very good decision, sir. My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, representing the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. Does the minister agree with the Premier's statement on 30 December 2003 that 'we have the lowest unemployment in South Australia in 25 years and the highest level of people in jobs in the history of the state'?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): At the time that was true.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I have a supplementary question. The minister just said that at the time it was true. Is the minister aware that in the first six months of this financial year we lost both full-time jobs and total jobs in each and every one of those six months? Therefore, how does she justify that statement?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. He does seem to want to knock the economy consistently; he does seem to want to talk down South Australian businesses. It is true to say that there are now 20 700 more people in employment than there were when we came into government; that is, 20 700 people who are now employed and who were unemployed when he was premier. That is a very significant statistic for those people. Of course, there are fluctuations between those two years but, if you look at the job advertisements, the reality is that they are now higher than they have been for four years. The issue we have pointed out is that there are jobs and opportunities available, and we are focusing on upskilling and training people to give them prevocational skills so they can take those jobs.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Mawson will come to order!

CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): What will the Premier do to address South Australia's status as having the weakest penalties for child pornography related offences in the nation?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I appreciate the honourable member's question. I was shocked to hear that South Australia's laws relating to child pornography appear

to be the weakest in Australia. I am sure that most South Australians were equally shocked, and that is why I will move to make our child pornography penalties the strongest in Australia, and that means multiplying gaol terms fivefold. I hope members will support this. They certainly did not address the issue with any resolve when they were in government. Offenders convicted for possession of child pornography currently face a \$5 000 maximum fine or one year's gaol (or both). Those who produce or distribute the material are up for a maximum \$5 000 fine or two years in gaol (or both), and that is for a first offence. I would like to see those maximum gaol terms set at five years for possession of child pornography and 10 years for producing or distributing child pornography. These people who prey on the innocence of children by ensnaring them and then creating or distributing child pornography are sickening.

In my book, people who access and view child pornography are just as bad, because they fuel the market that targets these vulnerable children. On top of tougher new penalties for child pornography, I want to give police the power to keep up with these criminals, who use technological advances such as the internet to avoid getting caught, and that means giving our police the powers to use covert surveillance. I am told that these methods are reserved for the investigation of offences previously regarded to be more serious, such as murder and serious drug offences, because they carry higher penalties. Police can use covert powers to detect drug dealers and so on. Increasing the penalties for child pornography offences will show that they are serious enough to be investigated by our police, using covert means.

I have asked the Attorney-General's office to examine these proposed changes before a proposal is finalised for cabinet consideration. We will also have to consider how these increases compare with other offences, because we may need to make other changes as well. So, I hope that all members of this parliament will support measures to massively increase the penalties for child pornography in the state.

EMPLOYMENT

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the minister representing the Minister For Employment, Training and Further Education. To what factors does the government attribute the fact that the total number of jobs in South Australia has fallen every month for the past eight months? The latest figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that 139 200 jobs have been created nationally over the last eight months, yet in South Australia 6 300 fewer people are now employed.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I reiterate that 20 700 new jobs have been created. Clearly, there has been a fall from the high last year, but the actual microeconomic explanation for why each job was lost is something I cannot answer without the question being on notice.

CLIPSAL 500

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): My question is to the Deputy Premier. How did this weekend's Clipsal 500 compare with last year's event?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): I thank my colleague for her question. I know how keen opposition members of this house are to receive good news, because they

seem to do nothing but produce bad news. This is a good news story, and it is one we all should share, including members opposite, that is, the pleasure of having staged in Adelaide the largest Clipsal 500.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The member for Mawson is absolutely correct: John Olsen and the then Liberal government brought the Clipsal car race to Adelaide, and they should be applauded for that. Since coming to office, we have taken that race and made it bigger and better. This year, a record crowd of some 237 400 attended the four days, up from 213 800 who attended the event last year. Ticket sales exceeded \$5 million, up from \$4.3 million the previous year. Attendances on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday exceeded records set in previous years. I am advised that, once again, the Clipsal has set a new record for attendance at a national motor sport event.

The Clipsal 500 is, in fact, the largest touring car event held anywhere in the world. In 2003, over 12 000 visitors were attracted to South Australia for the event, generating about an extra \$20 million of economic benefit. Excluding this year, it is estimated that the event has returned a total economic benefit to South Australia of over \$80 million over the last five years. Further research is being undertaken, in conjunction with this year's event, to assess the economic impact of the race. Last year the Premier promised 200 additional toilets, and I can advise the house that in fact we delivered 235.

We did what the Premier asked, added to it more and are now trying to work out how much it cost, and why they went over budget—but never mind. In all seriousness, that was an outstanding piece of infrastructure development. Of course, we have spent quite a bit more on infrastructure, including the doubling of overpasses, the construction of new pathways, the additional toilets and a number of other minor works. The event has been awarded the AVESCO Trophy as the best V8 Supercar event each year since its inception. Add to this three South Australian Yellow Pages Tourism awards, induction into the SA Tourism Hall of Fame and, of course, just a few weeks ago, as I have said to the house previously, the event was named as Australia's best major event or festival at the National Tourism Awards ceremony held in Perth.

On behalf of the Parliament, the government and all members, I congratulate the SA Motor Sport Board and all the staff, particularly the chairman, Roger Cook, who has built this event as chair of the board and improved on it each year. For that Roger Cook should be commended. I also congratulate all the board members, of course, but particularly to the chief executive, Andrew Daniels, who has managed the Motor Sport Board now for many years and who has continued to deliver such an outstanding event.

The Clipsal 500 team conduct themselves in a highly professional manner. They run the event each year better than the previous one, and as a government we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead for our state—

The Hon. I.F. Evans: He is excited.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Big Kev is excited about the Clipsal 500 and why would I not be, being a passionate lover of motor sports?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Then again, it is an offence to mislead the Parliament. I like the Motor Sports Board and I am getting to like it more and more. If they keep having acts of the calibre of the outstanding performance we saw last

night, particularly with Jimmy Barnes, Glen Shorrock, Mossy and others. It was outstanding. We are now in negotiations and discussions with AVESCO and the Motor Sport Board, to see how we can make it a bigger and better event and how we can ensure that 237 000 people is exceeded next year and continues to be exceeded year after year. We want to push the limits in terms of how big this race can become and perhaps, even more importantly, think about how we can better leverage opportunities for this state in exposing our state.

We want to see how we can attract more tourists, more migrants and more economic investment into South Australia. The Premier and I and other ministers met a dozen or more companies over the weekend at the Clipsal. It is a fantastic economic opportunity for our state and an outstanding opportunity to promote our city and state to major markets of the world and in particular provide a good event for all South Australians. They can be very proud that in South Australia we have the best event in all Australia.

EMPLOYMENT

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for Employment. How does the Minister explain that the total number of full-time jobs in South Australia has fallen every month for the last eight months, resulting in 22 100 full-time jobs being lost, totally against the national trend?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): One of the interesting issues to do with the performance of South Australia compared to the rest of the country is that we are a very strong exporting state. As you might well know, one of our major export destinations is the United States. In fact, I understand we export more to the United States than the rest of Australia per state. This means that we will be affected by one of the major global changes over the last six months, namely, the exchange rate. When you have the Australian dollar rising against the greenback as dramatically as it has over the last six months, it is hardly surprising that employment has gone down.

RIVER MURRAY

Mr CAICA (Colton): My questions are directed to the Minister for the River Murray. What is the current condition of the River Murray? What is the likelihood of water restrictions for South Australia's irrigators in 2004-05?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for the River Murray): I thank the honourable member for his question, particularly as today is World Water Day, as members would know. I also take the opportunity to note that the international water expert and member of the Wentworth group of scientists, Professor Peter Cullen (who is currently serving a term in South Australia as a thinker in residence), is giving a key address today on this issue. Of course, the River Murray remains one of the government's top environmental concerns—indeed, the top environmental concern. Just last week, the Prime Minister and I announced projects worth \$12.1 million to improve water quality in the Lower Murray, establish salt interception schemes, restore wetlands and improve vegetation. These works will help salinity and improve water quality.

However, the extended drought throughout the Murray-Darling Basin continues to hurt the River Murray, particularly in South Australia. Flows in the Darling River have been saline because of the heavy rainfall in Queensland and

northern New South Wales after a very long dry spell. Early predictions indicate that this highly saline water would raise salinity levels in South Australia. South Australian agencies have worked closely with their counterparts in New South Wales and commission officials to minimise the impact on the River Murray salinity in this state.

Much of the salinity slug from the Darling flow has now been diverted into Lake Victoria. Early indications are that this action has averted the worst case scenario, which had suggested that salinity levels could have risen to above 1,000 EC at Morgan. We are working to manage this event to keep salinity at Morgan below 800 EC which, as members would know, is the World Health Organisation's suggested maximum level for drinking water. However, salinity levels will rise at Renmark at the end of this month and will last for about five days, whilst Morgan's salinity levels will rise in early May and last a little longer. It is important that we minimise the impact of this flow on water users downstream, and SA Water and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission will continue to monitor the situation closely.

I am pleased to note that there is some improvement in water resource availability compared with this time last year. Water storages are currently at 33 per cent of active storage capacity, compared with 19 per cent at this time last year. However, I have received some early advice which suggests that, whilst storage conditions are better than the same time last year, South Australia is not guaranteed to receive its full entitlement of 1 850 gigalitres in the 2004-05 year. Current water resource assessments indicate that there is a 25 per cent risk that South Australia may receive something less than its annual entitlement in the 2004-05 year. For example, if conditions deteriorate this winter to historic minimum inflows into South Australia, we would receive only 70 per cent of full entitlements for the 2004-05 water year. I am stressing that that is the worst case scenario. Negotiations with representatives from irrigator groups regarding a potential restriction package are now under way, and I am pleased to note that some irrigator groups are developing policies for their own groups in preparation for the possibility of restrictions.

Any decision to require water restrictions for the early part of the next year will be made on the basis of the best available information regarding availability, as well as requirements for managing the poor water quality conditions in Lakes Alexandrina and Albert. The timing of any announcement of water restrictions will take account of the needs of irrigators. However, more reliable information on which to base such a decision will be available closer to the commencement of the new water year. In fact, irrigators would like us to tell them well in advance what it will be, but we do not know. If we made any announcement about water restrictions now, it would need to be very conservative and would more likely be at the 70 per cent level.

As we get closer to the beginning of the water year, we will have more information and will be able to make more reliable predictions—hopefully, at a higher level of entitlement. It may be that we will have a situation similar to that of this year, when restrictions will be needed early in the year and will ease as better information becomes available throughout the year. However, I will ensure that the house is informed as more information becomes available.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): My question is to the minister representing the Minister for Employment, Training and

Further Education. What immediate action is the government taking to arrest the slide in South Australia's employment as revealed in the latest figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics?

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: Tell that to the unemployed people.

