

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 24 June 2004

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

MEMBER'S REMARKS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: On Thursday 3 June I made a ministerial statement to the house regarding allegations raised by the Leader of the Opposition about South Australia Police. In that statement, I said that, during a telephone conversation with the Commissioner of Police, I had been advised that the officer involved was providing assistance outside his normal working time. Following receipt of a written briefing on the matter and further conversations with the Commissioner, I am now of the view that it would have been more accurate to say that the officer involved was working with the complainant in a supportive role for compassionate reasons. Whilst I told parliament that this support was provided outside his working time, I am now of the view that it would have been more accurate to say that this was done as part of his normal duties but not in an official investigative capacity. I apologise to the house if it was in any way misled by my statement.

NURSES ENTERPRISE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: I seek leave to correct the record regarding information provided by a Department of Human Services officer in response to a question from the Hon. Dean Brown during the estimates committee. The shadow minister for health sought information regarding the budget impact of the recently settled nurses enterprise bargaining agreement. In response to this question, an officer from the Department of Human Services (Mr Tattersall and not Mr Beltchev, as recorded in *Hansard*) provided detailed financial information to the committee.

I can advise the house that, following the conclusion of the estimates committee, Treasury has advised the Department of Human Services that the information provided during estimates was incorrect. Figures provided by the officer during estimates related to a provision made at an earlier stage of negotiations. As negotiations continued, additional funding was provided to ensure that the agreement was adequately funded. I am advised by Treasury that the provision allowed for in the 2004-05 budget was sufficient to meet the requirements for the next two financial years. The provision in 2006-07 and 2007-08 fell just short of the final agreed position. However, I am advised by Treasury that these small additional impacts are adequately covered by the provisions set aside in the recent budget for general wages contingencies. I apologise to the house for any confusion.

ASBESTOS LIABILITIES

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I rise to advise the house that before the estimates committee I referred to a figure of approximately \$82 million in relation to asbestos liabilities, and I am advised that the correct figure is approximately \$84 million.

MEMBER'S REMARKS

The SPEAKER: Order! In cogitating upon what the Deputy Premier provided to the house by way of an explanation of his assessment of the situation just now, as it related to the police officer who had sent an email to the Leader of the Opposition, can I also apprise the house of the background circumstances. I, too, have checked the record and, whilst I had thought on Thursday that I had told the house that, following the controversy about the authenticity of the email, I directed, as the house will recall, the leader to show that to me. He did present that to the chair, and the chair satisfied itself that the email from which the Leader of the Opposition had read on the Wednesday was indeed an authentic SAPOL email.

I know that I told both the Attorney-General and the Deputy Premier about that fact, and several other members of the house, both government and opposition, at that time (Wednesday) that it was an authentic email from the South Australian police force.

I cannot—and do not propose to, go into whom it was I told, as that would probably result in my failing to include someone or including someone else to whom I had not spoken about the matter. The simple fact remains that I had agreed with the Leader of the Opposition that, as well as passing that information on to the Attorney-General and the Deputy Premier, the email was authentic.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I have not had a chance to look at the standing orders but, generally, the business of the day on a Thursday morning starts with private members' business. Why are we not proceeding with that?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley should have apprised himself of the minutes of proceedings of the house from the last week of sitting, when it decided that it would set aside private members' business and proceed with government business. That is a motion of the chamber.

Mr BRINDAL: I apologise for not being attentive to the records.

APPROPRIATION BILL

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I bring up the report of Estimates Committee A and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee A and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I bring up the report of Estimates Committee B and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Ms THOMPSON: I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee B and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

The SPEAKER: The proposition that the house has now passed is without precedent. On previous occasions, there has often been a week or more for honourable members to review the questions put to witnesses, and the material provided in the answers given by witnesses appearing before those committees, so that honourable members can respond to that material in the debate that ensues to note the reports of the estimates committees. As a house, we have now decided that we know enough about what has been undertaken to be competent, member by member, to do the work of noting the reports of each of the committees the day after their conclusion. Whilst that is entirely up to the house, honourable members need to remember that, having set such a precedent, estimates committees reports will be dealt with upon greased rails in future, and I think that has some implications.

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I move:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): During the past two weeks, through the two committees the opposition has had the opportunity to question the government in relation to its budget. This is an important process (originally initiated, I understand, by the Tonkin government), and it has been a most valuable tool in probing the government on its announcements in the budget and its program for the forthcoming 2004-05 year. Notwithstanding that the government had attempted to downplay the importance of this process and, during the course of this estimates period, had certainly engaged in the high profile participation in the Anglican Church child abuse inquiry and issue as a deliberate attempt to draw attention away from this important process, I think it is important to note that it has exposed areas of considerable waste, overspending and lack of planning by the government.

There would be no greater example of what was being deceptively presented to the public by the Treasurer in relation to this budget than to highlight the fact that over \$200 million was available in this budget but that was simply not identified for the purpose of any expenditure. Not only is there a major surplus but there are considerable lines to which there has been no application of funding. Certainly, the government has tried to downplay this process—but we have not. We will never surrender it as it is an important process to expose the government, and I appreciate the valuable opportunity to expose these issues.

I refer to an aspect in relation to estimates which I consider to be a very important one. On Friday 18 June, I asked the Attorney-General, in relation to his commitment to a prior statement to this house, about his consideration of an inquiry or other options in relation to an inquiry into the sexual abuse of children in government care. He said:

My recollection is that my openness to an inquiry about state wards and children in foster care, and possibly children in the care of state authorities such as the education department, occurred after the budget was well settled, so special provision would have to be made for it, probably from the existing resources. But I have taken advice on establishing an inquiry short of a royal commission and am continuing to receive advice about that.

Further questions were asked and further information was provided by the Attorney-General in relation to what would have to be a very unsatisfactory process regarding his consultation on the question of the ambit and cost of an inquiry. Nevertheless, I think it was quite clear that by Friday 18 June the government had no option but to consider this as the only way to deal with the issue of child sexual abuse in South Australia.

The churches have been open and frank; they have conducted their inquiries. They have been open with the public in relation to their commitment to ensure that, in the future, their processes protect children in their care, and it is time the government did the same. While we are on that subject, during the course of the estimates process in relation to the education minister (Hon. Jane Lomax-Smith)—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Bragg knows that she may not refer to a member by her personal name but rather by her ministerial portfolio or her electorate.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I certainly did not mean any disrespect to the minister by referring to her name in addition to her title, but I am referring to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. During the course of estimates earlier this week, the minister was asked questions in relation to what action she and/or her department had taken in relation to child protection. It is interesting to note that on 26 March 2003—two months after the release of the Layton report—the Premier spoke about, amongst other things, the government's priority in relation to the care of children and their future protection. He said:

Education and Children's Services is also recognised as having an important role in supporting children and young people at risk and an improvement in school-based counselling and social work support is recommended.

On 23 November 2003, the former minister for education and children's services, having no doubt noted the leadership of the Premier on this matter, announced that the government would boost child protection in schools by implementing two important initiatives. She said:

The draft education act regulations propose that it become lawful requirement for teachers to undertake a mandatory notification course every three years to gain or maintain registration as a teacher.

In addition, she said:

As well, the education department is reviewing the current child protection curriculum to devise a new program that they plan to trial in a number of schools early next year.

We find, tragically, at estimates this week, that the minister was not able to answer questions in relation to this, but her chief executive confirmed that the position is: first, no regulations are even ready to be presented for the mandatory notification course to be undertaken every three years—nothing has been put before this parliament for its consideration in the seven months since that announcement; and secondly, in relation to the new child protection curriculum, that is still in draft form.

Even more concerning is the fact that, in November 2002, the former minister announced that the Safer Schools program was to include a new curriculum in relation to child protection in November 2002, yet over 18 months later, no action has been taken, other than the fact that it is still in draft form. That is a disgraceful situation. Last year's announcement by the former minister for it to be trialled in a number of schools earlier this year, at best—if this draft ever comes to fruition—will not be trialled until later this year. That is the priority that this government places on child protection and, in particular, children in government schools. That

example confirms the importance of estimates committees. It exposes the government's failure to deliver in any way whatsoever on what it says it will do and it exposes its lack of commitment.

It is also important to note the complete absence of any real commitment by the government by not only refusing to conduct an inquiry but by not also looking at ways in which it can protect children attending government schools. As I have said, the churches and the independent schools have addressed the issues with which they have been confronted—and I respect and applaud them for doing so—but the government and, in particular, the minister, have had the Teachers' Registration Board Annual Report 2003 for the year ending 31 December 2003 for some six months; and, indeed, the former minister had received the recommendations of this board in the latter part of last year.

One of the things which they considered ought to be a priority and which they were to address as a priority—and the government has clearly failed to address it as a priority—was the requirement for teachers to undertake the mandatory notification training prior to the initial teacher registration, and subsequently to update this training every three years to maintain a register as a teacher. That has been an important initiative. As I indicated, the former minister said, 'We will go ahead and do that', yet a year after this recommendation, and after the combining of the three schooling sectors—Catholic education, independent schools and the department—the government has not delivered anything to protect these children.

Let me elucidate what the board had also recommended in a comprehensive response to the important aspect in relation to the protection of children. I want to highlight to the house some of those proposals, none of which have even been announced as an initiative that this government is prepared to undertake. They are as follows:

1. That there ought to be notification by the South Australian police department, public prosecutions and the clerk of the court of criminal convictions recorded against a teacher.
2. Notification by employers and teachers of any dismissal following disciplinary proceedings and where a teacher resigns prior to disciplinary proceedings being taken.
3. Legislation to enable the exchange of critical information between agencies instrumental in contributing to the protection of children and young people.

It went on to a number of other areas where they would look to having an expansion or change under the legislature, including reform of the Education Act to enable them to undertake their duties to better protect children and to be able to have a penalty regime to enable them to better impose some discipline in relation to this area. Certainly, they looked at the wider scope to accommodate the range of conduct of teachers by replacing the current improper and/or disgraceful behaviour with unprofessional conduct, and recommendations 91 to 94 of the Layton report relating to changes in the Evidence Act. These are all matters for which the Teachers Registration Board has responsibility—the board which is the state body with responsibility for the initial and continued registration of all teachers who work in our schools—government, independent and Catholic sector.

These are important initiatives; they are important recommendations of which this government has taken no notice, on which it has made no move to act, and for which it has certainly made no provision in the forthcoming 2004-05 budget. One of the most disturbing things is that, whilst many

of our teachers work very well in our schools to provide an excellent service, repeatedly, year after year, we have a number of teachers whose registration is removed as a result of conduct. Last year, of those that related specifically to indecent or improper conduct towards children, two matters involved male teachers who had recent criminal convictions for possessing child pornography—both were found guilty of improper conduct. Two male teachers were also found guilty of disgraceful and improper conduct: one pursued an improper relationship with a female student, and the other with a male student. If this is not a repeated serious alert to the government that this is going on and that it is about time that it did something about it, and that at the very least it should listen to the board that has the responsibility to try to ensure that our children are protected, it is a disgrace that this government continues to ignore the recommendations of this important board.

We cannot help protect our children now in our schools and, in particular, our government schools, which nobody is looking at, unless we are prepared to open it up to an inquiry and at the very least act on the recommendations which the government's very own board suggests and which follow the blatant lack of attention to provisions under the Layton report.

There are many other issues which were exposed during the course of estimates, which I am sure other members will raise and which I certainly will raise over the forthcoming months. Sadly, most of the questions to which I sought answers from the Minister of Education during the course of estimates were taken on notice. It concerns me, as I am sure it would concern other members of the house, that when a minister presents to the committee and has an army of the most senior people in their departments beside and behind them who are available to provide information, that so much of the information sought was taken on notice. We look forward within the next 28 days to the responses on those, and I certainly hope that the minister attends to that promptly.

Let me give you one example of where notice was given of our request in relation to information—that is, the full list of all capital works that were going to be provided for in the 2004-05 budget. So that the minister would not be taken by surprise, I actually wrote to her on 20 April and advised that I would be seeking further information to be made available at estimates and that the list be provided to the committee so that the whole of South Australia would have the opportunity of knowing what capital works are actually going to be made available and what was not. She could not do so. I asked her again during the course of the afternoon, and she could not do so. I asked her again after the tea break, and she could not do so. I suggest to those in this parliament that it is the type of behaviour and secretive action of this government.

One has to ask the question: why would you possibly not disclose the list? A number of explanations are possible: one is that they have not thought yet how they are going to spend all the money, and they want to be able to keep that in reserve to make provision when they feel like it. That is not the purpose of a budget: the purpose of a budget document is to disclose to the people of South Australia what are the programs and who is to get what, and not to play games with the people of South Australia and, in particular, the children of South Australia in the provision of their education and their school facilities. It is an utter disgrace that we have this type of information concealed and, again, I look forward to the production of that list within the next 28 days.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): It is my pleasure to have a few minutes to make some comments on the process that we have been through over the last couple of weeks. I must say that I still find it a somewhat frustrating process, although I do consider it a necessary one. When I was on council in Stirling some 20 years ago, we used to all be able to read the budget in its entirety and discuss the budget line by line if we wanted to. We would debate each issue that came up and reach a resolution as to whether something stayed in or out of the budget or got changed as far as the amount being spent, and so on. It was actually a manageable process. My view is that this government has actually tried to denigrate that process and tried to take some of the value out of it. It seems to me that it would be unthinkable to have a budget controlling \$7 billion to \$8 billion that this state manages—a budget that is six volumes thick—and not have the opportunity to ask them questions and to raise some issues about it. They are often the important issues but, of course, this government tried to manage the whole situation.

On the day that I was doing the three portfolios for which I have some responsibility, the government had issued something like nine or 10 press releases by 9 a.m., trying to make sure that the media concentrated not on what was being raised in the budget by way of questions from the opposition but on what the government wanted them to be concentrating on for that day. In spite of that, several questions from my portfolios, particularly in the area of child protection, did make it on to the radio waves the next morning and into the press, so the government did not succeed in completely diverting attention as it wanted to. The member for Bragg noted overspending. In my area the problem is that, whilst there has been some overrun of previous years' budgets, there has been a significant lack of the appropriate level of spending to address some significant issues.

The issue of child protection and the need for an inquiry into child protection was clearly raised in that area. Indeed, the minister was not going to make an opening statement until I made an opening statement in the Families and Communities portfolio, indicating why the government responses to date had been insufficient, inappropriate and why it was no excuse to say that it would cost too much money.

The government does not mind if the Anglican Church or Catholic Church spend their money. The community will not accept that at the end of the day it is appropriate to say that it would cost too much. It is a necessary inquiry, and I believe that it will be necessary for us to go through the process of examining this issue of sexual abuse generally of people who were wards of the state in institutions run by the state. We cannot expect organisations such as the Anglican Church to cop the beating it has copped from the government this week without the government tidying up its own back yard. The government failed to address a number of issues in the estimates, but we will continue to ask questions about them.

One of the earlier issues we dealt with was the Moving On program, which is severely under funded. Whilst I was pleased that the government announced that the funding it is now injecting into it will be indexed, so that at least it will continue to cover the people who are being serviced at a certain level at the moment, unfortunately it failed to put in the extra \$2 million necessary to bring the funding up to where it needs to be. It is well-known that the current Moving On program has been under funded by \$3.2 million. The government generously put in \$1.2 million, so it is still \$2 million short. It did not put in even half of what was needed to bring the funding up to an appropriate level.

The people who access these programs are people who have raised their children in home environments and, by doing so instead of putting these profoundly disabled children into institutions for their lives as happened a couple of generations ago, have saved successive governments an enormous amount of money. Therefore, it is appropriate that the government respond by giving sufficient funding to enable these people to continue to support their children in their young adulthood. One of the other issues that came up in the course of estimates was the issue in the disability services area of the failure of this government to act on the need for more funding to provide disability services. In particular, I refer to a question that I asked of the minister at the end of Tuesday night in relation to a quite specific problem.