The Hon. M.D. Rann interjecting:

Mr BRINDAL: We will see how long you survive the next election. The latest ABS figures show that full-time employment in South Australia has, as the leader said, fallen by 22 100 over the last eight months.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): Again, I will put this in context and say that it was the highest level of employment ever on record. We have come off a very high peak and the economy has slowed—related, of course, to the drought and the rise in the dollar. Having said that, certain structural changes that have been implemented in the Department of Employment and Training relate to the employment strategy that has occurred over the last six months. You would be aware that there has been a focus on skills development and training, on school retention, on pathways to employment, and particularly on finding strategies to help youth unemployment re-engage; but, on top of that, we have engaged an Economic Development Board and we will be having an economic summit to talk about further changes that might occur. That will arise, I think, on 3 April.

HOSPITALS, REPATRIATION GENERAL

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the minister met a deputation of veterans to discuss governance of the Repatriation General Hospital following the establishment of new health regions in metropolitan Adelaide?

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I thank the member for Reynell for this important question. As I said earlier, the board of the repatriation hospital is consulting veterans' organisations and others—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. L. STEVENS: No; consulting with veterans and their organisations—about governance of the Repatriation General Hospital following the Generational Health Review. The review gave the government a plan to build better services. One of the most significant changes that we are making is to bring together hospitals and health services in metropolitan Adelaide in regions from 1 July this year. I think that most people agree that any one hospital or health service can no longer provide for all the needs of all patients. Our services have to work together, and a regional approach provides a way to make sure that this happens. There is an open invitation to the board of the repatriation hospital to consider joining the new southern region, because I genuinely believe that we will be able to provide even better care to veterans under these new arrangements. However, from the start of our reforms last year, I made it clear that I understood the special importance of the repatriation hospital to veterans and I told the board that whether or not they joined the southern region was their call.

The repatriation hospital is more than a hospital to our veterans. Both the Premier and I have given the undertaking that the hospital's special culture will always be protected. I recently met with a group of veterans and emphasised that there is no pressure on the repatriation hospital to join our new arrangements. I made it clear that I am willing to discuss any terms and conditions which the

repat board might wish to raise and which would preserve and promote the unique place of the repat, if they wished to come into the new region. The idea of regions is not new. The establishment of health regions in Adelaide was recommended to the Liberal government by the Commission of Audit in 1994 when the member for Finniss was premier. However—

Mr BROKENSHIRE: Mr Speaker, I ask you to rule on repetition. This was all in the ministerial statement by the minister only a few minutes ago.

The SPEAKER: Whatever information the minister gives is information which, of course, I assume is not contained in that statement and, if in fact, the minister is providing a further run-down of what was contained in the statement, can the chair politely point out that that is not necessary—the house is already apprised of that.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: As I was saying, the establishment of health regions in Adelaide was recommended to the former Liberal government by the commission of audit in 1994, when the member for Finniss was premier. But the former premier (and later the minister for human services) ignored his own audit commission on health reform. Instead, he privatised the Modbury Hospital and then tried on two occasions to privatise the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

STATE ECONOMY

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): Does the Minister for Industrial Relations agree with the Treasurer's comments in the house on 19 February 2004, when he said, 'That is what this Labor government has delivered to this state's economy: stronger retail sales and thousands more jobs in the retail sector'?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Industrial Relations): Yes.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Sir, I have a supplementary question. Given that answer, to what factors does the minister attribute what the ABS figures (which were released only last week) show; that there has been a loss of more than 11 000 full-time jobs in South Australia's retail sector—down by 20 per cent, from 60 000 in February last year to 49 000 now?

The SPEAKER: The honourable the minister, representing the minister for employment.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I think that one of the issues about retail employment is that it is very often part-time work. We would prefer jobs to be full-time but, as I have said before, there has been an increase in part-time jobs in our community generally.

INTRODUCTION AGENCIES

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): My question is to the Attorney-General. What was the success or otherwise of last week's phone-in day about the service provided by introduction agencies?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): Not all introduction agencies have a poor record, but the number of introduction agencies has increased over the past few years. Many operate online and have no personal contact with their customers. Only 11 businesses are registered as introduction agencies on the South Australian register of business names. About 50 of the 2½ million web sites offering introduction services in English offer services specifically to South Australians. The Office of Consumer

and Business Affairs receives a few complaints from consumers about introduction agencies each year. The government suspected that the level of dissatisfaction with the trade could be greater than reported because of the personal nature of the services. Obviously, some customers would be too embarrassed to contact a public official to say that they were using the service, and others would be embarrassed because they had been exploited by the service, that is, they had been foolish. Introduction agencies were therefore the subject of a statewide phone-in on St Patrick's Day, giving South Australians the opportunity—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: —I didn't staff the phones that day—to report poor service, while remaining anonymous if they chose. By the close of business, more than 70 complaints about introduction agencies had been reported to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs. About 10 calls were from regional South Australia.

A common complaint by male callers was of pressure sales tactics to sign up and then, having signed up, to upgrade to a premium service. Several callers believed that the people to whom they had been introduced by the agency were not genuine clients, because the contacts were either incompatible or appeared to be there just to share a meal or to fulfil the agency's obligation to provide contacts. Some callers complained about difficulties in obtaining refunds because the introduction agency with whom they were signed up was based interstate. This makes it difficult for people to pursue redress without incurring extra costs, and I recommend that consumers use an introduction agency with a street address here in South Australia.

Other callers said that they had confronted the owners of an introduction agency for a refund only to be told that it was not the agency's fault that the other party found them unsuitable or that there were better clients available if they wanted to upgrade their membership. Some callers said that their contact with the introduction agency had been terminated on the spot without an explanation after the caller asked for a refund on the grounds that the agency suddenly deemed the customer to be unsuitable. On a positive note, two callers reported having found lasting love through an introduction agency. The Office for Consumer and Business Affairs will use the data collected during the phone-in day to find ways of improving the performance of introduction agencies.

EMPLOYMENT, RETAIL

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): My question is to the minister representing the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. Given the minister's previous answer in which she stated—

The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley has the call. I know that the Deputy Premier and Treasurer is a mind-reader, but you have to have something to read. I would rather he did not pretend to know what is in the member for Unley's mind. The member for Unley has the call.

Mr BRINDAL: Given the minister's previous answer in which she stated that employees in the retail sector had moved from full-time to part-time employment, how does she explain that there are now 7 700 fewer people employed in the retail sector in either full-time or part-time employment than there were in February 2002-03?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I think that I need to get that

clarified and I will take that question on notice. I am not sure whether the honourable member means 2002 or 2003, or 2002 to 2003, so I will take the question on notice. I can say that there was approximately a 25 per cent increase in change from full-time to part-time employment in the decade to 2002, but the exact figures he is suggesting I need to check. I will take the question on notice.

TEACHERS

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. How many teachers have been made permanent in 2004?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I know that the honourable member is interested in teaching, education and the future of our children. One of the key factors that was a pre-election promise was that we would make teachers permanent and end the uncertainty where they were not sure of their future employment and had difficulty getting mortgages.

This year we have provided employment to 450 teachers and given permanent jobs in South Australia in the year 2004. That includes 136 graduate teachers—a 60 per cent increase on the number that were made permanent last year. To date this means that the government has made 1 600 people permanent within the education system—1 600 permanent jobs in 18 months. These include hundreds of teachers, school services officers, principals, Aboriginal education workers, early childhood workers and directors in preschools. Previously, these people had been unemployed or else working in contract jobs with no stability as relief teachers often. I am pleased that this permanency has been extended to so many graduate teachers, and this year 24 graduates have received country teaching scholarships from the government in order to support their studies, and it is hoped that in the coming year these people will be the backbone of our education across the state.

EMPLOYMENT, WOMEN

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, representing the Minister for Employment, Further Education and Training. Will the minister explain to the house why since May last year the total number of women in full-time employment increased nationally by 1.7 per cent (39 400 jobs) but declined in South Australia by 9.2 per cent (15 300 jobs)?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Tourism): I will reiterate that there has been a dramatic rise in the dollar, a drought and a range of issues that have affected South Australia but, beside that, I am very happy to take her question on notice, because clearly I have given the same answer for the last five questions at least and that has not explained the issue to the opposition in a way with which they are satisfied.

ROADS TO RECOVERY

Mr SNELLING (Playford): My question is to the Minister for Transport. What is the state government doing to ensure that South Australia receives its fair share of commonwealth funds under AusLink and the extended roads to recovery program?

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Transport): I also share the member for Unley's view that that is an insightful question, because it is a very important question for both the economic and social infrastructure of this state in terms of our funding share from the federal government. For whatever reason, it appears that this state does indeed have to fight hard to get its fair share of commonwealth funding for roads because currently it does not and for a long time it has been significantly under funded by the commonwealth government. Last financial year, South Australia received only 4.2 per cent of commonwealth funding available for road construction projects on the national highway and for roads of national importance. This is despite having almost 8 per cent of the nation's population and over 14 per cent of the national highway. Last year, we received only 4.2 per cent even though we have over 14 per cent of the national highway.

Similarly, local government in South Australia receives only 5.5 per cent of commonwealth funding for local roads, despite maintaining 11.7 per cent of the nation's local roads. On top of that, the state government directly maintains more than 10 000 kilometres of local roads in the unincorporated areas of the state. Despite the Prime Minister's announcement last week of an extra \$26 million for South Australian roads, this goes only part of the way—and not an adequate part at all—towards redressing the historical under funding of this state. Even with that additional funding, on a dollar per kilometre basis this state will receive less than any other state or territory in the nation. Let me repeat that for the opposition: we will receive less on a dollar per kilometre basis than any other state or territory in the nation.

What are we doing about it? Officials from my department are meeting with commonwealth officials today to ensure that they understand all the facts to ensure that this time the commonwealth government gets its roads to recovery formula right. We continue to ask why—

An honourable member: Disgraceful.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Members of the opposition say 'Disgraceful', and it is indeed disgraceful that the federal government does not fund this state to its current level. I see members out there criticising, yet I ask them and I continue to—

The SPEAKER: The minister must understand that questions are asked by people other than ministers.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: Well, then, perhaps a question that should be asked of the federal government is why the Riddoch Highway, in the state's South-East, is being excluded from the Auslink national network in favour of roads interstate which carry far less traffic, such as the Mount Isa to Townsville, the Mildura to Melbourne and Dubbo to Sydney roads and the New England Highway. They are all getting funding, whereas here in South Australia the Riddoch Highway is being excluded from the Auslink national highway network. I will be putting these questions and more to the Deputy Prime Minister ahead of the release in May of the commonwealth's Auslink white paper. Instead of whingeing and making accusations, perhaps opposition MPs will get behind me in trying to get their federal colleagues to grant South Australia a fair share—our deserved share—of the national bucket of funding.

EMPLOYMENT, WOMEN

Mrs HALL (Morialta): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, representing the

Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What specific programs will the government put in place to address the collapse of full-time employment for women in South Australia? ABS figures show that during this financial year the number of full-time jobs for women in our state has dropped from 166 300 to 151 400 (or by nearly 10 per cent) in eight months.

Mr Venning: Shame, shame!

The SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps the member for Schubert would like to put a few on. The minister.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Morialta for her question. As the member would know, there has been a considerable restructuring in the employment portfolio in terms of training and education. One of the issues that are particularly important for mature-aged re-employment and re-entry into the work force and one that is particularly important for women is training and skills development. There is now a focus on finding programs that will take people from ACE into VET and vocational training. There are also opportunities that arise through having a greater focus on enterprise opportunities, by developing skills that will attach themselves to the jobs available. It is particularly true, if you look at the job vacancy advertisements, that our job vacancies have risen dramatically, and they are now at the highest level over the four years, which would imply that there are plenty of jobs available but a shortage of skills. So, on the backdrop of available jobs and skills shortages, the employment strategy, combined with working on the shortage of child-care places, are especially important—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley has had a pretty fair run today. I suppose the member for Unley, like most other members, wants to participate in a debate about the matter. The member for Unley and all other members know what the solution to that problem is: question time is not about debate. The member for Unley needs to know, then, that the standing orders are capable of amendment to enable debate of the kind he so richly deserves, in his opinion—and that of other members, judging by their behaviour today—otherwise he will be orderly. Has the minister finished the answer?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Yes.

WASTEWATER, VICTOR HARBOR

Mr CAICA (Colton): My question is to the Minister for Administrative Services. What is the current status of the new wastewater treatment plant for Victor Harbor?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Administrative Services): I am pleased to be able to advise the house that the government has approved SA Water entering into a contract with United Utilities for the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant for Victor Harbor. Although the process of finalising the contract took some time, SA Water worked with United Utilities to resolve complex technical, commercial and contractual details to ensure the South Australian community received maximum value from the proposed long-term arrangements. It was also essential to make sure that the high level performance criteria set by SA Water is achieved and to satisfy Environment Protection Authority conditions for treated wastewater.

The \$33 million contract for building and operating the new treatment plant for 20 years will incorporate the use of the latest membrane filtration technology and will provide

'Class A' reclaimed water with very low levels of nutrients suitable for unrestricted irrigation of agriculture, parks and gardens. Construction of the project will take about 13 months, and it should be operational by mid-2005. Although reuse water will not be available until then, SA Water will soon begin discussing details of reuse water supply with potential customers. The provision of this treated water wastewater for reuse is another step in the right direction of conserving water and opens the way for further horticultural industries on the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula. This is great news for the environment and for the Victor Harbor community and demonstrates the government's commitment to the improved environmental performance of its operations.

OVINE JOHNES DISEASE

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I am pleased to direct the first question to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. Can the minister advise the house whether the Turretfield Research Centre is quarantined for Ovine Johnes disease and, if so, what action was taken to ensure farmers attending the recent open day on 17 February were advised of the quarantine conditions? Will the minister advise whether precautionary action and advice was given to farmers before they went home to farms unaffected by OJD?

The SPEAKER: I advise the member for Schubert that all those questions are very important; it is a pity there are so many of them. The honourable minister.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I will bring back to the member an informed answer to each of those questions as soon as possible.

DISABILITY HOUSING, PORT LINCOLN

Ms BREUER (Giles): Will the Minister for Housing inform the house about what is being done in the area of housing people with disabilities in Port Lincoln?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): I thank the honourable member for her question; I know she has a keen interest in issues affecting Spencer Gulf towns. It is my pleasure to announce that construction has begun on a state-of-the-art accommodation facility, known as the ADAM Project, in Port Lincoln for people with disabilities. ADAM is, in fact, an acronym of Assisted Disabled Accommodation, and it also happens to be the name of the grandson of the founding person, Moira Shannon, of this very worthy organisation. She, like many people in our community, is playing a tremendous role in looking after the needs of carers of people with disabilities.

This facility will be a new, purpose-built house to provide accommodation within the Port Lincoln urban renewal project of Lincoln Gardens. It is close to the city's main facilities and will house about four people with disabilities. This is a massive challenge that is facing our community in an era where deinstitutionalisation is favoured and where there is an increasing burden on families, which now have greater responsibilities for dealing with people in a home environment. There is a massive need for respite opportunities for carers, because enormous burdens are placed on carers, many of whom are often caring for people for almost 24 hours a day. This new facility will provide those families with respite, many of whom have children with intellectual disabilities. Until now, many of these families had to go to

other regional centres, which was obviously not satisfactory. In the meantime, while this facility is being built, we will be providing supported accommodation in a rental property to ensure that there is some adequate respite in the short term.

Mrs Penfold interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I know this has been a regular complaint from the member for Flinders. A local builder, Cliff Carpenter, won the tender for the facility—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is right. He is not a carpenter but a builder, but we managed to give to him, anyway. The facility should be completed and ready for clients to move in later this year. It is a \$235 000 project, which is being funded by the state government through the Housing Trust and the Disabilities Service Office. It is very pleasing that it is located centrally in town. I think that there is also a challenge for the community to accept that we are going to have a range of people with very diverse needs living amongst us. There is a responsibility for us all to show the tolerance that is necessary to deal with a very broad cross-section of people in our community. This project is a collaboration between this organisation, ADAM, and the state government. It also shows how local communities can work together with governments to find innovative solutions to these very difficult problems.

CRIME PREVENTION FUNDING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is to the Minister for Local Government. When will the South Australian government reinstate crime prevention funding? Local councils in South Australia pay over \$500 000 per annum for private security in their council areas. The largest totals are in those councils that have the most entertainment and visitor traffic. Holdfast Bay alone spends \$250 000 annually. When will crime prevention funding be reinstated?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): The government will give due consideration to that, budget by budget, as the state can afford it. The Labor government has increased the best of all crime prevention programs; that is, it has committed to South Australians that it will employ 200 new full-time police in South Australia, so that we will have more police than at any time in South Australia's history. That is the kind of—

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson needs to be reminded, I suppose, of what I said to the member for Schubert and a few other members, like the member for Unley. Clearly the issue deserves debate, but question time is not for debate. The solution to the dilemma the member for Mawson faces is in his own hands. The standing orders may be amended to facilitate that desire. The honourable minister.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The Rann Labor government is in the course of hiring 200 new police officers. That is the best kind of crime prevention. The member for Mawson shakes his head; I do not know why. I would have thought he supported our hiring more police here—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I see the desire of the member for Mawson is shared by the member for Giles and the member for Reynell. It is a topic worthy of debate. Why does the house not address its problem? I will name the next person who engages in debate under the guise of participating in question time through interjections. The minister.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The member for Mawson and I listen to and participate in talkback radio regularly, often in the same hour. We hear the desire of South Australians for the criminal justice system expressed every day. He knows as well as I do that it is more police that South Australians want, not more local government crime prevention programs. I am amenable, as budgetary opportunities present themselves, to restoring more of the grants to local government for crime prevention, but we already maintain funding of a robust local government crime prevention program, albeit on a regional basis. The odd thing is that, when we withdrew funding for some of these programs, local governments themselves decided to pick up and fund some of those programs. The opposition predicted that those programs would disappear altogether to the extent of the cut.

The Hon. D.C. Kotz interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The member for Newland says that they have disappeared. She is wrong.

PROPERTY VALUATIONS

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): My question is to the Minister for Local Government. What action, if any, will the minister take to ensure that local government is not profiteering from the significant statewide rises in property valuations? I have been contacted by a constituent who owns two properties, one in the Alexandrina council and one in the Unley council. While the capital value of both properties have increased by 30 per cent, rates payable in the Alexandrina council have risen by 19.3 per cent, compared with 5.8 per cent in the Unley council area.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for State/Local Government Relations): Mr Speaker, you, like I, understand the basis on which local government as an independent sphere of government raises the revenue it needs to provide the services that its constituents want. Unfortunately, the shadow minister, through that question, exposes the fact that he does not understand the basic principles under which revenue is raised. He is suggesting that, if your value goes up, your rates go up. That is not necessarily the case.

The starting point, Mr Speaker, as you and I are aware, is that councils set a budget. Then they actually look at their rate base, because that evaluation is the source of that revenue. If, for example, the rate of a council went up by 5 per cent and if somebody's evaluation went up by significantly more than 5 per cent and it in turn paid more than 5 per cent in its rates, someone else would actually pay less.

The understanding of averages escapes the shadow minister. Equally though, the fact is that valuations simply serve as a stepping off point by calculating and distributing across the rate base the revenue that a council needs to raise. We have got to, in the wider community, get away from this notion that, simply, if your valuations go up your rates go up. People opposite say that they do. I am absolutely astounded.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: The interjections disturb me, because they show that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of how local government works. I have had this problem also in the generic media. I think the failing is partly mine, because I am not communicating simply enough the fundamental basis on which revenue is raised in local government. I am prepared to offer anybody opposite a more detailed briefing should they so choose, but at this stage they should get out of their heads this notion that, if your values go up,

your rates automatically go up. That is a fundamental flaw and it exposes their lack of understanding of how rates work.

NATIVE VEGETATION

Mrs HALL (Morialta): Will the Minister for Environment and Conservation review current EPA policy and native vegetation regulations regarding domestic burning, with a view to offering greater flexibility to residents who wish to undertake bushfire prevention measures? EPA policy and native vegetation regulations provide that domestic burning may take place only within the hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday to Saturday.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I thank the member for her question. I am not entirely certain about the ill that she is attempting to cure with her suggested course of action. I am happy to look at the issue, and perhaps she and I can have a discussion about it so that I can find out more exactly what her concerns are. If there are ways of helping her, I will certainly try to do so.

POLICE NUMBERS

Mr MEIER (Goyder): My question is to the Minister for Police. What action is the government taking to address the lack of police officers in regional areas? The local police station at Mallala, in my electorate, has been unattended for at least six weeks whilst the police officer in charge is on leave. In this time there has been an increasing incidence of vandalism to both business and residential properties in the town. Whilst the local police officer's absence was to be covered by two neighbouring police stations, one of the residents affected by the vandalism was advised by the police that it was impossible to have officers to come to Mallala and inspect the crime scene and patrol the area, due to the already limited number of police servicing this area.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister for Police): As the member for Goyder would know, having served in this chamber much longer than I, I do not have operational authority or control of the deployment of our assets, our resources and our police officers, as that relates to policing our state. By law, I am prohibited from doing so. I have full confidence in the police commissioner to allocate resources as he deems appropriate for the effective operation of policing our state.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Not enough! I am happy that they say to me that there are not enough police, and they are right. That is why we are putting 200 extra police into service over the next 18 months—unlike members opposite, such as the member for Mawson and the member for Bragg's colleagues in an earlier parliament, who cut the number of officers. From memory, they cut hundreds of officers from our state. However—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Police will not debate the question: he will merely provide the information sought.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am happy to provide a fact to the house, and it is this: the Liberal government cut police numbers. I concur with members who say that we need more police, and that is why this government took the extraordinary measure and quite significant step to resource our police to the tune of 200 extra officers. The Labor government stands for more police: the Liberal government applied some flat

and cut the number of police. We are a government that is about more policing.

As this relates to Mallala, I say this—and I say this to all members of this parliament: I am quite happy for members to write to me directly and, indeed, I am happy for members, if they so choose, to write directly to the police commissioner, if it relates to a specific area in their own electorate. If the member for Goyder would like to detail his concerns about policing in Mallala, I encourage him to write to me. I will forward that correspondence to the police commissioner and ask him to provide me with a response which, I hope, will allay the member for Goyder's fears. I offer that opportunity to all members.

Mr Brokenshire interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Unlike former ministers for police, as I recall and am advised, I am a bit more relaxed about members of parliament contacting police and senior public servants. I am far more relaxed about that than they ever were with me, when I, from memory, could not meet with a public servant without a minister's minder being in attendance. However, that is off the track. I am happy to consider the matter if the member wishes to write to me, and I will forward that to the police commissioner.