It strikes me as just unthinkable that this could happen in our state in this day and age, especially following so closely upon the item in *The Sunday Mail* about the ministerial expenses of all the various government ministers and what they had spent, including money on flower arrangements and the like. The particular instance I referred to in the question was that of a 5½ year old boy who has outgrown his wheelchair. He has outgrown it for some time and he is continuing to grow. He was put on the high priority list to get a new wheelchair more than 10 months ago, and over the 10 months he has moved down the list from, I think, 7th to 15th position on the list. Rather than being closer to getting a wheelchair, he is further away, and his parents are becoming frantic about how you actually manage the situation.

I have enough trouble lifting up two year olds these days, but how do you manage to lift a 5½ year old for whom you need equipment that you cannot access? Instead of getting closer day by day, they appear to be getting further away. I understand that in this area of the disability equipment and services that are required we are some \$1.5 million under funded. What this government has earned in extra taxes, extra GST payments, in the land transfer stamp duty and the like, has meant many millions of dollars which this government now has available and which it did not necessarily anticipate having. Surely another \$2 million could have been put into the Moving On program and \$1.5 million into the provision of the extra equipment and services for disability services generally.

As I said, I welcome the fact that the \$1.2 million that was put into the Moving On program will be indexed. I also welcome the fact that the minister does recognise that it has to be an ongoing situation, because this program is there to benefit on a long-term basis those people with profound disabilities, who usually have not been able even to get work in a sheltered workshop. They are people with profound disabilities who are no longer eligible to go to school or have special schooling, and they need the Moving On program to provide them with the ability to maintain whatever skills they have managed to acquire whilst they have been in a schooling process; to enable them to have a social outlet and contact with their peers, and so on.

Importantly, it is also to enable the parents of those children to have some degree of respite. In fact, I had a lady in my office this morning who has a profoundly disabled boy now 17 years of age, so he is still at school. They are begging to get even one weekend of respite a month, because they have looked after that child from birth to 17-plus years seven days a week, 24 hours a day. She told me that he needs to be turned at night, so one night she decided she would count how many times she turned him. She put a piece of jewellery

on the side table every time she had to attend this boy and turn him in his bed. In the morning she counted the pieces of jewellery and there were 19 pieces. I know how nutty I get when I am deprived of sleep. Members should try to imagine being deprived of their sleep 19 times during the night—and these people have done it for seven days a week, day in and day out, for all those years.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley will take a place and not turn his back on the person speaking.

Mrs REDMOND: It is no wonder that they become desperate and, indeed, it is now affecting their health. Her husband is about to turn 60 years of age and they are finding that their own health is suffering profoundly.

These are important issues and I believe they are areas in which the government has the capacity to put in money but has failed to do so. It does not require huge amounts of money, but \$1.5 million more into disability funding and \$2 million more on top of the \$1.2 million that was announced for the Moving On program would be of enormous benefit to these people in the community. As I said, they have saved the government money—and it is not just the Labor government: it has been successive governments over the years. These people, by raising their children in their own homes instead of institutionalising them, have saved the government many millions of dollars. It seems to me that we need to recognise that and give them absolute priority in terms of funding. They have done something that most of us could not even contemplate the difficulty of doing but, when they need assistance, they have trouble getting it.

I believe the estimates process is important to throw some light onto these issues. It is not a perfect process, by any means, and I certainly think it could be improved and, personally, I would like to see some changes in the system. I do not think we should just say it is a waste of time and we should not have it, but I do not think there is a lot of value in Dorothy Dix questions from the government side. Anything government members want to raise by way of Dorothy Dix questions can be done by a ministerial statement on another occasion. It is appropriate to try to get some answers but, when I asked the minister the question about the little boy of 5½ years who has outgrown his wheelchair, the response was that he would take the question on notice and provide a detailed answer. However, his ministerial advisers were there with him and able to give a detailed answer and provide us with some good news for the people in this situation.

The government has clearly adopted a certain policy this week of trying to divert attention from estimates committees. I must say that I do not think the minister who has responsibility in the areas that I cover as a shadow minister is guilty of this but, certainly, a number of them were feigning boredom and disinterest and avoiding answering questions, and so on. I think it is a valuable process and that we could have a useful discussion about where the budget should go. At the end of the day, I accept that the government has the numbers and its budget will go through but, nevertheless, it is important for the whole of the government and the community to be aware of where the money is being spent and why there are increases, decreases and shifts in where the money is going, and it should be a matter of being open and accountable.

This government keeps saying it will be open and accountable but, in reality, what it does is avoid the question. We have had a number of instances already this morning of ministers coming in here and correcting the record of what they said in estimates. Of course, that is a good media ploy

because there are no cameras here at the moment. No-one is even listening to me.

Mr Venning: I am! Every word.

Mrs REDMOND: No-one is here to take notice of the fact that we are correcting the record, but I think the record should be corrected with the cameras and everybody watching. But it is good media tactics: I have to give this government high marks for its management of the media. But that is not what it is about, and I wish the Premier would come to understand that managing the media is not what government is about. Managing the state's economy and managing the issues that confront us as a community should be what we as parliamentarians are about.

So, I think this process is important, but I would like to see it be more flexible. I think it is an enormous waste of time for people to have large numbers of ministerial advisers here, and perhaps it would be better if we have two bites at the cherry so that, when a question is asked, if an appropriate senior adviser does not know the answer, we have another half hour or hour on the topic with the appropriate adviser being brought back, rather than sitting with enormous numbers of very senior people here. I know, because of my contact with the ambulance board before I came to this place, that a lot of time and effort goes into preparation for estimates because they have to worry about every conceivable question that could be asked, and the process leads to one or two questions being asked which are not answered, anyway. It seems to me that we could improve the process, but I certainly suggest that we do not say it is a waste of time and therefore we should do without it. I am grateful for the opportunity to make a few comments about it this morning.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I want to say a few words about the matter before the parliament presently (the noting of the reports) and, in doing so, I will address my remarks primarily to the question of the process by which the reports are generated. In doing so, I have listened carefully to the member for Heysen's contribution and, as usual, there is much wisdom in what she has to say. However, today I will be a little harsher than she is about the process that we have all recently been through.

I think it is, to say the least, a farce to go through what we have gone through for the last two weeks. It may be downgrading the word 'farce' to use it in this context, but I cannot think of a more appropriate word which is not unparliamentary to describe what we have done. The estimates process is apparently the second reading stage of the Appropriation Bill in this house, and it is a committee process by which we all exhaustively examine the matters contained in the budget. Any person spending five minutes observing the estimates process would realise that it is hardly an exercise by which a fine tooth comb is run through the budget.

This is bad for government, not this government or the last government, but any government. A government should be accountable to the parliament. This is one of the most important principles of the democratic system on which all of us say we are keen. If the estimates process continues to remain the farce that it is, we are wasting enormous amounts of time and money and pulling the wool over someone's eyes. I am not sure whose eyes, because anybody who bothers to look at it will have the wool taken away from their eyes very quickly. In any event, the whole process is absurd.

The fact is that the scrutiny of any government's budget is a very important function of the parliament. It is one of the major pillars of democracy. We must have a situation where

the executive arm of government is accountable to the parliament, because they are not accountable to anybody else. I realise that, at the moment, my party occupies the executive arm of government but, in 20 or 30 years' time when we have had enough, members opposite might be occupying the executive arm of government, and I would expect that the parliament will properly scrutinise them. Luckily, I will not be here then, but in 20 or 30 years' time when they get their turn again, they will deserve to be properly scrutinised. We all do; this is an important principle of democracy, and the public expect it and they are entitled to expect it, because this is such an important process and it is even more tragic that it has descended to this level of a farce.

I would like to touch on a few of the elements of this farce to illustrate the point I am trying to make. First, as a matter of practical effect, only non-government members participate at all in the process. I do not think I am telling any secrets by saying that, because everyone who has ever been here to observe one of these estimates processes would realise that, in terms of the scrutiny of government, which is the primary focus of the process, it is effectively left to the opposition or Independent members of the parliament.

The second point, of course, is that the members of the upper house (who, after all, are members of parliament, whether or not we agree with their election) do not participate at all—not at all. In some respects that might be a relief, but in other respects we have to remember that they are elected by the community of South Australia. So, one must raise the question: why should they not be involved in the scrutiny of the executive arm of government from time to time? I agree with the member for Heysen's observation that the use of dorothea dixers by government members in the estimates process is particularly galling. In my view, it is a travesty. I could move on to that general proposition, but I think I should confine my remarks to the estimates process.

Again, for anyone who has observed the estimates process, it is not useful or helpful and it does not contribute to exposing the issues that need to be exposed. The member for Norwood makes the point that the Senate is a good example of what estimates might be. With the greatest respect, I agree with her. The contrast between what happens in the Senate and what happened in the last couple of weeks, as we have observed here, is so dramatic as to make a person think that the only similarity between the two is the name.

The next point I would like to make concerns the officers of the various departments. How many countless hours do they put into preparing for the estimates process? How long do they spend preparing answers to possible questions? How many of them are brought down here just to sit all day for perhaps no real purpose? How much money is that costing the community? How many useful things could those people be doing instead of sitting here like dummies waiting for someone to ask a question that they might be able to answer?

I give credit to the very hard-working members of the parliamentary staff, the chairs of the committees and the table officers, who have to sit here and endure this. Their eyes do not glaze over; they appear to be interested; they sit there day in, day out; and it is to their great credit that they appear to be maintaining interest in what is going on. But what an effort that must be for them. What about the ministers who should be administering their department and focusing on important matters of state? They are sitting here all day doing things which are not particularly productive, and I have already mentioned the members of the upper house who are not doing much.

In my opinion, the estimates committee process is a very good time for all of us to take a serious look at the general proposition that the processes and procedures of this parliament need serious and dramatic reform to improve their efficiency and to deliver greater value to those who elect us to the parliament because, after all, what they are looking for is value for money. With the greatest of respect to the originators of the current procedures under which we operate, they may have delivered value some time ago, but I do not think they deliver full value now. We can do better, and we should do better.

I would like to see the committee report on reform of the procedures of the House of Assembly, which was dealt with in the last parliament, seriously looked at again and some moves made on it. I would also like the estimates process in particular to be thoroughly examined, because it is so unreasonable at the moment that it stands out like a sore thumb. I do not pretend to suggest that I have the only possible solution, but I suggest that we give some consideration to giving the Economic and Finance Committee something to do. Ever since the parliament stripped the innards out of the Economic and Finance Committee some time ago by eliminating its scrutiny of statutory authorities, it has basically been a committee in search of a job. Although the committee does scrutinise bodies such as water catchment boards and other statutory things such as the emergency services levy, which every year comes before the committee, it is certainly the case that that committee does not, because of the statutory prohibition on its functions, do what it might or should.

Perhaps it would be an idea for that committee to pick up, in a very detailed fashion, the scrutiny of the budget, and move in a more orderly, thorough way through the processes which are attempted to be completed in a couple of weeks in Estimates Committees A and B. Others may disagree with that suggestion. I have to declare an interest, I am on the Economic and Finance Committee, and I do not seek that job. But, it may be that the committee should be doing that job. It may be that there are other solutions.

I realise that there is more collective wisdom in this place than I can offer, and many members have been here a lot longer than I and they may have a better idea of how the problem can be solved. But, I have been here long enough to work out that the way we are doing it now is not good enough. I urge all members to approach the problem of the procedure by which the scrutiny of the government's budget is approached with goodwill and a genuine intention to improve the function of parliament.

As you, Mr Speaker, have said many times, the parliament will not rise in the esteem of the community unless it is seen to be improving what it does. That not only goes to the conduct of members as they go about their business in the chamber, but it also goes to the way in which we do our job and the value we deliver to the community from the job that we do. One of the very important jobs that we can do is to conduct this very important function of scrutinising the budget in an efficient, timely and effective manner.

I am sorry to say that the way we do it now does not get a tick in any one of those boxes. For that reason, whilst obviously contributing to this debate in a positive way, I hope that this is the last time I have to get up and speak about estimates in this way. I have done it three times now, and my views have not changed. In fact, they have become more entrenched. I live in hope that this time next year, neither you

nor any of my colleagues in the chamber will again be obliged to listen to this contribution again.

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr RAU: It has certainly sent me grey. In that optimistic hope, I will finish my contribution and ask all members present on both sides of the chamber to seriously consider how we can improve this process to get better value for all of us.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Sir, I have done it 14 times, and I can say to you, yes, I agree with the member for Enfield that it can be improved. But, the system is basically a very important function of the parliament and it has done a very valuable job. The problem has been, Mr Speaker, as you would know because you have been here longer than I, that this government has cut back the timing. When I first came into this place, estimates went from 10 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. There was an exhaustive probing of all the lines. I agree with member for Enfield that it is a waste to have these dorothy dixers but, sir, I object to the insinuation that a member of the government cannot ask his or her own question. I note that the member for Enfield did ask some questions which were obviously not dorothy dixers, and we on this side appreciate that as much as they do.

Every member has the right to ask a question of the minister, even if it be one of their own parish pump issues—and so many of them are; you have the right. It does gall one to see members of the government get up and read a prepared question, and then receive a prepared answer. That is a waste. That is what used to happen when we had the 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. sittings. I agree that we can cut back, and we have done that. There was a fair bit of wisdom involved, and we came to an agreement. There were no questions from the government, and we cut the times right back. But, we did have one of the chairmen asking a lot of questions, and that took up a lot of the time.

I agree that there can be some improvement in this process, but I still believe that the process of estimates is very important. After all, what would happen if we did not have estimates? At least it is an opportunity to hold the government, be it a Labor or Liberal government, to account. It is an opportunity for us to ask the minister, on a fairly casual basis, about all the lines. Any shadow minister or any member at all doing their work has that opportunity to cross-examine. Otherwise, I think the budget estimates process has, again, demonstrated its value as a tool for probing the government. Yes; it could be improved.

The two committees have provided valuable detail on the government's revenue raising and spending plans, as they should. I believe they have exposed wastage, overspending and a lack of planning, to which I will refer shortly. This is being achieved despite the government's attempts to downplay the importance of the process through the swamping of the media, in the last few days, away from questioning, particularly with the paedophilia issues which have arisen. I am not saying that that was deliberate, but it certainly took the media focus away from the estimate process here in parliament.

The government's tactic has been to have its ministers feign boredom, and we saw it often. They avoided answering direct questions wherever possible. Certainly, a lot of the answers were very rambling, particularly when we had government members asking questions. One particular answer took 21 minutes. One minister was worse than the others, and, although I will not name that minister, we all

know who it is. Also, a lot of the difficult questions we asked were taken on notice. In some instances, I even gave the ministers warning by letter that I was going to ask questions in this parliament but they still took that question on notice. I was pretty annoyed about that.

The government did use estimates to make some pretty important announcements, despite saying that the estimates process was a waste of time. One that was very important to me was the announcement by the minister for agriculture about the single desk. It would appear that the government is flagging legislation to the parliament to sit on the table in relation to a model for the single desk for the marketing of barley. I declare my interest as a barley grower, as I always do in this place, and as a member of the ABB. We have an impasse here, as we know.

The government had two choices to solve the problem. It could have helped the federal minister, via the NCC guidelines, and said, 'Okay, minister, what you are asking us to do is to prove that this is for the common good in South Australia. Therefore, we will do another report similar to the Round report but more detailed.' It could have been done in-house by Mr Barry Windle, whose knowledge in this area is very vast. Mr Windle could have done this report for the minister, showing that this single desk is not only supported by the industry but also by the people in South Australia. The government could have then given the report to the federal minister, and the minister would have said, 'Yes, I agree. I will not further penalise South Australia by the defaulting of competition payments.' He could not only have done that but we would have got the payment we have already lost. This would have been the way out for everyone. After all, the federal minister did not create these rules. They are national competition policy rules, which, of course, commenced under the Keating government.