CITY WEST CONNECTOR

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Transport): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: I inform the house that, on 7 March 2004, I announced that the South Australian government will spend almost \$9 million to construct a major new arterial road which will complete the transport ring route around Adelaide, as well as easing traffic flow pressure in the city's west. The City West Connector, which will be built from James Congdon Drive at Mile End to South Road at Richmond, should be operational by 2005. The City West Connector is identified in the draft transport plan as being vital to relieving traffic pressure into West Terrace and as a component of the freight ring route around Adelaide.

The original concept for the City West Connector, which was released for public comment over a year ago, has been revised in response to community feedback. The 1.1 kilometre connector will cross industrial land through Mile End south and will include upgraded transport signals at the intersections of South Road, Sir Donald Bradman Drive and Railway Terrace. Pedestrians and cycle crossings will be a feature of all intersections, and a pedestrian crossing, with a central refuge, will provide access to the new bulky goods zone across the connector. In addition to an on-road cycle path, the new plan includes the extension of the off-road shared path from Deacon Avenue, linking with paths in the sports stadium, Railway Terrace.

The City West Connector will connect Adelaide's ring roads, which are designated transport routes for freight and commuter movements around residential areas, and the city. The connector will provide a short-cut for traffic travelling between the south-western and north-eastern suburbs currently using roads within the city, especially West Terrace. It will also provide traffic relief for South Road, attracting

north and south-bound traffic to Churchill Road, via Torrens Road and Park Terrace.

The final plans were presented to state parliament's Public Works Committee on 18 March 2004. The tender has been called and construction of the \$8.9 million South Australian government funded project should start in May 2004. I thank the project's community reference group and the wider community for their input to the project. The revised plan will be on display at the Hilton library and the civic centre foyer later next month. Full details of the public display will be advertised.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STATUTES AMENDMENT (CO-MANAGED PARKS) BILL

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I move:

That the select committee have leave to sit during the sitting of the house today.

Motion carried.

EMPLOYMENT

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I seek leave to make a brief personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr BRINDAL: During question time today, in a question to the minister representing the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, I asserted that there were 7 700 fewer people employed on either a full-time or part-time basis in the South Australian work force as at February 2003. I apologise to the house, because I have since had cause to check those figures, and the figure is not 7 700: it is in fact 7 800. Lest I be accused of misleading the house, I apologise.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

EMPLOYMENT

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): Today, we have had confirmation of what we have suspected for quite a while: the former minister for employment never used to check the figures. Today, we have heard both the minister and the Minister for Industrial Relations making wrong statements to this house. The Minister for Employment stated that, at the end of December, never had so many people been employed in South Australia. This comes after six months of our losing jobs and the Minister for Industrial Relations claiming that there were thousands of extra jobs in the retail sector. That is absolute rubbish. It is wrong.

This confirms what we have been thinking, namely, that they are not watching the figures at all. They believe their own spin on unemployment. The real facts on unemployment—and the really important issue—are that this state has lost jobs every month for the last eight months, whether they be full-time jobs or the total number of jobs. In both categories we have lost jobs every month. Conversely, on the national scene, Australia as a nation has improved its figures each and every month.

It should be of great concern to the government that South Australia's employment figures are going backwards at a rate of knots whilst the rest of Australia is moving forward so quickly. It is really hard to work out why that is the case, other than the fact that we know that this government has taken its hands right off the wheel and that it will not

acknowledge the truth of those ABS figures. It does not matter whether you look at the seasonal or the trend figures: they tell the same story month after month. Every month this financial year we are losing jobs—and losing them quickly.

Those figures reflect real reasons for great concern. We were about level with the overall figure for unemployment for Australia in the middle of last year, but we are now about 1 per cent higher than the figure for Australia, after all the hard work that was done by industry in this state to catch up in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s. We came from behind, and we had real momentum, but that has now disappeared. We have seen that this government has no economic direction, and we are still waiting for the strategic plan. It has taken its hands off the wheel. We have seen the momentum of employment not only die in South Australia but go backwards, while, nationally, we go forwards.

Within that, the really bad news is for women in this state. It is a disastrous situation: in the middle of last year, there were 166 000 women in full-time employment; now, eight months later, there are 151 000 women in full-time employment. That is, one in every 13 women who had full-time employment in the middle of last year has now lost her job. It is all right for the former minister for employment, who says, 'This is globalisation. This is a national trend from full-time to part-time.' Well, tell the rest of Australia, because the rest of Australia has full-time employment growing at an enormous rate—total employment is growing at an enormous rate. South Australia is the only place in this nation which is going backwards and now going backwards at the rate of knots; and not only is the government doing nothing about it, they will not even acknowledge it. They get busy. The Premier's office gets busy on the phone to the media trying to question the accuracy of the figures.

We have been using ABS figures for a long time. It is all right for the ex-minister to say it goes up one month and down the other. For eight months in a row it has gone down, and for eight months in a row the rest of Australia has gone up. If that is not reason for concern, then I do not know what is. The members over the other side—including the member for West Torrens, the president of the Australian Labor Party—have always said that they are there to stand for the worker. They stand for the worker. Yet, a few weeks ago, when I asked a question about employment, he interjected, 'Haven't you got something more important to talk about?' What is happening with the Labor Party in this state?

The member for Mitchell can take a bow on this issue, because he pointed this out a long time ago when he said that this government is not a Labor government. It has forgotten the grassroots that it actually supports, and the only reason that it is actually going to bring the fair work bill in here is to pay back a few favours. I do not think most of the members even want it. However, because of the support they have had from the unions over a long time, they feel that they have to bring that bill in. It is a sop to the unions, and it is not a bill about workers. It does not help the workers of this state; it would just cost a heap of them a job. It is about the power of the union. It is to help the union. Retail jobs over the last 12 months have gone down at an enormous rate.

Time expired.

MERCURY 04

Mr RAU (Enfield): I rise today to talk about a matter which I think should be of importance to all of us in this chamber. It relates, in a sense, to what was reported to this

house today by the Premier in relation to the Mercury 04 exercise, which is a terrorism exercise taking place in South Australia, New South Wales, the Northern Territory, and so forth. This is a very important exercise, because it is an attempt by our counter terrorism forces to come to grips with the problems that would be facing Australians in the event of a terrorist outrage occurring in our country. I am obviously as pleased as everyone else is that such a thing has not already occurred, and I sincerely hope, as no doubt everyone here does, that such a thing never occurs in Australia. I would like to say that, in the context of this ongoing terrorism debate and the activity that is going on around the place, we need some honesty from our national leadership in relation to this matter. We need some honesty in relation to the very important issue of the truth being told in relation to not only counter terrorism but also the war in Iraq and our participation in these international activities which, to the present time, are not—at least inasmuch as we talk about Iraq—sanctioned by the United Nations.

There is an old saying that in war truth is the first casualty, and that certainly has been the case in Australia. It has certainly been the case in Australia, because I am very disappointed to say that our national leadership has jettisoned truth very quickly. The fact is that, 12 months ago almost to the day, we saw our national leaders—the Prime Minister and the foreign minister—in the vanguard of committing our troops to war in circumstances where there was no international support for such a thing, just a so-called ‘coalition of the willing’. The fact is that that war was a war that was looking for an excuse for months. They had made up their minds that they were going to go and do that with the United States, and they were looking for months, just as, unfortunately, the Americans and the British were looking for an excuse to go ahead and do it. In the end, it became the weapons of mass destruction that were the excuse. What an excuse they were! They do not exist; they did not exist. The whole event lacked truth.

If they had come to us in the first place and said, ‘We’re going here because we want to support the Americans, right or wrong’ or whatever the reason was (and I still do not know what it was)—whatever the reason was, if they had come here and had the decency to share with us the reason for us going there, we would have all been a lot better off, and I certainly would have had a lot more respect for them. As it was, they decided they would employ weapons of mass deception on the whole community. Well, the chickens are starting to come home to roost, because what is happening now is that the public does not believe them any more. Not only does the public not believe them any more, but we are confronted with the situation where an Australian citizen who is a greatly respected person appointed by this government—none other than the federal police commissioner—gets up and states the absolutely obvious on television the other day and winds up being lambasted for it. We can all see that there are only three possible alternatives. Our involvement with Iraq has made a terror attack (a) less likely, (b) just as likely as it ever was, or (c) more likely.

Mr Caica: (c).

Mr RAU: Exactly. I hear the buzzer going for (c), and well it might. It is going off in every household around Australia. Everyone gets it right. If this were *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* we would all be millionaires. Everybody knows the answer to that question. Mr Keelty had the temerity to stand up and state the obvious, and what happened to him? The chickens are coming home to roost, because

99 per cent of Australians know that what Mr Keelty said was the truth; he called it as he saw it, and he saw it the way the rest of us see it. What a disgrace that he was monstered for having the decency to stand up and say what everyone else thinks! The problem is that the Prime Minister is petrified that he will wear the blame for what he has done if things go wrong.

I sincerely hope they do not go wrong, but let us make no mistake about it: it should not be Mr Keelty who wears the blame for this; it should not be the 99 per cent of Australians who know that what Mr Keelty said was correct who wear the blame for this. The Prime Minister and Mr Downer should be held accountable in due course if, unfortunately, something goes wrong. They are the ones who committed us to this course; they are the ones who have pursued this course without excuse and without honesty to the Australian community. It is about time that they started fessing up instead of attacking decent Australians.

EYRE PENINSULA, WATER SUPPLY

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): In the more than 10 years that I have represented the people of Eyre Peninsula, there has not been an issue that has caused such a negative reaction in my constituency as the River Murray levy. This feeling has been illustrated by the 4 760 signatures on the petition which has been circulated for only a few weeks and which I presented today, and the hundreds of phone calls and letters that have come in. The people of Eyre Peninsula and many others who do not receive water from the river believe that this is a very unfair and inequitable levy. As a result of necessity, they are more conscious of water than others, having historically put up with poor supply, continuing severe restrictions, and the costs of private augmentation, etc. The Minister for Environment keeps telling us that the River Murray levy is an environmental levy to be paid by all South Australians. However, this levy is not being paid by all South Australians, some of whom have been and continue to be major beneficiaries of the water. Letters are being sent to the Minister for the Environment; however, he forwards them on to the Minister for Administrative Services in charge of SA Water—the collector of the levy.

The former minister for administrative services has responded to my letter on behalf of people who have said they will not pay the levy. He advised that ‘If it is not paid, SA Water will have to consider recovery options. That could result in your water supply being restricted.’ If this levy has nothing to do with SA Water, what right has the minister to cut off the water to those who will not pay the levy? These are the people who rely on underground water from south of Port Lincoln for the survival of their stock and who have to stay close to their farms during the summer to ensure that their troughs are working and check that their water supply has not been cut off. These are the people who volunteer and risk their lives fighting fires on the farms and many parks in this region using this underground water. They are supported by the volunteer ambulance and state emergency services workers, families and businesses who are all on stand-by in our area throughout the summer. Where is the equity when a shack on the coast of Eyre Peninsula pays this levy while a shack along the Murray may well not pay it despite taking unlimited water straight from the river for free?