I am sure the federal minister would like to solve this impasse. As the member for Enfield would know, the federal minister does not want to go down this path. He knows that the way in which we sell barley and, indeed, wheat, in South Australia has the almost total support of the whole industry and, I believe, this parliament. Listening to comments in the media this morning, after the minister's announcement, we have the Australian Democrats making statements. What really annoys me—and you, sir, would understand—the minister had two ways of doing this. He could have put forward a report, and the federal minister would have agreed. We could have continued on, we would have got back our competition payments and nothing more would have been said. But no, the minister has taken the other tack and, I am sad to say, the member for Enfield is complicit with this arrangement and is playing politics with this issue.

They have chosen the issue to be confrontational. They have chosen to say, 'We'll put forward a model similar to the Western Australian model. We know we don't want that, but we'll do that, and we'll blame the federal minister for it. After all, he's demanding that we abide by the NCC policy. If we don't, we'll let it lay here for 12 months.' Until what? Of course, a federal election! This is a very cynical political exercise. If the member for Enfield had the goodwill and was dinkum about this matter—and, in the main, I believe he is but, in this instance, he is playing politics—there is a way out. We could all eat a little humble pie, and then get this thing solved. It will not pass the parliament, and the member for Enfield knows that as well as I. All it will do is cause delay, which is the worst thing that can happen. The longer

we hang this out there, we are playing into the hands of the competition.

We are seeing a review of the Western Australian model, that is, the Australian Licensing Authority. We do not want that here: 85 per cent of our growers do not want that and nor do you, sir. I see that the Speaker is shaking his head. So, why do we not take the easy path, the non-political path? No, we do not do that. I believe that the minister should have shown more leadership in this matter. He comes from a rural area and he has barley growers in his electorate. I have told the minister that we have proof with the Round report. That report said quite clearly that, 'Because of lack of resources, I cannot make a recommendation to the federal minister in relation to this issue.' In other words, the federal minister could not use the Round report: it would be blatant abuse if he did. So, put forward a report that he can use, and he will say, 'Okay, we can proceed.'

No doubt, the newspapers will be full of this issue in the days and weeks ahead. I am very concerned about this delay. The minister had an easy way out, but he chose not to take it. I am amazed that the minister, being an Independent, has allowed himself to be a tool of the Labor machine in this instance to put it up the federal minister. That is what it is all about. The member for Enfield laughs. The member is not a dull man; he understands exactly what I am saying. I am disappointed that the minister did not take the easy way out to get this issue solved once and for all. We all know that all those industries aligned with the barley industry, as well as the wheat industry, are speaking with one voice on this matter. I wait and hope that we can overcome this impasse.

During the examination of the primary industry line, I was very concerned to see the cutback in funding right across the board. In every government budget—and I am afraid our government was a bit the same—poor old primary industry cops it. It is a very important industry, particularly when we are now relying on independent advice. We get so much commercial advice today, which, of course, comes with a tag. I was very concerned to see that primary industry has been cut back even more. When I brought up the idea that we could save a lot of money by moving the office of agriculture out of the CBD, of course I asked questions of the minister, which would be expected. He really had plenty of notice. It costs over \$3 million per annum to keep the office in the CBD. I believe the office already owns premises in the southern suburbs or outside Adelaide, which it has to maintain. So, that would be a direct saving of \$3 million.

The office leases over 4 000 square metres in the so-called Black Stump at an annual cost of \$1.25 million. The lease at 101 Grenfell Street, which is the de facto headquarters for the agriculture, mining and petroleum divisions, expires on 31 July and costs \$1.75 million annually. So, there is \$3 million, and I will not go into the others. There are savings to be made. I was encouraged by the minister's comment that, as these tenancies expire, he will look at them. I do not expect him to jump out in the middle of a tenancy, walk away and forfeit a contract. As I have said, it was a previous Labor government (the Bannon Labor government or the Arnold Labor government) under its then minister, Mr Terry Groom, which acquired land in Clare.

I was the local member. If the state election had not got in the way in 1993, that is where they would be today, and the reason would be the same. Agriculture should be about serving real people. The department does not need to be in the CBD. When did you last pull your ute up to the front of the Black Stump to see people in the department? I was encour-

aged by the questioning on the Barossa hospital. However, not much is happening, but it is not forgotten, and I live in hope.

I was concerned about road funding, and the allocation of only \$800 000 is a joke. Although some of the criticism is valid, I am concerned when I hear the government criticising the federal government about the lack of funding for our roads in South Australia. However, you cannot whack the federal government for cutting back when our own government does not give roads priority. Its own expenditure is so meagre and is almost infinitesimal: \$800 000 barely does the line marking. We need reasonable funding for our roads in South Australia. With trepidation, I mention the word 'formula', but if that is not locked in to help us I will join the government in lobbying to ensure that it is.

In my own area, the Barossa road strategy needs to be funded, because we now have problems with the huge development that is going on, and the other day we heard of another of \$60 million expenditure by Beringer Blass. Because of all the traffic travelling through the middle of Tanunda, Nuriootpa and Angaston, we need a strategy, guidance and some assistance from the government. I mentioned Kroemers Crossing, which is a very dangerous situation in the middle of the Barossa. Orlando Wyndham has a new development at Richmond Grove and, as the B-doubles pull out to enter the Barossa Valley Way, they have to park across the railway line. This is just another Salisbury level crossing accident waiting to happen. I have warned the government that it must address the situation, because it is a disaster waiting to happen, and I have put it on the record more than once.

The lights on the Sturt Highway are another concern. As you travel up the Sturt Highway, all the intersections are lit but the main intersection, where the Barossa Valley Way joins the Sturt Highway, is not. Why? Nobody can give me an answer. It is another accident waiting to happen. In fact, several accidents involving a couple of fatalities have already occurred. I also want to raise the issue of the Bowhill Wharf. Not many people know where this is, but people travelling on the *Murray River Princess* do because it pulls in there regularly. The Bowhill Wharf is in a very poor and dangerous condition. Because it has a very historic connection to the River Murray, I believe that the government needs to give it high priority.

I have many more issues I want to raise, but I will save them for later debates in the house. I certainly recommend the estimates process, but I wish that the government had looked after country people much better than it has.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): The member for Fisher described estimates as a 'near death experience'. I do not think that is quite right, but it is an unusual process. While this was only my first as a shadow minister, it was my third as a member. I feel sorry for those who have been here for a long time, particularly the attendants. I understand that the head attendant in the house, Perry Brook, has attended 25, and this is his silver anniversary of listening to estimates! We should have an estimate of how much it will cost to reward him! According to *The Advertiser*, we should not be here today, because its editorial today states: 'I am sure that the government can act promptly when the parliament resumes on 5 July.' So, *The Advertiser* does not realise we are here today, but I hope it is listening. I hope that someone is listening to what is going on in this place, because it is important.

We have just been through a budget of over \$6 billion, and that is a lot of money in anybody's terms. Certainly, estimates provide an opportunity for members on both sides of the house, and the Independents, to ask questions. At times, I am unfairly accused of speaking too quickly in this place, and I thank Hansard for their cooperation. Somebody said to me that, when I delivered the omnibus questions, it was more like a Greyhound bus, but that is not quite right. I think I have slowed down considerably, and today I certainly will not shout at Hansard, because they do a wonderful job. I will keep my voice to its normal dulcet tones.

Estimates committees are a good tool but, unfortunately, they have been abused. Somebody said that the ministers feigned boredom, but I received a lot of cooperation during questioning in my portfolios, and I hope that was not feigned cooperation. I was very disappointed that on occasions the ministers took ages to seek advice from their advisers. I do not want any minister to give incorrect advice—far from it. However, in some cases it was an inordinate length of time, and I hope that we can look at the way estimates are conducted. I was also asked whether, if I was given the opportunity to ask all my questions without dorothy dixers from the government, we could halve the time of questioning. If it is the case that dorothy dixers are used just to pad out the time, I am very disappointed.

I had an interesting time during the questioning in my portfolio area. As I said in my opening statement, I saw estimates as an opportunity for explanation and clarification, not just confrontation. We had problems with some questions but, in the vast majority of cases, it was a great experience and I look forward to perhaps one or two more in opposition but many more in government, giving clear and precise answers and giving the opposition plenty of time to scrutinise what the government is doing. Certainly, it has been a learning experience for me. If you are in government, you have the responsibility to be open and honest—as the Premier has always said he wants to be.

In regard to the portfolio of consumer affairs, the Office of Business and Consumer Affairs has been a very cooperative office, but they are under the thumb of the Treasurer. When you look at the fees and charges that the Office of Business and Consumer Affairs is administering, it is costing more to be born in South Australia, it is costing more to live here, and it is costing more to die here. Fees are going up, they are only going up by a dollar here or fifty cents there, and most of them are in line with inflation, but there are others that are way above the inflation rate: births, deaths and marriages, registration fees, building work contractors fees, cremation fees, business names fees, conveyancers fees, land agents fees, liquor licensing fees, partnership fees, plumbers, gasfitters and electricians fees, public trustee fees, real property fees, second-hand vehicle fees, trade measurement administration fees—all going up. And there are many, many more, and this is to get the Treasurer's AAA rating. Those fees and rises might be a dollar here, a couple of dollars there, but they add up to \$1.4 million that goes into the Office of Business and Consumer Affairs—and that is no fault of the officers in that office; they do an absolutely sterling job.

The disappointing part is that this government is pulling in an absolute truckload of money with their fees and charges. The Premier is referred to as 'superlative Mike' over there. He uses every superlative to describe what he is doing: it is the first, it is the biggest, it is the best—and in many cases that should be questioned. But certainly one thing that cannot be questioned is that this state budget is the highest taxing

budget of any state budget, and certainly in the history of South Australia.

It is a tremendous impost on the people of South Australia. They had to suffer through recovering from the state bank last time, now it is going to be WorkCover—then it is all the taxes. What are we getting? I want to put this on the record again. *The Advertiser* does not realise that we are here, but I hope they are listening or read this at some stage. I hope that the media listen at some stage or note that the \$1.046.4 billion that was taken in property taxes last year—that is \$2.87 million a day—each and every day. Nearly \$3 million each and every day in property taxes is going into the government coffers. I think that we were only going to pay the Belgian dentist \$2 million a day in interest on the State Bank debt, but the Treasurer is pulling in \$3 million a day in property taxes. I understand that the government is pulling in about \$1 million a day in gambling taxes.

Some of that money should be given back to the people of South Australia. The taxes are not just money to be squirreled away for election budgets next year, and we look forward to the 2005 budget, it is going to be an absolute ripper. The fees and charges are going up and up, and you can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all of the people all of the time. South Australians, and the media will wake up, they will start listening, and we should get some opportunity to scrutinise what this government is doing. The Premier is, as we have said, a very astute media manipulator, and it is unfortunate that the media is being manipulated. I understand that there is a new broadsheet about to start in South Australia. It has been criticised already as being staffed with Liberal Party apparatchiks. I think that is very unfair, I think that journalists generally have very high morals and ethics. It is unfortunate that some of them are becoming commentators rather than investigators nowadays.

The other portfolio that I will talk about is local government because the issue of 'tragic mountain' has been in the news lately. The position that the City of Holdfast Bay, the councillors, and the officers of Holdfast Bay have found themselves in is a tragedy. The development down there is a great development, it is a good development, it has been the catalyst for development right around the coast of South Australia. But what happened is that the agreements were drawn up in such a way, almost as convoluted as the budget documents, the contractual agreements between the city of Holdfast Bay and the consortium, as to put the council in a position where they sought legal advice and, as usual, you ask three or four lawyers, and you get six or seven opinions.

The council were led to believe that they were in a position where each and every individual councillor and council officer was going to be put at considerable personal financial risk were they to put up a legal challenge against the development down at Holdfast Shores. This has been disputed by other people. I understand that the Minister for State/Local Government Relations is seeking crown law advice on this. The minister said in estimates that it is nothing to do with the Development Act but it really is whether or not the council entered into a contract. The issue that the minister is trying to clarify, and he does not have crown law advice on this yet, is in relation to the implications for individuals, and whether they can be individually held liable under federal legislation, because they have protection under the Local Government Act, but apparently not under federal legislation.

I have been informed by one of the lawyers in the house, the honourable member for Enfield, that the council itself could indemnify the councillors. I am not a lawyer and I will

wait until we get further opinion on that. Certainly, it is a very interesting situation that not only Holdfast Bay but all councils around Australia should be looking at very carefully, because if there is an opportunity for developers to hold the threat of legal action over the head of councillors, then that is something that we should be avoiding. As I said, the jury is still out on that and we will wait to see what happens there.

The re-titling of the minister for local government as the Minister for State/Local Government Relations is something that I was a little concerned about when I was asking questions (which I genuinely thought should be able to be answered by the Minister for State/Local Government Relations) because, really, state/local government relations, what is that? That is how the state and local government interact. Question after question, unfortunately, was answered with, 'This is not our budget line.'

All I can say is that the convoluted presentation of the budget just leads to the ability for ministers not to answer questions if they choose. I will give minister McEwen his due: he has been very cooperative and perhaps I will have to rephrase my questions in some way so that they are more specific. I was disappointed, though, that when you look at the summation of performances in various government departments, in the Office of Local Government, for example, you are referred to a web site rather than having performances listed there. The issues that I raised with the minister were sidelined (perhaps that is too harsh a word) but they were offered to be put on notice. They included whether there would be a reduction in expenditure to business enterprise centres and regional development boards, and the way the natural disaster mitigation program is going. I sought information on the changes to expenditure for community sport and recreation programs.

I was very concerned—and this has been fed back to me from councils, individual councillors and the Local Government Association—about the lack of consultation between state and local government on the draft sustainable development bill. I asked about why there was a \$120 000 reduction in the state black spot program for safer local roads. I asked about what was being done to give council officers and councillors protection against outlaw motorcycle gangs intimidating them over development issues. I also asked about local councils being given assistance; what is the state government's relationship with local government over disputes with the direction of mobile phone towers in residential areas? I shall follow up on those and I know that the minister will be cooperative.

The issue of state local heritage is one that I think should come under state and local government relations, although it did not. I raise this issue now, because in this week's *Guardian Messenger* down at the Bay, there is a letter from minister Hill about a very old home in Glenelg. Half of the home is about to be knocked down to make way for another 12-storey lot of boxes in the sky. This home was built in the 1870s and was the residence of a former premier of this place. Because the local council had not put it on its local heritage list for some reason, I do not know why, minister Hill is absolving himself of all responsibility to enact some legislation or some protection for this property. I have a photograph of this house from the late-1800s where this house and others around it are there in the splendour they should be kept in. They are part of our heritage; we have lost a lot of that so far, and we need to protect it. Minister Hill, it is not good enough to blame local government and say that

the local government did not do what it should have, that they do not understand their responsibilities.

Ms Ciccarello: Who owns the house?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Well, I think the responsibility lies with the minister responsible for heritage to do something about that—not just to let our heritage get bulldozed all the time. We are just about to see Magic Mountain bulldozed—no argument there—but we are really concerned about what is going on there.

Sport and recreation is another area for which I have great pleasure in being the shadow minister. It is a fantastic area for being able to get out and talk to people. I went to the breakfast the other morning with Raelene Boyle celebrating officials and coaches. The government is paying attention to it, but the government again is short-changing the volunteers, the mums and dads and the kids out there. The physical activity plan is an example—and the former minister, the member for Newland, has said this—where some of the things that were introduced by the former Liberal government are being picked up by this government and then being reannounced time and again. The physical activity plan is one that has been reannounced. Of course, we need physical activity, we need to cut down obesity in children. We all know that we need to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Talking about healthy lifestyles, eating pies and pasties can be part of a healthy lifestyle if you do it in moderation. I understand now that you will be able to buy your pies and pasties down at Hindmarsh Stadium from a government-owned cafeteria. I think it will do that at The Pines as well. What is the government doing selling pies and pasties? Small business in this state is suffering enough without losing other opportunities to make a buck like selling a few pies and pasties. It is a great stadium and a great location; location, location, is it now? The Premier has seen it there and thought, 'We will flog a few pies and pasties down there.' It is hard labour for small businesses out there, let me tell you that.