A few days at a shack on Eyre Peninsula, in close proximity to their farms and businesses, is the only holiday that farmers and business people on Eyre Peninsula can hope to have at

this dangerous time of year. However, these people are well aware of others who go to the river for a week or two without a care or responsibility, who volunteer for nothing and who use the river water with abandon. No wonder they are angry.

The inequity, injustice and the draining of funds from rural and regional South Australia as a result of this levy is just another rip-off of the fewer than half the population of this state who live outside the city. A constituent writes:

It is about time the government stopped and had a good look at where best the money and extra water could be sourced, i.e. through irrigators upstream before it reaches the Murray, irrigators along the river, and the general population who rely on this water to water their gardens, wash their cars and pavers and fill their pools.

It is obvious that this government rushed through the levy without any real thought.

I have been contacted by a number of small businesses which operate as one entity but which occupy more than one property. However, each property is billed the full amount of \$135. This is an enormous levy cost to the small businesses that use minimal water. Once again, self-funded retirees have been penalised for providing for their retirement. Pensioners do not pay the River Murray levy, but no such consideration has been given to self-funded retirees. Confusion and alarm has been caused by SA Water accounts giving January to March as the period of the levy instead of October to March. Charitable and not for profit organisations are charged \$30, which is the same levy as for residential customers. However, these organisations are receiving accounts with a commercial levy of \$135. To clear up this mess, volunteers are required to make many calls—usually STD—along with having to deal with paperwork and stress to have the charge altered. And, to rub salt into the wounds, the \$30 levy also applies to recreational sport and sporting groups. It is yet another imposition on country people, who have to develop their own community and recreational sporting facilities, usually with little or no help from governments. Eyre Peninsula residents have had to develop their own water resources, often with individuals contributing thousands of dollars, to gain a reasonable and reliable water supply.

Time expired.

ANANGU PITJANTJATJARA LANDS

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I condemn the proposed takeover of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara lands, which was announced by the government last week. I was amazed and deeply disappointed to read the Deputy Premier's comments, which were reported in *The Advertiser* on Tuesday last week. He was responding to a headline which appeared in *The Advertiser* the day before about petrol sniffing and related issues in the AP lands in the north of South Australia.

Certainly, there are some critical problems up there. There are some severe health problems and, indeed, criminal behaviour that need to be addressed. The question is how to go about addressing those urgent issues. I was deeply disappointed because of the attitude expressed by the Deputy Premier, on behalf of the government—an attitude that has to be imputed to the Premier and to all the cabinet ministers. The Deputy Premier said:

This government has said we will not tolerate an executive that cannot deliver civil order, community services, social justice and quality of life to their community.

Members of the AP Lands Council have the job of governing the AP lands. But, of course, they cannot do so without the funding, resources and professionals to address those sorts of

problems. So, when it comes to blaming the current AP Lands Council executive I say that, if there is to be any blame directed anywhere, it has to be to the premiers and ministers of South Australia, over successive Liberal and Labor governments, who have not had the political will to get up there with enough resources and work with the local people to fix the problems that exist there. I was further disappointed to read these remarks, which were attributed to the Deputy Premier:

I think this is an acknowledgment that the way we have administered Aboriginal land rights in this state has failed.

In other words, the Deputy Premier is attacking the legacy of Don Dunstan in giving a measure of autonomy to Aboriginal communities throughout South Australia, and particularly in the AP lands. I reject that proposition entirely. I say that we need to keep moving forward with the Aboriginal people of South Australia—and particularly the people in the AP lands—to solve problems with them, not solve their problems for them. I was further disappointed to read these remarks, which were attributed to the Deputy Premier:

I think this is an acknowledgment that 20 years of doing what we thought was right for the Aboriginal lands has failed and dramatic action, strong action, must be taken.

The point is that this is the kind of patronising, colonial attitude that I thought we had left behind, through the leadership of Don Dunstan and the Labor Party in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It seems that it is still current in the government of the day, and particularly in the leadership of that government.

How outrageous it is that there is said to be an urgency about addressing this problem now, after adverse headlines appeared in *The Advertiser* on Monday 15 March, when in fact the Coroner delivered a report 19 months ago, in September 2002, which spelt out the problems that they are experiencing in the lands, particularly in relation to petrol sniffing and drug abuse. The Coroner at that time suggested that federal and state governments 'should accelerate their efforts to find solutions to these issues and get beyond the information gathering phase forthwith. They should use the extensive knowledge, published material and professional expertise that is already available.'

I will give credit where it is due: I was glad to hear the Deputy Premier acknowledge the government's responsibility for failure to act over the last 18 months, and it is true to say that the problem goes back much further than that. Indeed, the Deputy Premier, in his ministerial statement today, acknowledged that governments of both political persuasions have let down the indigenous people of our state. It is agreed by everyone that there are problems up there and that what is required to fix these problems is policing and the help of health care professionals. But we do not need legislation to do that.

Time expired.

SCHOOLS, NURIOOTPA HIGH

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I have brought to the attention of the house on many occasions the success of the Nuriootpa High School Wine Education Program, and I have highlighted the lack of support from the Rann government on almost as many occasions, particularly from the former minister. However, I believe that, with the change of minister and the program's further success, it is my duty to again bring the matter before the house. I hope that the new minister will

give it much more praise and recognition than did the last minister.

Towards the end of last year, I forwarded a letter to the minister for education in which I asked for her recognition of the Nuriootpa High School Wine Education Program and her support for the building of a facility to house the wine making and education roles. I even went to the trouble of drafting some suggestions that the minister may have used for a guide. That guide said that, unfortunately, the government could not supply any funding at this time but certainly supported the project. Those words of support are critical to Nuriootpa High School obtaining sponsorship from private enterprise to build its facility. However, the reply that I received from the minister early this year astounded me. The minister wrote:

The school can establish a building fund to financially support the current proposed development and it does not need my approval and endorsement as sought in your letter.

I found that response from the minister to be totally unsatisfactory—in fact, dreadful. What are private sponsors meant to think when the minister responds like that? How will Nuriootpa High School generate any faith in the program's continuing into the long term? However, since we last met in this place, I have been given some hope by the fact that there has been a ministerial reshuffle on the benches opposite. When announcing the reshuffle, the Premier stated:

I believe it is healthy to move some ministers around, to enliven interest, stimulate new ideas and bring a fresh approach to certain responsibilities.

The member for Adelaide is now the Minister for Education and I welcome her elevation to that role. Her attempts to promote South Australia's world leading developments are well known. I feel the need to point out to the new minister the benefits and recognition of Nuriootpa High School's wine education program. For a number of years the program has been providing the high school students of the Barossa Valley a valuable background in the industry that dominates the area.

Recently I spoke to Mr Kevin Hoskin, the revolutionary teacher and innovator of this program. Again, he impressed upon me the great benefits of the course. He said that the students get to learn not only about viticulture and winemaking but also the whole process undertaken in wine management and marketing. The students visit other winemakers, bottling plants and label designers and printers. They get an introduction to the whole industry—an industry that will employ many of them either directly or indirectly if they remain in the Barossa Valley after their secondary education. When speaking to Mr Hoskin he explained to me the ethos behind the program and the facility the school is hoping to build. When it proceeds, the facility will be called the Barossa Class Wine Education Centre. 'Barossa Class' is one of the world famous wines produced in their current facilities and exported throughout the world. In fact, the *Washington Post* ranked the school's shiraz as one of Australia's top drops. Mr Hoskin also said:

The program was not striving for mediocrity but to be world-class. It was about producing something in South Australia that is recognised around the world.

He said that this program at Nuriootpa High School 'was being aggressively positive in its approach to education' and that 'Nuriootpa High School took a progressive approach to education'. He went on to say that, unfortunately, 'we are highly aware of the potential in this program, but it is being limited by the current teaching facilities'.

This type of forward thinking was recently rewarded with a national award for quality schooling presented by the

federal government. I again commend Nuriootpa High School's world famous wine education program to the new minister for education for the support and recognition it justly deserves. In fact, I extend an invitation to the minister to attend a reception here in Parliament House to dine on barramundi grown by the school and try their wonderful wines. I emphasise that Nuriootpa High School is a public school leading the world in wine education: please assist them to great success and do not allow this program to be poached by others—as is currently the case. I also praise Mr Tony Robinson from *The Leader* in the Barossa who has taken upon himself to champion this cause. The frustration he has had in visiting the minister only a few days ago I can only apologise for. I will certainly do all I can to ensure they get a decent facility to house this project.

Time expired.

SCHOOLS, PARA HILLS EAST PRIMARY

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Music is one of my great passions and I have been happy to have the Florey Music Award in every school in my electorate for many years. I am glad to say that it is highly coveted by students at both senior and primary level. For many years it has been believed that children should have music for music's sake, because it is an excellent accomplishment and part of a well-rounded balanced education—and so it is. These days children are expected to learn so much more that they have to decide which subjects to keep and which subjects to drop. I am here today to ask them to think again: they should never ever drop music.

Research has shown that playing music can make a significant difference to children's abilities related to learning, memory and social interactions. Learning music can make a significant difference for children by improving their reasoning capacity and problem solving skills, improving their maths and language performance, enhancing their memory and giving them greater social and team skills. So I am thinking that music might be something we all should pursue here, as well.

Last Monday evening I had the pleasure of attending the Para Hills East Primary School's Music on the Oval. I commend the school leadership team under Bob Greaves and all the people who helped in the canteen and on the barbecue. It was a fabulous family atmosphere and the choirs at both senior and junior levels were supported by a very enthusiastic trio of gentlemen who are either fathers or supporters of the school. I do not think they had a name for their band, but they were excellent.

Classroom music is taught at Para Hills East Primary School by Mr Michael McConnochie, a very popular member of staff. Each class receives between 60 and 70 minutes of instruction each week. Music is taught through practical hands-on activities which encourage and prepare students to create their own compositions. There are three strands to the music curriculum at Para Hills East Primary School—arts practical, arts analysis and response, and arts in context, that is, knowing, understanding and doing music. Of the 365 students at Para Hills East Primary School, 120 are involved in the musical program either by a musical instrument or in the choir. A wide range of instrument tuition is offered through Sue Legierski and Patrick Carlson, and participation rates are growing in guitar, drums, bass guitar, recorder (which is my personal favourite as I studied that for many years), violin, keyboard and vocals. Percussion is offered to

every student as part of their weekly lesson. Mr Carlson has formed two rock bands and auditions are held to fill the coveted places in these groups. The band performs at local school events and is a welcome addition to any occasion. I have seen and enjoyed them many times.

The junior choir for 2004 has approximately 70 students from years 2 to 4. Songs are selected by Mr McConnochie and Ms Bond to help students understand the vocalisation of pitch, tempo, dynamics, form and texture. Students are also developing an understanding of choral conventions including canon, split parts and harmony. The senior choir for 2004 consists of approximately 60 students from years 5 to 7. Para Hills East will again be involved in the Festival of Music, which culminates in the annual performances that many members attend at Festival Theatre. Both Mr McConnochie and Ms Bond have been involved in the festival for a number of years and they are looking forward to teaching this year's repertoire—which of course is still under wraps because we are not allowed to hear it until the festival. Students who are not directly involved in the singing part of the festival can still participate by being involved in auditions for the drama troupe and choral compare or program compare roles for the evenings.

Other ways in which students can be involved in the arts at Para Hills East are through the dance group which Ms Bond has started and which rehearses at lunch times. At the moment she has only years 6 and 7 girls involved, but is looking to expand this to other year levels and developing a boys group, as well. Each year there is a series of concerts at the school. This year I hope I will be able to attend the concert in term 3 and, of course, the parents form a very enthusiastic audience for that evening.

Another part of my evening of Music on the Oval was the Para Vista Callisthenics Club practice in the school gym. Of course, through my involvement with the Callisthenics Association this is one of the local groups with which I have been associated. They have grown significantly in number this year, with large numbers of girls coming in at all levels. I was particularly interested to see how the performances that I watch every year at the Royalty Theatre are produced, how they start from practically nothing, and the expertise and energy that goes into them. I also thank Lindsay and the executive of the club and all the mums who go along to support their girls in this sport, which gives them fabulous opportunities to compete not only here in South Australia in front of large audiences but also interstate; and I remind the house that the national callisthenics competition will be held in the ACT in July this year. I look forward to attending as state patron and bringing back to the house a report of our girls winning, hopefully, at each level.

PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE

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

That the time for bringing up the report of the committee be extended to Thursday 1 April.

Motion carried.

CONSENT TO MEDICAL TREATMENT AND PALLIATIVE CARE (PRESCRIBED FORMS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 3 December. Page 1090.)

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I support the bill before the house. It is a very simple bill, to say the least. It effectively takes the forms required under the Consent to Medical Treatment and Palliative Care (Prescribed Forms) Act from being a schedule to the act to then allow the minister, the government and Executive Council to do so by way of regulation, and I support that. One significant problem has been found; that is, if there is more than one medical agent, then it was necessary that that be witnessed by the one person with all medical agents in the one room at the one time. You may have the situation where there are medical agents interstate which would make that difficult, or they may be busy doctors or something such as that who find it very difficult to coordinate with others so that they are all able to sign at the one time.

I am a very strong supporter of the more effective use of this measure of palliative care and power of medical attorney. When I was minister, I asked the department to prepare information so that people had a greater understanding of what powers were available. It is my experience that many people who advocate for euthanasia do not understand the extent to which there are significant powers to allow more appropriate treatment and significant steps to be taken to ensure that people who are dying of terminal cancer do so in a very dignified way. This measure attracted and received a great deal of attention from this parliament with a select committee in the early 1990s. I particularly acknowledge two of the members who served on that committee, Michael Armitage and Jennifer Cashmore, and other members as well, but they came up with this act. I believe that, in many ways, it was a leader in terms of what should apply to someone who is dying of a terminal illness and the type of palliative care and the level of treatment that they receive during those final days.

I personally have witnessed this with the death of my own mother, who died of cancer. I believe that far more effective procedures are now applied by the medical profession, the allied medical profession and those marvellous people who do so much for palliative care within our community to look at doing it in a suitable way and to ensure that a person receives a suitable level of morphine commensurate with their level of pain. Therefore, I am somewhat concerned and have been for some time, particularly when I was minister, at the extent to which there was a complete lack of understanding within the community about the Consent to Medical Treatment and Palliative Care Act, and so I asked the department to prepare more suitable material. I did a number of radio interviews trying to highlight to the public the importance of this act, and I would argue with people who supported euthanasia (which I do not) whether they were aware of the powers available under this act and whether they were being applied effectively.

I am very supportive of the original act and of amending the form to make it more workable, and therefore I support the amendment. I have made some suggestions in terms of how this might be done in a very practical sense, and I understand the minister might agree to that but that then depends upon the final form which is brought down, and I appreciate that. I believe that this issue has bipartisan support across this parliament. That may well be the case because it is an important measure to make life for those who are dying more respectful and to allow them to die with dignity but, at the same time, ensure that we uphold high medical principles in terms of any death that should occur. I support the

legislation and want to see it pass through this parliament as quickly as possible.

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I thank the deputy leader for his comments and support for the bill. As he said, it is a very small bill but a very important bill. It responds to concerns that have been expressed from the field in relation to the operation and intent of the act. What we are doing is changing things so that there is more opportunity for the provisions to be used. I thank the deputy leader for his comments. This is a very important piece of legislation. I think that we can probably do more in the future to look at the various forms of powers of attorney that we have operating to make them perhaps more streamlined, but today we are focusing on this particular act and making the prescribed forms able to be changed through regulation and also to get over the issue of requiring all the agents to sit in the one room with one witness, which requirement has precluded people from taking up the opportunity of proceeding with either a medical power of attorney or advance directive.

The deputy leader mentioned that he had made some other suggestions in relation to further changes we might make to the form when we take it through regulations, and I appreciate that and we will certainly take up the suggestions that he has made. I thank him for his support and hope that all members will support this bill.

Bill read a second time.

The SPEAKER: Since the measure has passed, may I say that I, too, wish the measure swift passage, and it is a matter upon which I have a personal view pretty much identical to what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has mentioned. Emphatically may I for the benefit of my constituents at least make it plain that my opposition to euthanasia is based upon my knowledge of the fact that palliative care legislation in this state is ahead of most other places in the world and certainly has led the way in Australia. It provides the means by which pain can be properly and lawfully relieved. The object of medical treatment is and must remain—

Mr O'Brien interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Napier will come to order—to relieve pain and not to secure the death of any human being. If the state passes a law making it lawful other than in war or in the defence of law-abiding citizens in the enforcement of law to take life, then the state has crossed a boundary and gone into an area where subjective determination takes over instead of ethics directing the course of action to be taken. As the palliative care legislation in this state stands, the objective of medical treatment is to relieve pain and suffering. Should the dose rate so required from such treatment be so high that the medication secures an earlier death in consequence of its administration, so be it. The mindset which caused it to be prescribed and administered must always remain to relieve pain and suffering and not to secure death. I thank the house for their attention to my opinion on the matter, exercising it not as the chair but as the member for Hammond.

Bill read a third time and passed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (COURTS) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 25 February. Page 1144.)

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): This bill has the same title and contains many of the same provisions as a bill introduced by the Attorney-General on 28 May 2003. However, there are significant differences in the contents of the two bills: in particular, extensive amendments to the Magistrates Act and the Criminal Law Sentencing Act were included in the previous bill but have been omitted from this bill. Moreover, the new bill now includes some important amendments to the Courts Administration Act and the Juries Act, which were not in the old bill. Most of the proposed amendments are relatively minor, procedural and/or administrative. I indicate that the Liberal Party will be supporting the second reading of this bill, and I will deal with the various topics separately.

First, in respect of the amendment in Part 2 to the Courts Administration Act, the bill proposes that a new section be inserted to ensure that publication, on an internet site maintained by the Courts Administration Authority, of a decision of a prescribed court will attract the same privileges and immunities as if the publication consisted of the delivery of the decision in court. We wholeheartedly support this measure. The Courts Administration Authority (and the Chief Justice in particular) is to be commended for establishing the web site on which the judge's sentencing remarks on criminal matters are available for perusal and downloading. The motivation behind the web site was to ensure that the media and the public have quick access to the complete sentencing remarks rather than relying on abbreviated news reports, word of mouth, rumour and the like.

This initiative was commenced under the previous Liberal government. Members would be aware that statements made by judges in court are the subject of absolute privilege; in other words, no defamation action can be instituted against the judge or the court as a result of making or publishing such a statement. We support that privilege; it is clearly essential to the proper functioning of the courts. We accept that there may be some doubt about whether material published on the internet attracts the same privilege: on principle, it should. In order to remove the doubt, we agree that it is appropriate to enact this amendment.

There is one minor problem with the new section: it is technology specific in that it refers to an 'internet site'. Because of the rapid change in technology, it is quite likely that, in the near future, technological advances will mean that information is disseminated electronically without using an internet site. We believe that passage of this measure should be delayed while we attempt to find a better definition. Finally, whilst on this subject, members would be aware that legislation granting privilege to parliamentary reports and the like is contained in the Wrongs Act. We believe that some of the language of that act should also be updated to encompass the new technologies.

Secondly, on the restriction of publication of proceedings under the De Facto Relationships Act, the bill will provide that the same type of secrecy provisions which currently apply to property disputes in the Family Court of Australia will also apply to property disputes between de facto couples in state courts, that is, to give the same protection to those who are married and having their dispute determined in the Family Court as those who are not in the state of marriage but living and cohabiting as a de facto couple. We should recognise that there is a philosophical divide on this issue: some people argue that the courts should be public forums to which any member of the public and the media should have access. On this view, the media should be able to freely publish material relating to private disputes. This is certainly

the American view, based on their constitutional guarantee of free speech. For those who remember the pre-1976 days, a cause list of matrimonial causes was published in *The Advertiser* in those days which gave access to information in relation to cases, as published.

However, on the other hand, others argue that the public has no right to pry into the private affairs of these citizens and that the media should not profit from the misery of those who are before the courts in private non-criminal disputes. This is the prevailing orthodoxy in Australia and, given the fact that disputes in the Family Court are not publicly published, we accept that it is appropriate that those who have access to the state courts should be entitled to the same protection. Moreover, this parliament recently supported the suppression of the publication of evidence in relation to applications by same sex couples under the Family Relationships Act. We have not reached this decision lightly because there is much to be said about free access to the courts. Suppression of evidence can lead to suspicions and conspiracy theories about what has gone on behind closed doors. However, the Liberal Party generally supports openness, and we are prepared to accept that a special case can be made for these disputes. As I have said, it is consistent with the current orthodoxy in Australia to protect against publication in these cases.

On the constitution of the Environment, Resources and Development Court, presently this court (the ERD Court, as it is commonly known) may consist of a judge and two lay commissioners, but the bill will allow a judge to sit with only one commissioner. The presiding judge, who must be a judge, will be redesignated the 'senior judge'. The Law Society of South Australia, on this matter, has suggested that this proposal to allow a judge to sit with only one commissioner has arisen because there are not enough commissioners. The opposition shares this suspicion, and I would be pleased if the Attorney-General would place on the record sufficient information to allay this suspicion. In particular, I request that the Attorney-General table details of the number of commissioners sitting in recent years and their case load.

I now turn to the amendment of the Juries Act. The bill introduces two amendments to the Juries Act, which were recommended in a review conducted in May 2002 by the Sheriff of the Courts Administration Authority. I suggest that it is a pity that the Attorney-General did not mention this review. It is perhaps small-minded of the Attorney not to acknowledge this excellent and comprehensive review in his presentation to this house. One possible reason for the silence of the government on the review may be the fact that the government has not adopted many of the sensible recommendations made in the review. For example, the appropriate travelling—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Which review is this?

Ms CHAPMAN: The review in May 2002 by the Sheriff for the Courts Administration Authority—for people who have to travel long distances to serve on juries. The least controversial amendment relates to the payment of jurors. Proposed section 70 will allow the Sheriff to reimburse a juror's employer where the employer continues to pay the juror's salary during the course of the trial. As outlined by the Attorney-General, under the present system, a number of jurors continue to receive payment in full from their employers and then receive a payment from the court for their jury service. In fairness to the employers, the juror should pass that money onto their employer. This amendment will allow the Sheriff to pay the employer direct, and I invite the Attorney to indicate in his response the exact mechanics of

ensuring that this system does not operate to the detriment of jurors.