As to volunteers, they are the backbone of South Australian sport and recreation, and many clubs and societies. We have the highest number of volunteers of any other state. They are worth \$5 billion to the budget of this state. What happens to volunteers here? They are not given the support they should; they are not given any help in drawing up codes of conduct. If they draw up a code of conduct for the sporting club, they are charged \$1 200 to register it with OCBA; then they are charged another \$250 to register as a user of that code of conduct. Talk about suffering; it is long suffering. We saw a plethora of media announcements on each morning of estimates to try to sideline the press. As I said, I do not think that they are listening, because they do not think that we are here until next month.

However, one announcement that I thought was fantastic, and I am glad that the member for Colton has just come in because, being a great support of Surf Lifesaving SA, he will also be supporting the Nipper Safe program that has been developed by them. It is a sad fact of life that we have to have programs like Nipper Safe, because we know the history of the nippers in Surf Lifesaving SA having been abused by people who should be above reproach in this community. The Nipper Safe program is something that is really worthwhile. We need to protect our volunteers, our mums and dads. We only saw this morning a parent showing how a teacher should appropriately touch their child. What is this society coming to? South Australia is a fantastic society; we have some wonderful organisations; and, with the exception of one or two individuals, it is a society of which we should all be very

proud. We need to take care of those predators out there, those paedophiles.

The issue of predation on our children will not go away. The Premier and the Deputy Premier have made a lot of noise over the Anglican report into child abuse, yet they have totally neglected the Catholic report. I will have more to say about that later. I am still dealing with the long-suffering parents of individuals who have been affected by abuse within the Catholic Church, and just yesterday on the news we saw another incidence of that. It will not go away. Salvos, surf life savers, chalkies: they all deserve our protection. All the volunteers deserve our protection. There is \$6 billion in the budget and the government should make sure it is using it wisely and giving it back to the people of South Australia. As I said, the \$3 million a day in land tax needs to be given back in more than just a 'hollow log' budget next year.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I wish to make some comments as a result of information that flowed from the estimates process. I begin my comments, as have a number of other members, by talking about the process. It is important for us all to understand from the start that the estimates process is an integral part of the democratic process. I note that the member for Enfield is agreeing with me there, and I heard him saying something not too dissimilar earlier in the debate. I believe that some would have us throw out the whole process. Some have been talking as though the process is unnecessary when what they are trying to say is that it is possibly unwieldy and not working in the way in which it was initially designed.

The member for Schubert also raised this point, but the parliament—opposition members, members of the minor parties, independents and, indeed, the government—should be questioning the Executive Government and the bureaucracy on what is happening in regard to the governance of the state. I have experienced over the last week and a half the range of ways in which the exchange of information has occurred. I have experienced it from one end where I believe a minister absolutely abused the process and had no intention of answering questions or imparting information. Why are ministers too ashamed to be questioned on their portfolio area? That is the fundamental question. If they were proud of what they were doing in managing their portfolio area and if they were sure in their own mind that they were doing a good job, I do not think they should feel embarrassed or ashamed about being questioned about it, resorting to the ridiculous humiliation and ridicule that was a tactic of at least one minister.

At the other end of the spectrum, I had the experience of certain ministers who were more than happy to defer questions to the experts who advise them in their departments and have them give that expert advice to the committee, which is the way it should have happened all along. During one of the breaks yesterday, over a cup of coffee I congratulated minister McEwen on the fact that the financial adviser he had with him was doing an excellent job and that it would make the process all that much better if, in future years, the opposition, minor parties and independents had the ability to go and talk to some of these financial advisers and have a briefing from them before the estimates process started, so that we could get a real understanding of what the budget is saying.

Part of the problem with the estimates process is the complicated way in which the budget is drafted. If we drafted the budget in user-friendly terms so that people could

understand what was happening, half the questions directed to ministers and their staff during the process would disappear. That process is not just redrafting the way the budget is written but allowing some briefings from some of the financial officers prior to the estimates process, so that those who have not been involved in the drafting of the budget can develop an intimate understanding of exactly what some of the figures do. Even after the estimates process, in some areas I find that I am still quite confused about what the numbers actually mean.

In private conversation with some of the departmental officers, they confirmed my thoughts that the way we are drafting the budgets does not really reflect what is going on in their departments, and they are trying to address that. All power to them: the sooner they do it, the better. Having made those few comments about the process, I reiterate that it is an important process, although I think it can be improved greatly. One of the other ways I would like to suggest that it could be improved is to have a much longer period of time available. In that way, ministers would be disinclined to try to talk out the limited time made available for each portfolio area. That is probably the key to turning this into a process that has great value to the parliament and, consequently, flows on to have great value to the people that we are here representing.

It is nonsense to have an hour here, half an hour for a particular agency or a couple of hours for some of them. I heard anecdotally, although I was not in the particular committee, that one minister spent 25 minutes on answering one question. That seems absurd to me. If the minister could not answer a question much more concisely than in 25 minutes, there is something wrong—probably with the minister's understanding of the agency that is being administered.

I now wish to talk very briefly about the budget overall and what the estimates process has proved. It has certainly proved to the opposition our fears that the Treasurer is ferreting away literally hundreds of millions of dollars in what are euphemistically called 'hollow logs'. We know what is happening: a pre-election budget will come out next year and, all of a sudden, the Treasurer will be hailing himself, as this Treasurer does—and he may even be hailed by the Premier, because he likes hailing himself and those close around him—as being a fantastic manager of the state's finances. Nothing could be further from the truth. I remind the house of what the Leader of the Opposition has said a number of times now: that there is a big difference between having a well balanced and healthy state budget, government budget, and having a healthy and well balanced economy.

That is what we really need in South Australia—a healthy, well-balanced economy that is moving ahead. That is what I really want to talk about. I want to talk about the estimates committees that I have been involved in and the portfolio areas for which I have taken on responsibility on behalf of the opposition and put that in the context of where the state is and where it should be going. I will talk about the State Strategic Plan—again, I think the name is a euphemism, because there is nothing strategic about the plan that has been presented by this government. There is no planning in it. It sets a couple of goals, but they are in the never-never, and numbers have been pulled out of the air. There is no plan, no road map and no strategy to get there, and I will talk about some areas in that context. One of the things that this government has failed to understand is that 55 per cent of the exports of this state come from the regional areas—that is, from agricultural

pursuits in the regional areas. If you add minerals exports, it is another 12 per cent, which takes to 67 per cent the exports of this state that come from outside metropolitan Adelaide (that is, outside the manufacturing and service sectors).

Exports primarily come from agriculture, food, wine, fisheries and minerals sectors. One of the goals of the State Strategic Plan is to treble exports over the next 10 years. I do not believe this government will come within a bull's roar of getting anywhere near that. Why? Because it has no strategy and no plan. If you are to triple exports and, currently, approximately 67 per cent of your exports are derived from outside greater metropolitan Adelaide, one would have thought you would have some plan for what is happening outside Adelaide. One would have thought you would have some plan for the industry sectors that are currently exporting from outside Adelaide, and some plan and some strategy to help them to expand and treble their exports as individual industries.

I first move to the area of mineral resources. I hail the government for having put in some extra money in the budget over the next few years under a plan called the Accelerated Exploration program to try to accelerate mineral exploration in South Australia. The target is to go from \$37 million a year currently to about \$100 million a year. That is a good plan and a good strategy, but the government has missed the boat. One of the issues South Australia has is that it is well-known that a lot our mineralisation and prospectivity includes uranium. We know that the stated policy of this government is that there will be no new uranium mines in South Australia, and the minister in the estimates committee confirmed that policy and did not seem to think it was a problem. So, on the one hand, the government is saying, 'We will spend more money and encourage exploration, but be careful if you find an ore body with uranium in it: do not think for a minute that we will let you mine it.'

One of the other elements of the Accelerated Exploration program is the appointment of a resource industry ambassador, and I guess his job will be to say, 'Let's not think about the uranium issue: come and explore, anyway.' I do not think he will get too far with that approach with the hard-headed mining industry. The mining industry is about taking risks and spending money, but also it is about managing those risks and expecting that, if you find something, you will be able to develop it and get a return on your investment.

One of the interesting things that came out of the estimates committee is that part of the money for the Accelerated Exploration program will be used to put a billboard outside the Perth airport saying that South Australia is a good place to come to explore for minerals. I question the sanity of that. I did not have time to find out the detail of exactly how much has been spent on that, but I think it is outrageous that money which the government says has been put aside to accelerate exploration in South Australia is being used to build a billboard in Perth. Anyone who thinks that having a billboard in Perth outside the airport will encourage a board member of a major mining company to come to South Australia does not understand industry one little bit. That is why, under a Labor government, South Australia tends to lag.

Another thing that the Labor government has done in regard to mining as part of the Accelerated Exploration program, in concert with the Department for Environment and Heritage, is develop some protocols about where we might and might not let miners operate—about what land we might lock away from miners because of its natural heritage. That program is being paid for out of the PIRSA budget—no

money is coming out of the DEH budget—and, before it starts, as of 1 July (next week some time), I understand cabinet has already taken a decision to lock away the rest of the Yellabinna park. My understanding is that somewhere between 80 per cent and 85 per cent of that park already has mining tenements over it and the balance is being locked away. That is not because an assessment has been made that there is some pristine environmental reason for doing so: the decision has been made just because it is there and just because we can.

I think that certainly sends the wrong message to the mining companies. Why would they come and set up exploration in South Australia—spend money setting up offices and working crews and exploring—when that sort of decision-making is going on and they do not know from one day to the next whether or not they will be able to continue exploring in a particular area? Again, the government is sending the wrong message. I have the opportunity to talk about regional development. I have gone around the state over the last few months visiting regional development boards (there are 13 of them across the state), and I have had an opportunity to speak with a few of them, although certainly not the majority at this stage.

It is my clear understanding that the funding for these boards, which is used to operate their offices and pay their staff, has received no increase whatsoever to cover CPI cost increases since this government has been in office. We know that the budget contains a 3.8 per cent average across-the-board increase in government fees and charges. We also know that there is about a 2 per cent underlying CPI inflation rate, yet the boards are expected to continue to develop regional South Australia with no extra funding to cover increases in the CPI.

When we looked at this during the estimates committee, the minister announced a one-off ex-gratia payment of \$50 000 for each board. Why is this only a one-off payment? I understand that it is money that was underspent last year, so it was already in the budget area for regional development, but why is it only a one-off payment? I do not know what the board is going to do in the following year. I think the government should come out with some of the millions of dollars that it has in its kitty and build this funding in and make it ongoing.

The Treasurer has in his contingency fund \$25 million, which was money to be used to build infrastructure if the SAMAG project got up. The government missed the boat on that one, it fell over in respect of that because it did not go out and ensure that that project came to South Australia. As a consequence of that, Port Pirie will be left languishing for many years. The Treasurer has this \$25 million sitting in a contingency fund. I implore him to use at least some of that money to build in funding for CPI increases for regional development boards so that they might be able to overcome some of the problems created by the lack of action of this government in the regions.

I will move on quickly to forestry. Currently, South Australian forests are being harvested at the rate of about 900 000 cubic metres per year. The current sustainable yield is estimated to be considerably less than that, probably about 650 000 cubic metres per year, and there is an attempt over the next couple of years to build that to a sustainable harvest of about 850 000 cubic metres per year. However, do not expect there to be any great rise in exports or import replacement from the forestry sector. I remind the house that the forestry industry in South Australia is a very big industry.

Returns to South Australia from the South-East region are probably between one and a half and two billion dollars a year, and it is responsible for about 30 per cent of employment and the economy in the South-East of the state. It is a big industry, but it will not build substantially and it will not contribute towards increasing our exports by a factor of three. So, there is nothing in that area either.

One of the things that did come out of the estimates process was when I questioned the Minister for Administrative Services about State Fleet, because there is a sleight of hand in the budget papers. It is not really a sleight of hand, but what has happened is that the government has changed the way it funds State Fleet. That means that \$111 million, which used to be funded by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia under an arrangement with them, is now funded through SAFA. When the Premier said that capital expenditure is so great in this budget, about \$950 million, that figure included this \$111 million. He said things like, 'This is a great budget where we are spending lots of money and that is going to drive the economy.' Of that amount, \$111 million (well over 10 per cent) will not create one job and will not drive anything in this economy. It is just a shifting of numbers from one year to the next and from one account to another. It will not create one job, and it will not drive one bit of economic activity. I just want to make sure that the house is absolutely aware of that.

Yesterday afternoon I had the opportunity of asking questions of the minister for primary industries. I omitted to pass on my sincere thanks to the Hon. Caroline Schaefer in another place who, as the opposition spokesman for this area, did most of the research and provided most of the questions which were posed to the minister. She did a terrific job going through the budget papers in this area. One of the things that came out is that the minister announced that he is going to change the Barley Marketing Act. I make one comment. The government has two choices: either there is a net public benefit under the current barley marketing system—and, if there is, the minister and the government should go to Canberra and make a case—or, if there is no net public benefit, they should stop playing politics and tell the barley growers that they are dreaming. It is as simple as that: either there is a net public benefit or there is not. The minister for primary industries is the person with the resources and the expertise to advise whether or not that is the case. That is his decision. If the benefit is there, go to Canberra and make the case.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): We have just finished the estimates process. Having had the experience of being a non-cabinet member and a cabinet member of the former government and being grilled as a minister during estimates committees and then being a shadow minister for the opposition, I think I have enough experience to judge this process. Whilst they are cumbersome in their nature, I think that, to some extent, the process works, because it provides the non-government members with an opportunity to ask questions of the minister to try to obtain information for their electorates. I know that you, Mr Speaker, on a number of occasions attended various estimates committee hearings to raise matters of concern to you or your electorate. At this time of the year, there are always some cheap media comments to say that the estimates committees should be reworked or whatever. I think we need a process under which ministers can be held accountable by non-government members of the house, and the process that we have is the

estimates committees. If some of the ministers were more committed to using the process genuinely, members would probably have access to more information. I think some ministers were better than others. Certainly, that has been my experience this time.

I raise a couple of matters arising from the estimates committees. I must admit that I am a bit confused and will seek further briefings from the minister for planning in relation to her answers on the fees. There is a \$2 million increase in the amount of fees to be collected by Planning SA. It rises from \$1.287 million to \$3.87 million; it is actually about \$2.6 million extra. According to the minister, that is an increase of around 4 per cent, and that does not make any sense to me. The minister's answer is that it is in response to the Economic Development Board's recommendations about the planning system. I cannot find an Economic Development Board recommendation that says, 'Please put up the planning fees'—the cost to the system, if you like—'by an extra \$2.6 million', which is what has happened in this case.

I have some concerns about the increased cost to the planning system, a system which is under review by the government. It will be interesting to see how the government responds to its own legislation once it has gone through the consultation process. Yesterday, I sat through the environment portfolio's estimates, and I must say that the government lacks commitment to coastal issues. The Labor Party has lacked commitment to coastal issues for some time. When in government, we released a plan to have marine protected areas in place by 2006. We put in place a \$4 million metropolitan coastal study, which the now minister for environment bagged as a total waste of money, saying that we should get on and do something for our coastal areas.

What do we have after three Labor budgets? The metropolitan coast strategy has been delayed: it cost shifted \$1 million from last year's budget into this year's budget. They have a strategy called 'Living Coast' that they have now been talking about for three budgets—that has been delayed; the long-promised coast and marine act, a rewrite of the Coastal Protection Act and other legislation regarding coast and marine matters promised last year has been delayed; the marine planning process (which was one of the initiatives set up under the previous government) has been delayed; the finalisation of the Spencer Gulf marine plan has been delayed; the Encounter Bay pilot marine protected area, promised to be completed last year, has been delayed; and we are now told that the marine protected areas which were meant to be finished by 2006 (as in a timetable put out by the previous government) will not be completed until 2010—almost a five-year delay.