The bill also repeals section 31 of the Juries Act. That section currently provides that the sheriff must cause a list of the name of every juror summoned to render jury service in any jury district for any month to be kept in the sheriff's office at least seven clear days before the first day of that month. Subsection (2) obliges the sheriff to provide on request a copy of the list to the DPP or the accused or the solicitor or agent of the accused. We are informed that this section has fallen into disuse because of the implementation of the new procedures, which are designed to protect the anonymity of jurors.

Most people would understand why jurors might be concerned about the fact that their names and addresses are publicly available. Quite obviously, a fear of possible recrimination is not an irrational one. Under the new system that is to be adopted, jurors will not be named in open court but they will be referred to by a number, which will be allocated to each juror. Presently, the juror's address appears on the list provided to counsel. It is proposed that this will cease. All that will be provided is a list containing the juror's name, occupation and suburb, and counsel will have to return the list at the end of the empanelling process. The judge will continue to have access to the jurors' addresses but will only disclose this information if the judge deems it necessary.

We received a letter from the Law Society today concerning the operation of this system. I understand that the Law Society does not pass any adverse comment in relation to that, but it is a matter of regret that we should receive its response at such late notice. We are anxious to ensure that this system will operate effectively and will not undermine the confidence of the jury system. I ask the Attorney-General to place on the public record details of any other consultation process concerning this new system, and in particular to indicate to the house whether there have been any instances where a juror's safety has been compromised by the fact that his or her name or address has been put in the public domain.

Next, the bill simplifies the jury summons by allowing a less formal document to be employed to notify citizens of the requirement to perform a public duty. New section 6A will authorise the empanelling of up to three additional jurors. The trial in the Snowtown murder case clearly illustrated the necessity for a provision of this kind. In any trial that is expected to run for many months, it is inevitable that one or more jurors may become indisposed or unable to continue.

Finally, the bill introduces a measure to accommodate the so-called Prasad directions. Although the amendment appears to be appropriate, we have not yet received any advice about the practical application of the clause, and we may look to make some amendment in another place as further information comes to hand in relation to that. I look forward to the Attorney's indication in that regard.

I move now to the classification of offences. The bill proposes some technical amendments to the Summary Procedure Act. The first will reclassify offences against children under 12 years of age from minor indictable offences to major indictable offences. The effect of the reclassification will be to require such cases to be dealt with in the superior courts with officers of the DPP, rather than police officers, as prosecutors. We agree that this is appropriate. The second reading explanation states that the government is aware of concerns that these amendments might mean that some defendants are less inclined to plead guilty under section 56. I would be pleased if the Attorney would put on the record

who expressed those concerns and, in particular, whether any advice was obtained from the DPP concerning this issue.

I now move to restraining orders. These amendments relate to the Summary Procedure Act, and they concern a new amendment that did not appear in the original bill. The amendments are designed to make it more difficult for a complainant who is not a police officer to obtain a restraining order. Most applications for restraining orders are made by police. However, private citizens can make applications and, indeed, they do so. In the second reading explanation, the government suggested that there had been incidents of inappropriate use of restraining orders by non-police complainants. The opinion is offered that such applications are encouraged because the court can presently make such a restraining order on affidavit evidence alone.

The Attorney-General provided an example of a particularly notorious litigant with mental health problems, who has apparently obtained a number of restraining orders by falsely alleging assaults, etc. There is no doubt that this occurs and has occurred. I have had this experience myself and it is always very difficult to deal with a litigant who may be representing themselves and who may suffer, sadly, from a mental health problem. No doubt that is very inconvenient and annoying to the people who are involved and a considerable waste of time and money. However, the Liberal Party does not believe that we should fashion laws of general application to overcome problems caused by particular individuals, especially when the individuals have mental health problems.

The usual way of dealing with issues of this kind is to give the courts greater power to delay or dismiss apparently frivolous or vexatious applications. The government seems to have adopted the route of penalising all non-police applicants by preventing them from using the usual method of presenting evidence by affidavit. There may well be cases of serious inconvenience, where a non-police applicant is required to present oral evidence. Again, the opposition has only just today received a response from the Law Society, and it has certainly raised some issues in relation to the question of appeal. We will need to look at that aspect to ensure that those concerns are covered and that that matter is taken into account in ensuring that we do not adversely impact on the new procedure that is to be introduced, and, if there is to be a restriction in relation to the process on the applications, that an adequate and appropriate appeal process remains in place.

The Supreme Court Act will be amended to facilitate the making of orders in all courts, the workers compensation jurisdiction and other prescribed tribunals in relation to proceedings by vexatious litigants. I refer to the case of the Attorney-General for South Australia v Burke, where it was held that the proceedings in the Residential Tenancies Tribunal or the Planning Appeals Tribunal could not be properly categorised as proceedings instituted in a court. We agree that this is a deficiency that should be rectified.

The amendment proposed to the Criminal Law Consolidation Act relates to the mental impairment provisions contained in sections 269F and 269G of that act. Amendments made in 2000 repealed the words 'liable to supervision' in section 269G. The effect of that repeal was that a court which acquitted a person on the grounds of mental incompetence could not authorise the person to be liable to supervision. This error was rectified in the Criminal Law Consolidation (Offences of Dishonesty) Act 2002. However, the act applies only to offences committed after 16 January 2003. The bill

that we are debating today seeks to ensure that the amendment applies from 29 October 2000. The Liberal Party is generally opposed to retrospective amendment of legislation, especially criminal legislation.

We have some reassurances from the Law Society about this matter, and I propose to put on the record the substance of the letter sent by the Law Society to the Attorney-General. The letter, dated 3 October 2003, states:

We note the retrospective effect of the particular amendment to provisions of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act concerning mental impairment. We agree that the retrospective effect of the legislation is always an important matter of principle, and we note your observations about that in your letter as well as in *Hansard*. We might explain that the need for this retrospective amendment arose by virtue of the case that was pending in the District Court earlier this year in which the accused person had raised the defence of mental impairment. In the course of the hearing it became apparent to the presiding judge, and to the prosecution and defence counsel, that if His Honour found the accused person not guilty of the offence (which had occurred in early 2001) by reason of mental impairment, then there was a serious lacuna in the legislation because of the prior amendment which had removed the legislative provision enabling the District Court to direct that a person was liable to supervision.

As a result of those concerns, counsel for the DPP took appropriate steps for the introduction of the legislation to cure this defect. The defect could otherwise have operated to prevent the usual powers available to a court in determining the disposition of an accused person found not guilty by reason of mental impairment. This would have been unfair and unjust in the circumstances.

The amendment is therefore indeed necessary to cure this defect so as to ensure that there is not any period of time during which offences may have been committed which would not be covered by the entirety of the mental impairment legislation. Retrospectivity in this particular instance is therefore necessary and appropriate.

In summary, therefore, we do not see the retrospectivity in this provision as offensive. It does not seek to turn conduct which was not previously an offence into criminal behaviour. It is, indeed, a beneficial provision for the reasons I have outlined, and we will support it.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I support the second reading of the bill, because there is much to be found in it. However, I will raise a couple of points, one being in respect of the Environment, Resources and Development Court. I cannot understand why there would be offences over which the court has jurisdiction and which have a greater penalty than the monetary jurisdiction of the court. So, unless I am persuaded otherwise by the Attorney's reply to the second reading debate, I will move an amendment which will increase the general jurisdiction of the court to \$2 million to ensure that the court has a free hand in respect of the offences which it examines.

Secondly, in relation to the changes to the De Facto Relationships Act, I applaud the move which gives parity to Family Court proceedings in respect of the non-publication of identifying details. In these sensitive matters, it is consistent with the dignity of the litigants involved that, although points of law etc. need to be publicly debated, there is no need to drag people through the ordeal of media sensationalism. So, it is good to see that in this bill de facto heterosexual couples at least are provided the same rights to privacy, if I may put it that way, as legally married people.

However, there is, of course, a glaring omission, that is, in respect of same sex couples. I have been waiting for a long time for the Attorney to introduce a bill consistent with Labor Party policy and with undertakings made by the government to give same sex couples parity with heterosexual couples. This bill provides an opportunity to redress the balance in respect of privacy in these kinds of court proceedings. Of

course, we are talking about court proceedings which are often acrimonious, because they deal with the dissolution of property after a couple has split up.

I inquire of the Attorney about the scope to use this bill as a vehicle to give equal rights to same sex couples in respect of those rights which have been accorded in this bill to heterosexual de facto couples. I look forward to the Attorney's reply. With those remarks, I am happy to support this bill, which covers a miscellany of matters concerning the courts.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I have the pleasure of speaking on the adjournment debate, which is not often my wont. For the benefit of the Deputy Premier, I will say nice things about him. From the outset, let me say that, during the parliamentary break, I have been diligently doing my duty as a local member. One of the things that interested me the other night was when I was watching pay TV. A flash came on of the New South Wales parliament, and I started to take notice.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Just wait! Your friends in the SDA had Mr Black at Port Augusta during the last election.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I think you will need that help next time! I was watching the TV, and Mr Barry O'Farrell, the Deputy Leader, was addressing the house when he was suddenly disrupted. The television cameras conveniently turned on an individual who was distinguishing himself. The long and short of it was that Mr O'Farrell was suspended from the service of the house for drawing the disruptive and disorderly member, Mr Black, to the attention of the house, but Mr Black was left to continue his disruptive behaviour on the floor of the house. The point I wanted to make about this esteemed and honourable gentleman was that he was one of the characters that the Labor Party trumped up in Port Augusta at the last election, being prominently displayed on the polling booths—support your erstwhile candidate. On the Sunday morning after the election, he had the front and the indecency to tell the Mayor of Port Augusta that, because of her support for me, they were going to get her at the next election too. They were his comments—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes. It was. He was driving around in a Toyota with his name on it. I do not know whether it has a self-drive GPS system in it. I think it should have, because I have seen the gentleman at functions at Coburn. Then, of course, an article appeared in the *Sunday Mail*. It has a couple of good photos in it. It had 'Drunk MP Apologises'. As the week went on, the Premier intervened and said that he was going to change the law so that intoxicated MPs could not be served at the bar. Great! I want to indicate to the house that these are the sort of people that they had campaigning and doing great things up there at the last election.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, here is one of the blokes that they trotted out as one of their prime campaigners. Well

done. I hope they bring him next time. I hope they bring him up there next time, because not only was he up there saying terrible things about me but he also made those comments to the Mayor of Port Augusta.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, I hope they bring him next time. Let us proceed, because the other matters I wanted to talk about were in relation to the erstwhile new leader of the opposition, who seems to be a bit like Lazarus. He has seen the light on the road to Damascus.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No. That was St Paul, not Lazarus. John Howard described himself as Lazarus with a triple by-pass.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: He has seen the light.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I am happy to be corrected by the Attorney-General. In relation to this newfound policy, and as someone who represents rural people, I want to quote what he had to say. Mr Latham has totally sunk his boots into farmers. In a column he wrote for *The Daily Telegraph* on 19 February 2000, he claimed that 'farmers are the most heavily subsidised part of the economy'. He went on to talk about tax concessions—'a list as long as your arm' he quoted on 5 March 2000—and the handouts to people in rural and regional Australia. What is he indicating by that? Is he going to remove those few concessions? No other farming group in the world would receive less assistance from government than the rural sector in Australia. There is no other rural group in the world which is as efficient and well-organised and which does more good for the general economy than the farming community in Australia. The hand of Mr Latham would deny rural Australians zoned tax rebates, right after water conservation and land care expenses, drought-proofing, and it goes on. Mr Latham went on to write:

Just last week I uncovered another nice little earner called FarmBis. The federal government is spending \$38 million on management training for farmers and their families. No other part of the work force receives assistance of this kind.