The government was anti the metropolitan coastal study. The CEO of the Department for Environment and Heritage early in this government's term quite publicly said that coastal development needed to be restricted, and generally gave a negative view of coastal development in an article in *The Advertiser* about two years ago. We find that the department for environment and the planning department are now establishing a working party on Eyre Peninsula to look at coastal planning issues. I hope that this is not a signal that the government will prohibit appropriate coastal development, because the magnificent coast of Eyre Peninsula and, indeed, other areas such as Yorke Peninsula or the South-East, provide a real opportunity for an economic boom. The Australian community does have a love affair with the coast, and many people will move to the coast. If the government is about to enter a process of prohibiting appropriate develop-

ment, then, in the long term, some of those regional communities will regret that aspect if this government goes down that path.

The whole coastal marine approach by this government has basically been delayed and put out a number of years. The message from the minister yesterday was that it is all a bit hard and a bit complex. I know it is hard and complex. Ministers handle issues that are hard and complex everyday. The difference is that, under the previous government, I took the opportunity to sit on the marine managers' forum (the committee set up between PIRSA and the department for environment) to drive the marine protected area issue as minister, because I had a keen interest in the matter. The minister has taken his foot off the pedal, taken his eye off the ball and the departments have had their head, and the whole process has wound down because the department for environment will be fighting with the fisheries section about a whole range of matters dealing with coast and marine. That is one that I will be keeping a keen eye on because it is an area of great interest to me.

The other issue is the lack of coordination between the department for environment's EPA and Zero Waste group which the minister has set up. There seems to be a lack of coordination between those two groups in relation to regional waste matters. Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting Eyre Peninsula and talking to regional councils about waste matters. The problem is that the EPA is not re-licensing its landfill sites, forcing the councils to consider other waste strategies which involve transporting particularly recyclable products to Adelaide. The cost of transporting waste product (which is being imposed on the councils by the EPA or by Zero Waste) ultimately is a huge cost to the ratepayer, and so council rates in those small regional communities will climb through the roof because of the imposition imposed on them by the EPA or Zero Waste, as far as waste collection goes. The local councils have asked Zero Waste to consider subsidising those transport costs. After all, if the EPA and Zero Waste want them to achieve a certain recycling or waste outcome, the local councils believe there should be more financial input from EPA or Zero Waste to achieve that end. It was clear yesterday that there is confusion between EPA and Zero Waste about their regional waste strategy, and a lot of work needs to be done to put in place an appropriate regional waste strategy that will not become a prohibitive cost burden on regional communities and regional councils.

The industrial relations estimates committees were probably the most entertaining, in one sense. They illustrated that the minister was not across any of the issues. In fact, we spent more time looking at the back of the minister than at his face, because he continually turned around and asked his staffer for advice. There was not a question raised by the opposition where the minister did not have to turn around and ask for advice. It might be easier next year if Michael Ats simply takes the estimates committees and gives the minister the day off. That would save the minister having to put himself at risk of an occupational health and safety injury by twisting all the time. I would hate to see the minister come down with a back injury as a result of the estimates committees.

It was disappointing from that aspect, given the industrial relations agenda the government has put on hold. We have the WorkCover Governance Bill on hold; the Statutory Authorities (Safework SA) Bill has been put on hold; and the draft fair work bill is floating around, because the minister is not quite sure what to do with it. Janet Giles tells him one

thing and the Premier's office tells him something else, and the poor old minister is torn between the two areas, not knowing quite what to do. I daresay the industrial relations area was probably the most disappointing estimates committees process with which I have been involved in my 10 years in the parliament. However, we will have to battle away and, hopefully, next year that section might be a little better.

Another issue I want to comment on is the issue you raised yesterday, Mr Speaker, during the examination of the environment section, or it might have been under water, land and biodiversity conservation. It related to the level of salt in the water being marketed to the Virginia market gardeners under the current arrangements. I had not previously heard about this issue in relation to the level of the salt content entering the drainage system that finds its way into the Virginia water that ultimately goes onto Virginia market gardens. If what you say is true, Mr Speaker, and I do not doubt it for a minute—and I do not have any information to the contrary—the government needs to advise the Virginia market gardeners as soon as possible, and I do declare an interest. I do have some uncles who are the biggest market gardeners in Virginia. I am sure they will be interested to find out what the government response is to this issue.

If, as the Speaker alleged yesterday, we are inadvertently putting more salt on the Virginia market garden plains than we intended, because of the nature of the salt that will remain in the soil, long term, there will be a salt build up which will cause major issues for what is commonly known as the food bowl of South Australia, the Virginia market garden areas. Those families need to be aware of that issue, so they can make a judgment about whether or not they use that water. So, I support your call, Mr Speaker, for the government to come clean and clarify the issue: is the member for Hammond right or isn't he? Hopefully, the issue can be resolved quickly, because the income of a large number of families in Virginia will depend on that water stream. If the water stream is such that it will create problems for them long term, everyone needs to know and the government needs to take action.

With those words, I support the estimates committees process. While it is cumbersome, I think some interesting issues come out of it. Again, I support the continuation of the estimates committees next year.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): I, too, rise to offer my support for the estimates process. As I indicated during my opening address to part of that process, I believe there need to be sensible changes made to the estimates process to ensure that South Australians get the best value out of the process of scrutinising the government on its budget and those things that flow from it.

I have sat now on 15 such estimates committees and, during that time, I have had the opportunity to sit as chair, to sit in seven estimates committees as a minister, to sit in one estimates committee as an opposition backbencher, and the remainder as an opposition spokesman. During those 15 estimates committees, I think I have been able to gather a fair understanding and appreciation of how the process works. I have seen many different ministers in action in those committees, and it is fair to say that different ministers have a different approach. There have been ministers from both sides of politics who have had an appropriate approach to estimates and there have been ministers from both sides of politics who have had an inappropriate approach to estimates.

I believe that what the house needs to do, in a sensible and mature fashion, is extract that part of the process where they believe it has worked well, often because of the way in which the particular minister has conducted themselves, and then ensure that the process is amended to make that a requirement rather than a decision of the minister of the day. I also allude to the fact that, over the period of the estimates, we have our 22 colleagues in the other place who cannot participate in the process unless they are a minister. In any organisation, if we consider the parliament as an organisation, I believe that the inability of so many people to participate in a process is a waste of resources and talent. There is no doubt that it could be improved with their involvement.

Regarding the work being undertaken by our colleagues in the federal parliament, I believe that the federal Senate is used far more effectively in consideration of the budget. I am quite impressed by the process whereby, during the course of the financial year, the Senate is able to undertake hearings on specific topics, in specific areas and with specific ministers to ensure that the budget process as it is being implemented is also scrutinised. That is a valid process and one that we ought to consider adopting as part of ours. Nevertheless, while the process can be improved, it has some value.

This year I was a member of the estimates committee for the portfolios of emergency services, energy and infrastructure, and to examine the Land Management Corporation and part of the Attorney-General's portfolio, so two different ministers were involved. The first committee on which I sat related to the emergency services portfolio. Regrettably, only one and three-quarter hours were allocated to question that line. Certainly, that was not enough time, principally because of the changed flow in questions.

Initially, the government decided that it would match questions with the opposition but, on seeing that the process was becoming unnecessarily slow, the minister, to his credit, indicated a willingness for government members not to ask questions to allow the opposition a greater opportunity to do so. I made that gesture during my time as minister, and I was pleased that this minister did likewise. I know that not all ministers in the process did so, but I give credit to this minister for doing just that. However, on this occasion the Chairman decided that he would ask the questions that the government members did not, and I know that the government was embarrassed by that. In fact, during that one and three-quarter hours the Chairman asked six questions, some of which required an extended response.

One of the changes I believe needs to be made to is to ensure that the chairmen of the committees cannot ask questions but can, of course, vacate the chair to ask them. The way the process works is that, while there is a designated committee to question the minister (three members on each side of the house), and any other member can ask questions with the concurrence of the chair, the important part of that process is the concurrence of the chair. If the chair is giving itself concurrence to ask questions, I believe it has a conflict making such a decision and that it is important to amend standing orders to ensure that the chair vacates that position for those questions to be asked. As a consequence, at the end of the examination of the emergency services portfolio, the opposition had more than 30 questions it did not have the opportunity to ask. We have taken advantage of questions on notice to ensure that they are asked.

I note with some disappointment that this year questioning on the emergency services portfolio did not include the Ambulance Service, and the reason was that the government,

in its wisdom (or, I would argue, lack thereof), has moved the Ambulance Service into the bowels of the Human Services Department. Mr Speaker, you and I are both familiar with what happened to the Ambulance Service the last time that health department bureaucrats managed to get it by the throat. Indeed, they not only held the service by the throat but also tightened their grip, to the extent that they started to strangle it. The service became an incredibly inefficient organisation; volunteers started to leave in droves; there were all sorts of union battles between paid staff and volunteers; and, a once fine Ambulance Service became shameful at that time under a Labor government through the then health department.

It concerns me that the same bureaucrats again have the Ambulance Service by its throat. As I have indicated to this house on previous occasions, I will continue to observe what occurs vigilantly and, every time I have areas of concern in relation to the Ambulance Service I will continue to rise in this house and highlight them. Already, I am advised that the Ambulance Service is most unhappy. A large number of staff in senior positions are starting to leave, and volunteers are concerned about what the Labor government will do to them this time. We saw the way the Ambulance Service was treated as an irrelevance in the budget papers. In fact, it was a hard task to find a reference to it.

I am pleased that the Minister for Health is in the chamber while I make these comments, because she can take on board the fact that there were absolutely no highlights and no objectives for the Ambulance Service in the 2004 budget papers. That is the shameful way in which this once fine service is being treated. I have no doubt that, under the hands of this minister, who has already demonstrated her poor grasp of the health portfolio, we will see the Ambulance Service slip dreadfully from where it has been in the past.

The next area in which I was involved in questioning was that of energy, followed by infrastructure and the Land Management Corporation. As members of this chamber know, I am not one to hand out credit to the Minister for Infrastructure but, in relation to the estimates process, he determined that government members would ask very few questions to enable the opposition the maximum opportunity to ask theirs—largely, I suggest, as a result of the experience of the emergency services estimates. As a consequence, we were able to question the minister extensively and, to the best of his ability, he answered the questions; where he was unable to do so, he undertook to bring information back. That is what we expect from this process, so I give credit to the minister for the way in which he conducted himself in relation to that questioning.

However, I cannot give such credit to the Attorney-General in the estimates process. I asked him questions in relation to the import of a royal commission, or an inquiry with the powers of a royal commission, into the abuse of children in state care.

We have heard the Attorney-General tell this chamber that a royal commission would cost the taxpayer \$30 million and, as such, would be a waste of money. I was keen to find out from the Attorney-General where that information came from, and in my 15 years in this chamber I have never been so appalled by an answer from a minister. The Attorney-General told us in the committee that the source of his information about the costing for a royal commission came from a silks' dinner—he got his information from a dinner party. A dinner party of QCs told the Attorney-General that a royal commission would cost \$30 million. On that point, understandably, and quite rightly, I started to challenge the

Attorney-General, and suggested that surely he was not serious that he obtained this information from a dinner party of QCs. Then the Attorney indicated, after consulting with an officer behind him, that it was information that corresponded to that given to him by his chief executive, Kate Lennon.

I then said to the Attorney, 'If your chief executive, Kate Lennon, gave you this information about the costings of a royal commission, surely that information was in writing and, if so, can you table a copy for the committee?' The committee was then told that the information was given to the Attorney verbally. So, there was nothing in writing—and how convenient. We are left with the fact that the Attorney's principle source of advice about the \$30 million cost for a royal commission into the very serious issue of abuse of children, who were supposed to be under the protection of the state, came from a dinner of QCs.

I am not doubting the experience of those QCs to give advice, not for one minute, but it all depends upon the information they were given as to what the response is. So, I then said to the Attorney, 'What parameters were given at this dinner party for these costings to be determined?' Did the Attorney talk about a wide-reaching inquiry or did he indicate a more specific, narrow terms of reference with time frame inquiry? Did he ask the QCs at the dinner party, when they were making these recommendations to the Attorney, whether or not an inquiry that was only into children who were in state care and places like McNallys or Lochiel Park—whether an inquiry into people in that sort of institutional care, with a specific term of reference—would, in fact, have been put to the QCs. The Attorney told me that he did not put that to them.

So, at the end of it we are left with this: the Attorney-General has told this house that it would cost \$30 million for a royal commission into abuse of children in government care but the source of the Attorney-General's advice was verbally from his chief executive, nothing in writing, and from a dinner party of QCs. I would have thought that the Attorney-General was beholden to this parliament to provide it with accurate, well-researched information. It disgusts me that this government has dismissed out of hand a royal commission into a very serious issue, and now, on the Attorney-General's own admission, it has not even done its homework properly about the costs. That is something about which every member of parliament, and indeed every South Australian, ought be concerned.

I then asked the Attorney-General if an inquiry was being considered, and he confirmed that there was one. I asked: if an inquiry was held would such an inquiry offer the powers of a royal commission, in that protection would be provided to witnesses who came forward to give evidence? Those witnesses could thus give evidence in the knowledge that anonymity could be preserved if necessary, in the knowledge that it could be in camera if necessary, but, importantly, in the knowledge that they could not be victimised or otherwise threatened. At least the Attorney-General indicated that, yes, that would be the case—but, of course, if an inquiry is held.

This is a serious and topical issue and there are very good reasons for holding a royal commission or an inquiry with judicial powers, the powers of a royal commission, into abuse of children in state care. The Catholic church has had its inquiry, the Anglican church has had its inquiry, and the government have been dismissive of one, but they are now considering it, but we now know the source of the advice as to the cost is from a dinner for QCs.

Mr Speaker, I hope the government is going to be far more serious about this issue, because as you and I know, this is an incredibly serious issue. The Premier today is challenging one of my colleagues, the member for Unley, to take information to the police. One of the problems, as many members of parliament know, is that some of these people are scared to take information in that way. They are scared of intimidation after the police start investigation. They want the protection of an inquiry to be able to bring their evidence forward. As we have seen with the Anglican Church, this information did not go to the police in the first instance. It has now gone to the police as a result of the inquiry. There is no doubt that if this government does the right thing, the correct thing, the honourable thing, the decent thing, on behalf of all of the victims who have been abused in state care over the years, they will hold such an inquiry, their victims will be afforded proper protection, and there is no doubt that there will be police investigations after the event. At the very least this is what must happen.

I got the impression in questioning the Attorney-General that he is a torn man. I got the impression that the Attorney wants to have an inquiry but someone in his government is stopping him. So, if he wants to have the inquiry, all strength to him, for I hope his will is able to prevail on the day. For an inquiry will be held, whether this government does so willingly or whether it is dragged kicking and screaming, it will be done. It will be done because it is right, it is just, and because there are victims in our community who must have a right to be heard, and a right to be heard with appropriate protection, knowing that their concerns will be acted upon and the perpetrators of these crimes will be brought to justice.

I will close by referring to some economic history. A number of ministers during the estimates process endeavoured to talk about the parlous economic circumstances that the Labor Party inherited on coming to office. That sticks in the throat of Liberal members of parliament. How short do they expect the memories of our community to be? I remind the house, yet again, that when the Liberal government was elected in 1993, we inherited a \$9 400 million from the Labor Party.

We inherited a superannuation fund for government employees that was terribly underfunded. We inherited an electricity system, right back then in 1993, that was in a mess for which no forward planning of any substance had been undertaken, where there was a new generation capacity needed, which was not being delivered. We inherited the fallout from the State Bank that was part of that \$9 400 million debt. The State Bank losses totalled some \$3 300 million. A number of my colleagues have detailed today some of the ridiculous projects that that bank embarked upon. We now have, as Premier of our state, an individual who is unique in many ways. Some of that uniqueness relates to the State Bank. The Premier is the only member of this House of Assembly who sat around the cabinet table when the State Bank went under.

The Premier is the only member of this parliament who rose and moved a motion in this house commending the management of the State Bank for its entrepreneurial and managerial ability and, more particularly, for commending Tim Marcus Clark. I shudder every time I recall that now ludicrous speech by the man who is now Premier. If that is an example of the economic ability that now heads our state, particularly as we move through this budget estimates process, then God help South Australians for certainly the Premier will not be able to.

I have previously outlined at length my concern with the smoke and mirrors tricks of the budget that has been detailed. However, I am particularly concerned at the very premature announcements in relation to capital works projects. We now have capital works announcements that extend beyond March 2006 and the next election. In watching the way this Premier works with the media—or rather, how he works the media—I have observed on many occasions that he believes unless something is announced a multitude of times, the public do not hear it. We now have that within the budget process: announce something for 2006 or 2007 in the 2004 budget, and keep announcing it each year thereafter and then people will think that it is being done. I do not believe that South Australians will be fooled by such a childish strategy.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY secured the adjournment of the debate.

HEALTH, MOBILE COUNSELLING SERVICE

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: In answer to a question from the member for Finnis during estimates, DHS officer Ms Roxanne Ramsey said that funding for a mobile counselling service was being provided by the Wakefield and Mid-North health regions. This is incorrect. It should have been the Mid-North and Northern and Far-Western health regions.

TARGETED EXPLORATION INITIATIVE SA

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: In answer to a question from the member for MacKillop during Estimates Committee B on Friday 18 June 2004, my colleague the Minister for Mineral Resources Development advised that the TEISA 2020 program—that is, Targeted Exploration Initiative SA—has gone up from \$0.2 million from last year to a total of \$1.8 million in 2004-05. I can advise the house that funding has increased by \$0.2 million, but the minister has subsequently been advised that the figure for 2004-05 is \$1.5 million with the amount increasing to \$1.7 million in 2005-06, and \$1.9 million in 2006-07.

PRIMARY PRODUCE (FOOD SAFETY SCHEMES) BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

[Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 2 p.m.]

MATHWIN, Mr J., DEATH

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

That the House of Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Mr John Mathwin, OAM, former member of the House of Assembly, and places on record its appreciation of his long and meritorious service; and that as a mark of respect to his memory the sitting of the house be suspended until the ringing of the bells.

John Mathwin served in this chamber for 15 years, from 1970 until 1985, representing people in the seat of Glenelg. He was born in England in 1919 and was a master painter by trade. He had served in Europe with the Royal Engineers, 15th Scottish Division. In fact, he was a member of the Normandy Veterans Association. In 1951, he came to Australia with his first wife Gladys and the first two of their five children. John joined the Liberal Party within two years of arriving from England in 1951 and ran his first election race in the seat of Bonython in 1955. Sadly, Gladys Mathwin died suddenly at the age of 42 when John was Mayor of Brighton, and his then 14-year old daughter became Lady Mayoress.

He served 15 years on the Brighton council, including five as Mayor, before entering parliament. He became the member for Glenelg in 1970 and remarried in 1972, to Clarice Middleton, but she too died only eight months later. John served his local community in this place for some 15 years. After his seat was abolished in a redistribution, he eventually won preselection for the new seat of Bright after four tied ballots and an appeal. He was not called 'the great survivor' for nothing. However, John lost his seat at the 1985 election to Labor's Derek Robertson. At the time, he reflected on his loss by saying, 'I'll catch up on a lot of mates and work I haven't been able to do around my home.' Looking back on his term, he said he believed he had been a good, sincere, hard-working politician. To quote him again:

I took Glenelg from a seat with a 1.3 per cent margin to one with a 7.5 per cent margin. You couldn't do much better than that.

I was not fortunate enough to know John Mathwin but, judging from the tributes since his passing, he was a much-loved partner, father and grandfather. He seemed to be a real community person. His retirement from this place did not mean retirement at all. He served on the committee of the Brighton Senior Citizens Club from its inception in 1972 and was chairman of the Brighton Meals on Wheels for some 30 years. He was a dedicated board member and Friend of Minda for more than 33 years, and in its tribute to him it says:

A gentleman who will be remembered not only for his outstanding community work and contribution but also his wit, warmth and kindness.

He was also a former president and patron of Somerton Surf Life Saving Club and a long-term associate and supporter of the Brighton Lacrosse Club. He was a member of the Rotary Club of Glenelg from 1964 until 1991. In 2001, John Mathwin was awarded a medal in the General Division of the Order of Australia for his service to local government, the South Australian parliament (as an MP for 15 years), coastal protection, the Good Neighbour Council and Meals on Wheels. John was happy to describe himself as a conservative.

Again to quote John:

The conservative label is never an embarrassment to me. There is nothing wrong in conservative things. Fear of the tag is quite wrong.

John was quoted as saying that he saw the family as the basic unit of society and that he was concerned for the needs of people. Again, to quote John, 'It makes you worry about people who do not worry.' On that note, I would like to pass on my sincerest condolences, and those of the government, to John's partner Cecily and his five children and grandchildren.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I second the Deputy Premier's condolence motion and express our deep regret at the passing of John Mathwin OAM. John played a significant role in our community as a member of the South Australian Parliament, in local government and in a range of community bodies over

many years. Mr Mathwin spent most of his youth in Liverpool, England, with his mother. He was an aspiring actor and enthusiastic member of an amateur theatre group. Any hope of his fulfilling his dream of becoming an entertainer, however, was dashed by the onset of World War II. It was during this period that he diligently served in the army as an engineer in both the Battle of Britain and the Normandy landing. He was on the beach on D Day and was among the first troops to cross the Rhine River and enter Germany as the war drew to a close.

After the war, Mr Mathwin, his wife and two children migrated to Australia, where three more children were born. On arrival in Sydney, the migrant family travelled by rail to Adelaide, living for a time in one of the migrant hostels that were located at various sites in and near Adelaide. John Mathwin and his young family arrived here with £80 and a couple of trunks as their possessions. But, more important than the material things they brought with them were the hopes and aspirations of this remarkable man, then in his 30s. He used some of his £80 to buy a block of land at Seacliff, to which, I am told, he and his young family travelled at weekends to make the bricks that he later used to build a modest family home. I am told he died peacefully in that same house last Friday.

Throughout his 50 years in our state, John Mathwin maintained an unshakeable confidence in what this country and this state have to offer. At the same time, he made a continuing contribution to the community in an astonishing range of areas. For many years, this former migrant greeted each migrant ship that arrived in Adelaide and was well known for putting up new arrivals in the Seacliff home that he had built. He served Meals on Wheels, Minda and Rotary and entered the political arena in 1960, when he was elected to the Brighton council. He had been persuaded to become a councillor after securing a contract to paint the council chambers. In later life, on several occasions when I spoke to him, John reminded me that he went to Jamestown to paint my father's house at one stage as well. Within five years of being elected to the council, he was appointed mayor of Brighton, a position he held for five years.

Tragically, John Mathwin's wife, Gladys, died during his first term as mayor, and his second wife, Clarice, died only eight months after they married in 1972. He raised his five children on his own, juggling his responsibilities as a father with his responsibilities to the community.

He was first elected to parliament in 1970 as a member for the then new seat of Glenelg. He was incessantly proud of his electorate, boasting of its charms throughout his maiden speech to the parliament in July 1970. In the 15 years he served this parliament, Mr Mathwin proved to be a passionate and determined member of the Liberal Party. As a politician, he was well known for taking gutsy moral stances. In May 1983 he spoke for three hours and 10 minutes, presenting a strong case against the establishment of a casino in South Australia. When asked for his views on the move to legalise marijuana, his response was, most emphatically, 'No way. I'll fight it tooth and nail.'

John Mathwin obviously was unfazed by any backlash for his strong beliefs or being labelled a conservative. In turn, he earned the respect and admiration of colleagues of both political persuasions. His determination to succeed in the political arena was evident as he battled to hold a marginal seat, being close to losing preselection a number of times. The most memorable occasion, of course, was in 1984 when he eventually defeated Dick Glazbrook for preselection in the

seat of Brighton after an eight month struggle. Ironically, it was in this election that his parliamentary career came to an end, when he was narrowly defeated by the Labor candidate for Brighton, Derek Robertson.

However, John's great influence in the community was far from over. Reflecting the regard in which he was held, he was encouraged to return to local government at the time of the Brighton and Glenelg councils merger. He subsequently served as a councillor and deputy mayor of the new City of Holdfast Bay. Among his many community contributions, John Mathwin served as Chairman of the Metropolitan Seaside Councils Committee, was a member of the Brighton RSL and Somerton Surf Lifesaving clubs, served as President of the Surf Lifesaving Association of South Australia and, as I have already mentioned, served on the board of Minda and was a member of Brighton Meals on Wheels and the Glenelg Rotary Club.

John Mathwin has been described by fellow parliamentarians as a true gentleman, loyal to his colleagues, dedicated to the cause, and a team player. I believe he was immensely proud of the Order of Australia medal that he received in 2001 for services to the community, local government and the South Australian parliament. Clearly, John Mathwin was a very worthy recipient of this honour.

John Mathwin OAM shared his later years with his partner Cecily. I am sure all members present will join with me in paying respect to him and acknowledging the commendable contribution which John made to the South Australian community. Mr Speaker, I ask that you convey to Mr Mathwin's family and his partner our deepest sympathies and our admiration and gratitude for the role that he played in our state and our community.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader): I, too, support the condolence motion. I am delighted to welcome to the parliament this afternoon members of John's family, including Cecily. Yesterday, they held a marvellous service, and I am pleased that they are able to share this moment with members of parliament as we pay our respects to John Mathwin.

I would like to touch briefly on some of John's great characteristics. First, he was absolutely dedicated to his family. He loved his family, and his children and grandchildren were always number one on every occasion. He was so proud of them and what they have achieved, and all of that was highlighted yesterday during the service. John was also very dedicated to his local community of Brighton, Glenelg and along the foreshore of Adelaide. That is reflected very much in the fact that he took on the role of a councillor at Brighton and then mayor. He was their local member of parliament and he represented them for 15 years in the House of Assembly.

In later life, he took on the role of being a member of council again and then Deputy Mayor of the Council of Holdfast Shores. John had a very close affinity with that area of Adelaide, which he loved. He was passionate about it, he would talk about it whenever he had the opportunity, and he would certainly stand up and fight for it. He enjoyed people. He enjoyed being with people: mixing with people and talking with people. Of course, that is why he was so good at being a councillor, a mayor and a member of parliament.

John had one addiction and that was to a microphone and public speaking. He loved to get up and speak. I recall, as I am sure does the member for Stuart (Hon. Graham Gunn), the

numerous occasions in this house when John would give a very passionate speech on something. As has been said, he gave one very long speech, but I assure members that he gave many speeches all of which were passionate about what he believed in, what he stood for and the values that he held close in life.

He was a good bloke. Those who remember John from the Liberal Party room and who mixed with him regularly around the parliament would all say that he enjoyed life. He loved to share a joke, he always had a smile on his face, and he wanted to share so many things with his fellow members of parliament. That, in itself, became one of the great hallmarks of John in this house.

Yesterday, many people celebrated the life of John Mathwin. It was a celebration of what he had achieved, of what he gave to other people, and therefore what he stood for in life. I want to particularly thank the family for the very open and friendly way in which they talked about John, his life and his achievements and what he meant to each of them. Each of the five children spoke at the service of the different ways in which John had affected their life.

I think it is also appropriate to look at the people who attended the service representing the broader community. There were representatives of: the RSL, the Lodge, Minda Homes, the Good Neighbour Council—the point was made that every time a new ship of immigrants came to South Australia, John would go down to the port and welcome the ship and those new immigrants to this state—Meals on Wheels and the Normandy Veterans Association. You always saw John when it came to 11 November, or on Anzac Day you would see him laying a wreath on behalf of the Normandy Veterans Association. What a proud moment it must have been to think back 60 years later as to what was achieved on the beaches of Normandy. I refer also to the Liberal Party, the various members of councils, both the Brighton Council and latterly the Holdfast Shores Council, Rotary, lacrosse, surf lifesaving—just to mention a number of them. John took a very active interest in all those groups, and participated very strongly indeed.

To all of his family, his children, his grandchildren, Cecily go our condolences. But, at the same time, remember the very happy memories that all of us have of John Mathwin, of his achievements and what he stood for. We will always remember that beret cap, and the cheeky grin that went with it.

The Hon. W.A. MATTHEW (Bright): Those of us who knew John Mathwin will know that he would have been very pleased with today. He would have been very pleased to use the opportunity to use, in his name, yet another slice of parliamentary time! As has already been indicated, John was a good user of slices of parliamentary time. Indeed, his speech on the casino—while I was not here at the time—has become almost legendary in its stature. I am not actually sure how long that speech went; the Leader of the Opposition says that, from research that he has done, it was three hours and 10 minutes. But, certainly, in the discussions that I have had with others, they were talking more in the realm of seven and a half to eight hours. Whatever Sir, it was clearly a long period of time. It was John's view that standing orders might have had to be amended after that because of what he achieved during that speech.

John told me that he knew that he could not stop the casino bill going through but, despite that, he said he could 'bloody-well make them wait,' and wait he made them. That

was just an example of the passion that John took to his role. John was always passionate about people; he was passionate about the people in his family; he was passionate about the people in his community; he was passionate about the people alongside whom he fought in World War II; and he was passionate about his friends. That passion extended into everything he did in life.

John was both a visionary and a worker, and that is often an unusual combination. But, John was able to take that combination to many advantages in the community. Probably, the most recent final example of his passion and work is the memorial to the fallen which is at the end of Anzac Highway in the Holdfast Shores development. It was John who took that to the city of Holdfast Bay, and who was determined that there should be a memorial at the end of Anzac Highway; and what an appropriate place for it to be. On receiving the nod from council that it was a good idea, I remember being told by a couple of councillors that the very next day John Mathwin was scouring the quarries of Adelaide for the right stone for the memorial. Having got that nod, he was determined that it was going to happen and there were going to be no excuses. The memorial has been built and is in place, and is there as a result of his vision, energy and work ethic.

The changes to electoral boundaries that occurred for the 1985 election brought around a rethink from members of parliament as to which seats they would contest. John Mathwin sat down with his colleague John Oswald, and it was agreed that John Oswald would contest the seat of Morphett which included a large part of John Mathwin's seat of Glenelg, and that John Mathwin would, instead, contest the seat of Brighton, half of which was the old Brighton council. That was a council that John Mathwin had so capably represented as mayor. However, he was aware, of course, that half of the electorate was an area that would not have known him well, and it included suburbs such as Hallett Cove and O'Sullivan Beach. He was well aware that a big effort lay ahead.

I first met John Mathwin about 20 years ago when he was doorknocking in the electorate of Brighton. In fact, he was doorknocking with another former colleague, the Hon. Jamie Irwin, a past president of the Upper House. In those days, Jamie Irwin was a candidate for the Legislative Council, and he was also John Mathwin's campaign manager. As a result of that doorknocking, I had an opportunity to talk to John and Jamie. At that time, I was president of a residents' association, the Hallett Cove Progress Association, and was not a member of a political party, although I did advise both men that I had been a former Young Liberal president during my university days. I expressed concern to John that he got a late start. As has been detailed, the pre-selection of John Mathwin as the candidate for Brighton was delayed and that meant that he had a lot to do in a very short period. I indicated that the Labor candidate, Derek Robinson, seemed to be a personable sort of fellow and that he was certainly getting around the area very quickly and was winning respect. I offered to introduce John to locals in the southern part of the area. When I was doing that, I came to know John very well, and we became very good friends. As has been indicated, unfortunately, John was unsuccessful at the 1985 election, largely due, I would argue, to the short term of his candidacy.

At the age of 65, he exited politics, whilst, at the same time, insisting he still had plenty more to give to the community and, by heck, he demonstrated that statement. He turned his energy to a whole range of other things, including entering Brighton council again. When he was approached to

enter that council, knowing that the City of Holdfast Bay was to be created, such was the respect for John Mathwin, the other councillors knew that, with his energy and enthusiasm and the respect that he attracted, he would be instrumental in steering the new City of Holdfast Bay successfully forward. Indeed, he was made deputy mayor of that new council by his colleagues, and he did not disappoint them in that role in the way in which he helped steer that council forward. I know that Brian Nadilo, as the first mayor of Holdfast Bay, will be for ever grateful for the professional support that John Mathwin was able to provide to him as a former Glenelg mayor so that together they could combine those two old councils into one.