Only the Labor Party headquarters, of course, in Canberra. They are the ones who certainly get the financial assistance and, no doubt, we will hear more about that in the days ahead.

Now I want to bring another matter—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: A third matter? Excellent!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN:—to the house. A constituent of mine involved in driving school buses has pointed out to me that on 9 February a school bus used at the Port Augusta special school had an official temperature of 45 degrees. He states:

Last summer I placed a thermometer in the bus on one particular hot week and noticed the temperature inside the bus decreased by 1 degree for example it was 42 degrees outside it only dropped to 41 degrees inside.

If you check you can see the air conditioner has been re-gassed several times and this last school holidays I asked the mechanic Mark Mauley could he check the air conditioner before school starts.

He went on to say that the weather was nice (28 to 30 degrees) and school had started. He went on to say that now it is 40 degrees and just not good enough for these special needs children. On four days out of ten, nine of them could not attend. All I am saying to the house is that that particular school in Port Augusta is staffed by people who are dedicated and do great things for disadvantaged children. I think that, in 2004, it is not too much to ask that they have a decent air-conditioned bus. It is not too much to ask, and I

think that these sorts of things need to be addressed. If we have money for unnecessary, hare-brained schemes—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Such as?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, too much money is being spent on the arts centre down here, in my view. I would far sooner spend it on little children or disadvantaged children or looking after the elderly and the infirm.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: What other wastes are there?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Too much money is being spent on certain unnecessary environmental programs which are of little or no value to the community and which are holding back development and stopping people from earning income on behalf of the taxpayers. I make no apologies. This group, down at the Festival Theatre, are getting too much money and doing too little for it, and have little or no value to the long-suffering taxpayers of this state. I do not care who I upset or offend.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I will tell Kate, then.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: You can do that—I am pleased. Give her my compliments. I would far sooner see a lot of that money spent on looking after children. Like this government did in my electorate, they took \$20 000 away from the Mariam High Special Needs Centre, \$20 000 where they took one staff member where they were teaching three year old children to walk and to talk—they took \$20 000 away. I say that if the choice were between \$20 000 for those children or for the Festival Centre, I would choose the kids every time. Take the State Opera: how many ordinary people go to the State Opera? How much does it cost per seat? I hope that the Treasurer can find the funds. I do not mind if people want to go to the opera, but let them pay. They probably do not want me there anyway; but let me tell you that I have no intention of ever going. I was unfortunate enough once to be taken to something by my wife in London. You know what was wrong with it? It was that bloody hot that I could not get out of the place, and it cost me a lot of money. The lady sitting next to me said, 'You are different, sir.' I said, 'I sure am. I would be a lot better if I could get out of this damn place, but it is nice to be shown the way to get in here.' I could not even get a drink. It was not air-conditioned either. That is my view of those sorts of establishments.

The other thing that I wanted to say was that I read with some concern (I hope it does not happen here) that in Western Australia they had locked up disturbed children at schools for long periods. A former constituent of mine brought this matter to my attention. The headline was 'Boy at school locked in a cage'. It appears to me to be a most unfortunate way to manage disturbed children, and I hope that it does not happen here, because there must be better ways to deal with these issues than to resort to that sort of draconian and unnecessary measure.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): In a media release published on 23 February, the Hon. Ian Gilfillan asserted that—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:—I had misled parliament during debate on the Summary Offences (Consumption of Dogs and Cats) Amendment Bill. He said that the story about a man of Asian appearance in Melbourne holding a bag with a puppy inside and gesturing that he wanted to eat it was 'probably black humour by the man'. The Hon. Ian Gilfillan says that my story about a cat being barbecued in a public reserve in The Parks area of Adelaide 'has all the hallmarks of an urban myth'. Mr Gilfillan issued a new release stating:

It is entirely inappropriate to legislate in response to rumour, innuendo and urban myth. . . The Attorney-General offered two stories to support his bill and efforts so far have been unable to verify that animals have ever been under threat in those circumstances. In the first case, it appears that someone was suspected of intending to harm a dog. This story was based on a single comment that was probably black humour. In the second case, we have a story about bikies cooking a cat in the Attorney's electorate which has all the hallmarks of an urban myth. . . I am dismayed that this government is making legislation on the strength of a single unsupported claim to a talkback radio show.

At the very end of the debate on the last Tuesday of sitting I told the house, as an aside:

Not so long ago when Ferryden Park was in my electorate, a group of bikies and ne'er-do-wells got together in a public park and used a newly installed coin-operated barbecue to cook a cat for human consumption.

I was wrong in some respects. The animal barbecued was a fox, not a cat, and foxes are not protected from slaughter for human consumption by the government's bill. The public barbecue was not in Ferryden Park but in adjacent Mansfield Park. The evidence is of a gang of about 100 youths, not necessarily bikies. I apologise to the house for not recalling perfectly in my aside an incident that occurred 13 years ago and has not been publicly canvassed since.

The evidence that I have gathered from local residents, local councillors and the press indicates that baseball bat wielding youths chanted at the barbecue in the early hours of the morning, warning local people not to approach, and later a disembowelled fox was found slung over a road sign and paper plates were strewn in the vicinity.

The member for Unley says I have defamed bikies without sufficient evidence and so, at his insistence, I apologise to the Gypsy Jokers, the Hell's Angels, the Finks, the Rebels, the Bandidos and the Descendants and any other gangs that the member for Unley nominates as being cut to the quick by my remark during the debate. I stand by my description of the people who commandeered the barbecue at the witching hour as ne'er-do-wells unless the member for Unley and the Hon. Ian Gilfillan, being the post-modernists and deconstructionists that they are, insist I apologise to The Other in general.

The Melbourne incident occurred at Niddrie around October 2002. The *Moonee Valley Community News* reported that passers-by rescued a 10-week-old Staffordshire puppy from a man of Asian appearance who had indicated that he intended to kill and eat the puppy. The man had been holding the dog in a plastic bag. The Victorian government moved immediately to ban the consumption of dogs and cats. I spoke about this incident during debate on the bill in the house. I have secured copies of the relevant reports from the *Moonee Valley Community News*, the *Sunday Herald Sun* and *The Age*. If the Hon. Ian Gilfillan had conducted the most cursory search of the internet he, too, would have them. I commend the internet to him. The *Sunday Sun Herald* report states:

The issue has blown up since a man walked into a northern suburbs restaurant late last year with a bag of puppies saying he wanted to eat them. The RSPCA president Hugh Wirth said his organisation had been asking the government to change the laws.

I think it is now accepted that there was only one puppy. Another *Herald Sun* story stated:

Although the government now says it will work with the RSPCA to improve legislation, RSPCA Australia and Victorian president Dr Hugh Wirth said he had struggled for years to get a total ban imposed. . . The agonising deaths associated with human consumption of dogs stems from a belief that the stress hormones released when an animal is tortured or killed slowly makes the meat more

tender to eat, according to animal protection foundation Animals Asia.

The Age reported:

The man, said to be of Asian appearance, motioned that he intended to eat the animal. . . Waitress Rebecca Silva yesterday told reporters she took the puppy from the man after he pointed to it and suggestively brought his hand to his mouth several times. The pup's owner told reporters she could not believe someone was planning to eat her dog.

It seems, according to the Hon. Ian Gilfillan, that the named people are suffering from collective false consciousness. Mr Gilfillan is from the same political party that engaged in Holocaust denial last year, when one of its MPs claimed that Saddam Hussein's army did not gas Kurdish citizens at Halabja. Of course, there is overwhelming evidence that it did, and there are witnesses to the Halabja massacre in Adelaide. The Democrats deny facts or events that do not fit their current policy position.

The second incident, referred to as an urban myth by the Hon. Ian Gilfillan, is the Mansfield Park holocaust. Far be it for a Democrat member of this state's Legislative Council to visit the parks and inquire of the residents whether they were aware of the incident—perhaps even witnesses to the incident named in the press at the time. If the Hon. Ian Gilfillan had thought to call the then local councillors (who are still the local councillors) John Croci and Janice Jensen, he might have discovered that this story was not an urban myth. Councillor Jensen has sworn a statutory declaration, as follows:

I was an alderman with the City of Enfield in 1991 when I raised the matter of a fox being barbecued on the community barbecue situated at Wilson Street Reserve. Also that a number of people on bikes had urinated on the barbecue. I attended the park after members of the community contacted me in relation to the incident and saw the fox and evidence of urine on the barbecue.

Local resident Ernest Keenihan, of 42 Wilson Street, Mansfield Park, has sworn this statutory declaration:

Some years ago a fox was cooked on the barbecue in the Wilson Street Reserve. At that time there was a mob of people in the reserve.

Mr John Croci, who lives in Mansfield Park, has sent me an email to the same effect. Peter Haran, writing in *The Sunday Mail* on 20 January 1991, said:

Police are investigating a drunken street party involving up to 100 youths which saw the 'ritualistic-style' killing and barbecuing of a fox at a suburban reserve. . . Evidence that the fox, which had been disembowelled, had been cooked was found on a barbecue plate on the council reserve at Wilson Street. The reserve was also strewn with bottles, empty Valium packets and paper plates. Outraged neighbours said that up to 100 youths had been involved, many carrying baseball bats.

Mr Roy Chico, who lives opposite the reserve, said. . . 'the party was going on from midnight until 3.30 a.m. and I would say there were at least 100 there. They were aged about 10 to 15. There was a lot of chanting while the cooking was going on. It was like some sort of ritual'.

Police were questioning residents in the area. The horror killing of the animal prompted some residents to call for greater police patrolling of the area and particularly the reserve. Another resident said the gang had assembled in about 30 minutes and threatened anyone going near the barbecue area.

I should add that, when I gave my speech during the sitting week before last, I was unaware of talk-back radio being a primary source about these events. I am still not aware of talk-back radio being the source of any of the evidence on these matters. The Hon. Ian Gilfillan would have avoided his mistakes if he or his staff had contacted me before issuing the release and asked me for my evidence of these incidents.

When the attempted Victorian puppy consumption incident was reported to the South Australian Premier, he was horrified to discover that a loophole in South Australian law meant that the consumption of dogs and cats in South Australia was not illegal. The Premier asked me to close that loophole in South Australian law. Let me make myself perfectly clear. We changed the law in South Australia not because the government had been inundated with reports of dog and cat consumption, but because one incident of this nature is one too many.

Motion carried.

At 5.10 p.m. the house adjourned until Tuesday 23 March at 2 p.m.