Another thing John turned his energy toward was finishing the unfinished task. John did not like losing the seat of Bright and, in John's words, he did not like turning it over to a socialist. As far as John was concerned, he had to get 'that bloody Lefty out.' So, John turned his efforts towards doing that and, unbeknown to me, John planned well in advance and was a good schemer. Some time after the election, he approached me and said, 'Lad, we need some new blood in the Liberal Party, would you like to join?' Well, initially I was not enticed to join. However, he approached me a couple of times, and eventually I did, on the understanding that it was to help them recruit younger members. Using records of John's copious notes and the people who had helped him during campaigns, we got together a new branch of the Liberal Party in 1988. The Hallett Cove branch started with 35 members, most of whom were under 45 years of age, and John was fairly pleased with that.

Then in mid-1988 he asked me whether I had thought about running for parliament, and I said, 'Maybe, one day'—I was only 30 years of age—and certainly not in the area he was looking at. I did not think the older people in the area would accept a young candidate. A few weeks later, I started receiving all these telephone calls from all these people I had never met. They all lived in the Brighton, Seacliff and Kingston Park areas, and they tended to be in the age group of 60, 70 and 80 years old. They all said that they were scouting around for a young candidate for the area and that John Mathwin had given them my name. I soon started to realise just what sort of contacts John Mathwin had. I received numerous calls and, in the end, I said, 'Okay, I will put up my hand.' I contested the seat and won it as a candidate.

However, that is not where John Mathwin's involvement stopped. First came the John Mathwin school of politics, and I was run through some very firm lessons as to how I must doorknock. I will not give away all John's tips today, but he said that I should knock on every door and I should be polite to my future voters and, therefore, I should never argue with them. He said, 'Lad, always look them in the eye so that they know you seriously mean business and that you will do the right thing for them.' He also said, 'Lad, when you knock on their door, look for the stickers on their car or on their letterbox. They're your conversation starters.' So, armed with those John Mathwin tips, and many others that I will not reveal today, I was able to start working in the area. John Mathwin's strategy was, 'Lad, you take care of the younger part of the area. I'll take care of the older part, and I'll do the introductions,' and indeed he did. He said, 'Lad, we're going to get rid of this lefty. We're not going to let this socialist stay in. Losing is not an option. It is not in your vocabulary.' I can assure you that I never raised the prospect of our not winning the seat of Bright.

As to the John Mathwin poster locations, he knew every location to put them and did not trust anyone else to do it. When the election was called in 1989, John Mathwin was out there in his vehicle with his pliers putting up posters. At that stage, he was moving well into his late sixties, but was able to put up posters at an incredibly fast rate. As to the John Mathwin campaign helpers, I have never seen such a large gathering of people in their sixties, seventies and eighties mustered in such a short period of time, and they all got on well with the younger people I brought in. Many of those helpers became my very good friends, and many have preceded John in passing.

On many occasions I had cause to ring John and advise of another mutual friend's passing, such as Dorothy Vinall, Herman Drenth, Harry Viney, Bill Kerslake, Max and Mabs Pearce and Eric Isaachsen, who were good friends to both of us and who helped us in our campaigns.

The thing I always enjoyed most about being with John Mathwin was his cheeky sense of humour and the Mathwin grin. We saw that grin initially on election night in 1989, when he insisted on poring over the booth statistics as they came in. He said, 'Lad, we've got that bloody socialist.' I was not quite that confident and was more than a little concerned. In fact, the seat of Bright was not conceded by the Labor Party until the Wednesday after the election. A lot of postal votes had to be counted and, as members know, they are counted on a daily basis in the intervening period.

A recount was also requested by the Labor Party. Wanting to see the job done to the end, John in true fashion immediately volunteered to scrutineer not one but every one of those counts. After each count, each night he came to see me and we would work through the figures. He kept saying, 'Don't worry, lad. We've got this one. We're going to do this lefty. He's out. He will concede some time during the week,' and concede he did. I had one simple telephone call from John: 'I told you so.' On election night, regardless of the tightness of the vote, in true long-term campaign style John Mathwin knew how to run those numbers.

Even after the election, the advice kept coming. John Mathwin did something in retirement that I confess to this house I never intend to do: he was an avid reader of *Hansard*. He received copies each week, and not only would he read *Hansard* but also he was never short of advice in relation to comments that were made. Some of my colleagues in this chamber—myself included—have been on the receiving end of John Mathwin's advice in relation to the wisdom of a particular comment or speech made in the house. Indeed, as recently as just four weeks ago, even though John was very ill, one of my colleagues (who will remain nameless) was chastised by him in relation to a comment he had made in the chamber. My colleague spoke to me about it, and I rang John. He was not feeling particularly well that day and was finding it difficult to breathe, but he still managed to have a chuckle. He said, 'The bugger won't make that mistake again.' So, up to the end, he was happy to hand out his advice.

At that stage, John was particularly ill. He had been diagnosed with the result of inhaling asbestos. It is somewhat ironic that, at a time when asbestos has been in the news, that was the problem from which John suffered. When I spoke to him about his illness, I always found it easy to be frank with him. I asked him his prognosis, and he said, 'Lad, it's not good. I've got no chance. It's inoperable, but we'll do what we can with the time that's left.' I do not know whether I could have been as composed as John was in that situation, and doubtless, privately, he may have shed some tears with

his family, but I was so impressed with the way in which he was able to come to terms with that issue. John's role in the community was something to admire. He was chair of the Brighton branch of Meals on Wheels up until the day he died, and I believe that he held that position for about 32 years solidly. He was a board member of Minda at the same time.

He was a councillor of the City of Brighton (now Holdfast Bay) from 1994 until 2003. He was the council representative on the metropolitan seaside council, and an ardent advocate of coastal protection, and for that reason he was also taken on board by the Coast Protection Board as a special adviser because of his extensive knowledge of matters coastal. He had been a member of the RSL since 1951. He was involved in Rotary and Probus; and he was a committee member of the Brighton Senior Citizens Club for 31 years. They are not the efforts of an ordinary man. Many people in our community do many things but it is rare to find one individual who packs so much so unselfishly into a lifetime, and particularly considering the lifetime of personal trauma John experienced, but he was still able to maintain that sense of humour and strive to represent his community.

I spoke to him just before he retired from council at the 2003 election and asked what his plans were. He said, 'Well, lad, I suppose I could retire, but if I do I am worried that I might get old. So, if I do, I had better find something else to do.' At the time, John was 82 years of age. That is something of which many people who knew John might not have been aware because age was something that you did not mention. I knew how old John was and I remember having a chat to him a few months before his 80th birthday, saying, 'John, you have got a big one coming up.' He said, 'What are you talking about?' I said, 'Well, your birthday.' He said 'It is just a birthday.' I said, 'No, it's the big birthday,' and he looked at me and he said, 'And lad, we are not going to tell anybody about it or how old I am going to be, are we?' I said, 'Well, John, it is a big one, perhaps your family will arrange something.' Well, I was delighted to be a guest at John's 80th birthday that was organised by his family and, while he was a bit grumpy about his age being revealed, I know that he was absolutely chuffed at what was a very fitting tribute to the 80 years of life of that wonderful man.

John Mathwin left the world a very decorated man. He was decorated not only for his military achievements, amongst which he was a Normandy veteran and was also in the first of the troops over the Rhine and into Germany, but he also received a number of commendations from council. I was delighted that he received the Centennial Medal in 2001 and an OAM. I do not mind volunteering that I nominated him for those latter two awards, and in true John Mathwin recognition, when I received the letter from Government House saying that he was to be awarded an OAM, I found that someone else had also nominated him, and again, it would not happen very often that nominations are received from two different areas in relation to the one individual. Finally, a reserve in the City of Holdfast Bay at Seacliff Park, the John Mathwin Reserve, was dedicated and named in John's honour a couple of years ago, and that reserve stands as a reminder to the community of his work.

John Mathwin left his mark on the world. He will be sadly missed but his family can deservedly be very proud of what he achieved. I offer, my sincere condolences to John's five children—John, Stephen, Jeanette, Peter and Kaye—their families, and also particularly to John's dear long-term friend Cecily who supported him so ably at home and gave John the chance to die at home with dignity. He will be sadly missed.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I entered this place on the same day as John Mathwin and I am pleased to say that we became firm friends. We had similar views—and that means they were right. We were somewhat slightly to the right of centre, but we were proud of it.

John Mathwin came from a very humble beginning, and he achieved great things for himself, his family and the people of this state. I think if there is one thing that stands out about John Mathwin it is that he succeeded. I listened to some of the stories he used to tell—many of them about D-Day. I recall the story he told in the lounge room not far from this chamber where, along with two or three friends, he showed me a piece of paper on which he had written the sequence of events which took place at General Montgomery's headquarters when the German high command came to surrender. He had actually written it out; his late mother typed it out. It was a piece of history. It was interesting for him to recall the attitude of General Montgomery, because the first group that came was not of high enough rank, so he sent them away to bring the senior German commanders. Obviously, that was a part of history.

John Mathwin travelled to my family home on occasions and we had many enjoyable times there. I had occasion to meet his family, and I think that the send-off that they gave him yesterday was befitting for someone who has made a very good contribution to South Australia. His family can feel justly proud of someone who succeeded. He made a good contribution to this parliament and was a worthy member of the Liberal Party. Those of us who knew him were proud to call him our friend. I sincerely hope that his predecessors follow the line and policy that he put forward because, if they do, the Liberal Party and the people of South Australia will be in good stead.

I actually sat through a fair bit of that marathon speech that John delivered. I will admit that I may not have paid a lot of attention to it, and I did not try to follow it in length because, as members would know, I am normally a person of a few words.

In conclusion, it was a pleasure to serve with John and to call him my friend, and I commend the motion to the house. I express my condolences to his family.

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): It is with pleasure that I support the motion. John Mathwin OAM truly had a remarkable life, and what a remarkable man he was! He will always be remembered with warm affection and high regard. Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending the service, and heard Stephen and Jeanette and other members of his family amongst those who spoke so magnificently as they said goodbye. I could not help recalling some of the common elements that Mr Mathwin espoused. He insisted that I call him John, which I thought was to recognise my becoming an adult but, as I learned later, it was to ensure that people did not think he was older!

Nevertheless, it gave me an opportunity to recall some of the common elements that he had with my father. They both came into the parliament at a similar time in the early 1970s. Both had had a tribe of children, and had the contemporaneous challenge of raising them in single-parent families. Both had a resistance to disclosing their age, and both had a love and passion for women. I have to say that one of them is still pursuing that! Perhaps the most obvious difference between them was that one was six feet three inches tall and, with due respect, Mr Mathwin was 5 feet something.

I recall the family holidays that we had when the Mathwin kids would come to stay. They were very active in the pursuits we got under way, usually under my father's direction. Mr Mathwin would stand safely and wisely on the verandah. Probably picking stumps and mustering sheep were skills that they have not found useful in later life. However, having seen, experienced and been part of some of the professional lives of John's children, I can say that their contributions, particularly in the worlds of education and the law, have been exemplary. They are a great tribute to John.

Humour was always foremost in Mr Mathwin's mind. I recall an occasion when I (probably under age) was driving Mr Mathwin to Flinders Chase on fairly treacherous roads. I allowed the vehicle to get into a spin in the gravel and we did a 360-degree turn—I have never confessed this to anybody. In true humour, Mr Mathwin, as he gripped the front dashboard and went white with terror said, 'Well, at least we are pointing in the right direction.'

He was certainly a man before his time, and I would like to acknowledge, as I am sure others will, that Mr Mathwin made a fine contribution to this parliament, and on many very important issues. Even at the time of entering the parliament in July 1970, after spending many years in local government, he had recognised the significance of the future of tourism in his maiden speech to this parliament: it was a way of the future. He, of course, presented Glenelg and its environs as being a premier area for that, but he spoke of it at length and with passion. He recognised the importance of local government getting into services for the aged: a remarkable, fortuitous area to consider. He opposed compulsory voting for local government: it remains voluntary. He supported 18-year olds getting the vote: that law occurred.

He supported the Surf Life Saving Association receiving state government funding: that has occurred. And he certainly wished to support many other organisations in his local community. He advocated the importance of consumer protection law and, as we know, in the early 1970s the Consumer Protection Act and Consumer Credit Act followed. His speech is of some note if you understand Mr Mathwin's history. He described the importance of protecting women who went to ladies' hairdressing salons from being charged more than they were entitled to be for a haircut, that is, for the extras that are added on for shampoo, conditioners and the like. He insisted that this was a very important issue in his electorate, a very important area of reform. But if you understand where Mr Mathwin was coming from, as was noted yesterday at his service, he was a widower and he had the perfect seat: it was full of widows.

Mrs HALL (Morialta): I, too, rise to make a few remarks in support of the condolence motion moved by the Deputy Premier and supported by the Leader of the Opposition. I would like to support a number of the remarks already made by my colleagues and will not repeat a number of John's many achievements. I would like to extend my sympathies and those of my husband to his family. John Mathwin OAM was a very special person, in my view. Not only was he a loving and devoted husband, father and particularly proud grandfather, but he was one of those rare individuals who could honestly have said that he devoted a lifetime of service to his local community. I well recall many stories of the 1970 election, when John Mathwin and his friend and colleague Heini Becker, the member for Hanson, were elected for the Liberal Party, and they very proudly extolled the virtues of

these two individuals having established or re-established a Liberal foothold on the coast of this great state.

Some of the stories, I am sure, will be told over coming years, of some of the outrageous campaign activities that both Heini Becker and John Mathwin got up to. I must say that my husband, who was then the leader of the Liberal Party, was actively involved in a number of them, which I will not repeat here today. Like many of our colleagues, I was very proud to have joined hundreds of people yesterday, including a number of family and friends, at the Heysen Chapel at Centennial Park. They were there to pay tribute to a lifetime of achievement and to celebrate what has already been referred to as an extraordinary life.

As many have already outlined his contribution in terms of local government activities, I shall not repeat that, but I would like to make a few remarks about his contribution as a state member of parliament, first for Glenelg and then for Bright, between 1970 and 1985. I thought many of them were captured in what can only be considered to be a very moving service yesterday, and I am sure that everyone came away from that service with some very cherished memories of John Mathwin OAM.

Some of the stories relating to this chamber, in my view, provide a snapshot of a very mischievous sense of humour and an utter sense of irreverence to himself, sometimes to his colleagues, but usually to the government at that time (because, as has already been said, he came into parliament in 1970 so he experienced all too short a period as a member of a government). That extraordinary long speech that he made on the establishment of the casino has already been referred to (I think the official timing is something like three hours and 10 minutes). After he had completed his remarks, he endured a great deal of chivving from colleagues on both sides and he feigned a great deal of hurt at being accused of being a filibuster.

I can remember that on future occasions he was quite offended when he was called the Liberal Party's chief filibuster. He corrected *Hansard* at one stage, I understand, when he said that he was always happy to speak—usually with a microphone, and preferably with a microphone. He would speak anywhere, any time, and on any subject, but his preference was in this chamber. However, he was emphatic that he was not a filibusterer—he was a 'filler-inner', and a very good one at that, and he loudly proclaimed that he would accept that nickname and answer to it in future years.

I will relate another John Mathwin story of which I am particularly fond. He was always superb to new members on both sides—albeit he did not like the socialists, as we have already heard—but he was particularly friendly to new members on his own side. One former colleague tells a story about his coming in to hear one of the early speeches of a new member. It was a very well-researched speech and he was determined to deliver this particularly important speech on behalf of his electorate and on behalf of the Liberal Party. He stood up and was conscious that he had a 20 minute time limit so he was speaking very quickly (not quite as quickly as does the member for Morphet sometimes, but for those days he was speaking particularly quickly). So, John Mathwin sidled up to him and very gently whispered in his ear, as I understand it, that he ought to slow down because 'You don't need to hurry through addresses but you must improve your delivery; and please remember, laddie, that, as no-one is listening, you may as well enjoy it'. That put off the new member entirely and he sat down just a few minutes afterwards.

I think history and many of the clippings in the library will show what an active local member John was. He was very passionate about a number of particular issues, but I think it needs to be said that his commitment to young people was very real and he pursued that as an issue right throughout his parliamentary career. He was one of the early advocates for coastal protection. He was deeply involved at the time (which is now particularly relevant) in the controversy over building and the height of buildings on the Glenelg foreshore. I think it has often gone unrecognised that it was John Mathwin who moved the first environmental impact statement bill in this house, which is quite prophetic, in my view, given what has happened since.

One of the more prophetic things (and I was quite surprised to read about it when I was checking through the clippings) is that, in October 1985, he gave a very poignant speech, in hindsight, about the difficulties and the double standards of the building code at the time. He was very concerned that homes were being built in Hallett Cove, in a rapidly developing area, from materials which flouted building regulations, and he was particularly concerned at the use of fibro board. As we all know, the illness that finally claimed John's life was particularly related to that issue.

I know that this has caused a lot of amusement on the other side, but there is one quote of John's that I want to put on the record because he was very proud of this. During the 1973 Address in Reply, again speaking about his concerns about socialists, John said:

The difference between socialism and communism is slight. The only difference is that socialism takes a bit longer to achieve the same result. If members opposite were honest with themselves, they would follow the example of socialists in Italy who, when there is an election, include the hammer and sickle on their street banners.

The interjections during that speech were fairly significant and very loud and caused the speaker of the time a great deal of distress as he attempted to restore order to the chamber.

My husband and I were privileged to join John and his family and friends at his 80th birthday party. As has already been said, he was particularly concerned not to have the number 80 written on any card or cake. However, by the end of the afternoon I must say that he was certainly enjoying himself, and we found it difficult to believe that he was celebrating 80 years of life. We all acknowledged yesterday that John died just two days short of being able to celebrate what would have been his 85th birthday. There was absolutely no question that he was a dedicated and loving family man, and we know that his family and friends will miss him terribly. He was not a spectator of life but always a very active participant. I am sure that all of his family and friends will share wonderful memories of a very special person who lived a long and extraordinary life.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to support this motion. I was going to say that I will miss John Mathwin, but I think he is using the member for Morialta as a medium and still giving me advice. I will try to slow down for the sake of his memory. I have to confess that it was me whom John Mathwin phoned a few weeks ago and gave some advice. This was not the first time that he had given me advice. I think Heini Becker sometimes played tag with him. John Mathwin was a very important part of my life before I came into this place and once I was here, and I certainly want to pass on my condolences to Cecily and John's family. John always gave full and frank and very clear advice. I will not commit again the offence of which I was guilty a few weeks

ago, because I know that John will be watching and that, if not through the member for Morialta, through someone else he will send me the same message, so I will not commit that offence again.

John's advice was always well-intentioned, and I always took it on board. In most cases it was constructive advice, not a reprimand, and he would often say, 'Keep going'. As the member for Bright said, John always called you 'lad' or 'laddie'. He introduced me once at a function and he made a mistake with my name, as sometimes happens. Afterwards, he came up to me and said, 'Laddie, don't you worry about that, because they will all remember your name now.' John always had an answer; a way of getting around things. He was a consummate politician and a consummate gentleman. He told me how he came to Australia as a Pom, and I said, 'I'm a Pom', and we had a bit of a chat about where we came from. I admired John's efforts on arrival in Australia in building the bricks and then the house in which he and his family eventually lived and in which he died. He was a master painter.

My wife and I were restoring an old house at the Bay, and one day John came around to look at the house. We were having a few drinks, and John disappeared. I found him in one of the rooms which we were still finishing off. He was running his hands along the walls, and I asked what he was looking at. He said 'Well, I can't find the joins in the wallpaper'. I said 'That's because there aren't any, John; it is all stencilled'. My wife had put nearly 1 000 hand stencils on this wall. From then on, he just did not want to talk to me because he realised that my wife was the talent in that area. So, he spoke to my wife and I was relegated to being told how to conduct myself in the world of politics.

John was a great guy. He was a good bloke and a very passionate man. Certainly, as the member for Glenelg and in his other roles in state and local government, he gave 110 per cent all the time. There was not a function that I attended both as a candidate and as the member for Morphett that John was not at. John was always supportive of the community. What other members have said about him today is just the tip of the iceberg of what John did and who he was. He was a fantastic bloke who will be very sadly missed. I know that in all the organisations with which I deal today, I have never heard a bad word about John Mathwin. He was a great bloke, he will be sadly missed and I pass on my condolences to his family.

Ms BREUER (Giles): I rise today to support this motion. Yesterday I had the honour of representing the government at John Mathwin's funeral. At the time and since then, a number of members opposite have asked me why I was there and did I know John Mathwin. I cannot say that I knew John very well; I certainly did not know him at all, really. I met him a number of years ago, but after listening today and being at the funeral yesterday, I feel like I do know him. He certainly was an incredible person. The reason why I attended the funeral and why I am standing here today is that I did meet John Mathwin many years ago—probably some 30 years ago. I was trying to work out exactly when it would have been. To the consternation of my family, one of my cousins, Dean, became involved with a young woman who was the daughter of a Liberal politician. At the time this was amazing. Here we were, this Labor family—

Members interjecting:

Ms BREUER: A socialist family with a hammer and sickle on our doorway! We came from a long line of Cornish miners. I remember that when I was a child, my father,

Dean's father, my dear Uncle Ken, used to talk about politics. Our grandfather used to talk politics, but it was always the Labor version of politics, of course.

Ms Rankine: As opposed to?

Ms BREUER: Absolutely! We could lay claim, although it was not talked about very much at the time—and I only realised this recently—that our great, great uncle was a member of the upper house in Western Australia and had helped form the AWU in Western Australia. Family members had, at times, helped out in elections all over the place for the socialist parties, of course. And so, to hear that this cousin of ours had become involved with a daughter of a member of the Liberal Party, and a Liberal member of parliament on top of that, was pretty amazing. It is probably one of the biggest scandals ever to hit the Raymond family at the time and since. However, I have to say that eventually we did get over it.

Yesterday, it was interesting when I met with my cousins again, including Dean's sister and brother. We were talking about Dean's marrying into this Liberal Party family. They said 'You know, we were all Labor people. He was the one who turned his back on it.' At the time Dean said, 'Oh, yeah, I married into it; I had to.' This was amazing for us. I was very pleased to have been present yesterday and to hear the comments about John Mathwin. He certainly must have been an incredible person. One of the things that impressed me the most was the fact that he was a single father for so many years—and I do I remember hearing about that at the time. He obviously did a wonderful job with his family, because the comments from his daughter Jeanette, his son and other family members reflected what a great person and family member he was.

Whatever we do in this place or in our lives, our family is the most important thing in our lives and that is by whom we need to be remembered. I have heard people being talked about in this place after they have died and I think: 'Why do good people always die? Why don't any bad people ever die?' We only ever hear about the saints. When we talk about deceased people in this place, they all turn into saints or people who have performed miracles. We say what wonderful people they were. We know damn well that they were not, but we always say that they were. Consequently, I think that it does not matter what I do in my life, when I die, they will still say what a great person I was because that is what happens in here. However, in this case I know that it is for real and that he was a wonderful person. From hearing his children and family talk about him yesterday, you know that that was the case. If I felt that my children would talk about me like that when I die, I would be so pleased because they certainly do not talk about me like that now!

I say to the family that my family expresses its sadness at your loss. It was a pleasure seeing everyone again yesterday and to realise how proud you are of your father and grandfather. I was very happy to represent the government at the funeral yesterday.

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I, too, wish to express my deepest sympathies to John Mathwin's family. It was a pleasure to serve for some three years with John when I first came into this house. As so many other members have said, he made new members feel very much at home. He certainly helped me overcome some of my fears about the unknowns, and he encouraged me to speak on a subject when I tended often to prefer not to say anything. It was very interesting to be here and to be part and parcel of that debate when John spoke for so many hours, and it is something I will not forget. There is

no doubt that we held similar values and beliefs, and there is no doubt that John lived his life to the fullest. I think it is quite remarkable that he retired from parliament at age 65; but, boy, for the next 19 years he still undertook so many things. Perhaps there is a lesson in that for all of us.

I was very privileged to be present yesterday at the celebration of John's life. I guess of all the things that hit me yesterday at that celebration of John Mathwin's life was when his son Stephen said that John was born to a 17-year-old mother. When his mother fell pregnant at the age of 17, the father (a Swiss waiter) left the country immediately, never to be seen again. His mother was disgraced, and both his and his mother's life was very difficult. If we think about it, if he had been conceived today, what chance would he have had of being born? Thank goodness, John was born back in 1919, because how many organisations would have been that much poorer in the subsequent time? This parliament would not have had the benefit of his contribution, and certainly none of his family members would be here today. To John Mathwin we say a big thank you: you made a great contribution to this parliament and to this state.

The SPEAKER: I, too, knew John Mathwin very well, although probably not as well as some of the people who have spoken but certainly well enough to count him amongst my friends. As other honourable members have mentioned, he was, first and foremost, a man who gave commitments and enjoyed delivering whatever it was, wherever it was. Life was about doing something useful. Regardless of the organisation to which he belonged and to which he pledged his support, you could rely on John. Those stories which I could tell, I suppose, are pretty much the same in character as the kind one might have told about the late Gil Langley or the late Des Corcoran: many of them not quite suitable for the record here. Nonetheless, he was an amusing man who embraced life and lived it completely. He was a fine example to those around him, and I am sure honourable members would quite happily have me remark that he was a fine example to his family whom, in turn, are a memorial to his life and what he stood for. Altogether, he was someone who always sought out the place where he could have the greatest beneficial effect. He was not a person who was shy to participate in discussion with people whom he knew were very much less fortunate than the majority of us. He sought out those people and did what he could for them, as demonstrated by his contributing so much of his time to organisations such as Meals on Wheels.

On behalf of the house, I will ensure that a copy of *Hansard* is presented to the family. I invite all honourable members to pass the motion moved by the Deputy Premier, and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, by standing in silence in their places.

Motion carried by members standing in their places in silence.

[Sitting suspended from 3.07 to 3.15 p.m.]

PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE: CONDOLENCE MOTIONS

The SPEAKER: Before calling the Deputy Premier to seek leave of the house to move the next condolence motion, can I make a point to all honourable members that, whilst it is the convention of the chamber to acknowledge the passing

of any one of the members of the chamber and, indeed, members of the other place, and that, equally, it is the convention of the chamber to acknowledge the passing of a head of state who has had responsibility for affairs in South Australia in some form or other, and the chief justices and the like, it has not been the usual practice, unless there has been some outstanding reason to do so, for the chamber to entertain condolence motions for people from outside South Australia, unless they have made an outstanding contribution to the development of civilisation and democracy elsewhere to the extent that it is warranted in the opinion of the chamber.

It is my view that it is an area of standing orders that needs to be dealt with and made more explicit, otherwise we will not simply be acknowledging in addition to those categories that I have mentioned, such as acknowledging the death of Indira Gandhi who was murdered by an assassin and, likewise, that of Olaf Palme more recently, but we will get into the practice of deifying and canonising people from outside South Australia who have had nothing whatever to do with South Australia, but rather someone of significance in one or other of the major parties.

It is for that reason that, whilst I think it is not inappropriate for the Deputy Premier to seek leave of the house on this occasion to acknowledge the passing of the late premier Jim Bacon in Tasmania, we should do it in a framework that is deliberate and conscious rather than a framework that is ad hoc, lest we go down that slippery slope into the vortex of spending all of our time acknowledging the passing of people who may be significant to party organisations but not to this institution and the people of South Australia in any direct sense. I mean no disrespect to any person living or deceased by making those remarks. I make them in the sincere belief that the Standing Orders Committee needs to address it, and I make them acknowledging that any member of the house has the right to prevent leave being granted for any such proposition to be debated.

BACON, Hon. J.A., DEATH

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

That this house expresses its deep regret at the death of the former premier of Tasmania Jim Bacon, and places on record its appreciation for his long and meritorious service.

On Sunday 20 June, the former premier of Tasmania Jim Bacon died after a short battle with cancer. He will be remembered with great affection by all of his Labor colleagues around the nation. The Premier is today attending his state funeral service in Hobart before flying on to Canberra for COAG. He will be there with all serving premiers of Australian states and the Prime Minister. Jim was held in very high esteem by his fellow premiers and colleagues in federal politics. Recently in Canberra the federal parliament paid a tribute to Jim Bacon prior to the commencement of question time, similar to what we are doing today.

There I understand that Prime Minister John Howard described the former Labor premier as a man of strong convictions who fought hard for his state. The Prime Minister told federal parliament that Jim Bacon was a very constructive person to work with, a person whose interest was the future of Tasmania. The federal Leader of the Opposition (Mark Latham) said Jim had been a good Labor man, a committed trade unionist and successful reformist premier of Tasmania. He said Jim had transformed the state for the

better, giving it new education and economic opportunities. No Premier could ask for a better legacy.

Jim Bacon was first elected to parliament in February 1996 and became opposition leader in April 1997. In August 1998, Mr Bacon led the first majority Labor government in 20 years into office in Tasmania, and his government was re-elected in July 2002. In February this year, Mr Bacon announced that he had inoperable lung cancer, resigned his commission as premier and retired from politics. The courage he displayed in making his announcement and his honesty in describing himself as 'a bloody idiot for smoking' touched us all. As his replacement Paul Lennon said, 'It was a brief but spectacularly successful political career.'

Anyone who ever met Jim would know that he was very passionate about his home state of Tasmania. His vision was for a Tasmania that was more confident, more tolerant, more progressive and stronger. As premier, Jim Bacon helped give Tasmanians optimism and a renewed confidence in their state's future. While he was at the helm, Tasmania's fortunes improved measurably, and he left Tasmania in better shape than he found it. He was a straight shooter whose decisions were firmly rooted in commonsense. His laconic, self-effacing sense of humour appealed to all who met him. After his resignation, his focus turned from politics to family, and he vowed to make the absolute most of the brief time that he had left. Sadly, it was to be too short.

On behalf of the state government and all South Australians, I would like to pass on my condolences to Jim's wife Honey and his children. The house might be touched to note that among the many tributes to Jim Bacon there was a particularly heartfelt one at Tasmania's parliament. The staff there decided to honour the former premier by going into work on Sunday and hoisting the three flags on top of the building to half mast.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I second the Deputy Premier's condolence motion and express our regret at the passing of Jim Bacon MHA, former premier of Tasmania. I ask that you, Mr Speaker, convey to Mr Bacon's family our deepest sympathies and gratitude for the role that he played as a member of the Tasmanian parliament and the great contribution he made to that state over a number of years. Jim Bacon's political career, as the Deputy Premier said, has been described by many as short but spectacular. He was first elected to the Tasmanian parliament in 1996 and only one year later was appointed Labor leader and elected as Premier within two years.

His rapid promotion reflects a rare passion and determination, and these are traits, coupled with his natural leadership qualities, that saw Tasmania do well under his premiership. Jim spearheaded significant progress in areas such as air and sea access, tourism, the arts and infrastructure. He was immensely proud of what his state had to offer and was well known for extensive promotion of Tasmania, both interstate and overseas. He was even more committed to its people, once declaring:

Our people are our greatest asset and we must encourage them, care for them and ensure they have a good quality of life.

In February 2004 Jim, sadly, announced that he had inoperable lung cancer and resigned as premier. A relentless optimist, Jim Bacon used what would have been shocking news to him and his family to send a message to Tasmania's and Australia's youth about the dangers of smoking. His

successor, now Premier, Paul Lennon declared in a tribute to Jim that the Tasmania of today would not even exist without Jim Bacon. This is quite a statement. He was a man who earned the deep respect of his colleagues, and I am sure that all members present will join me in paying respects to the late Mr Bacon and acknowledging his terrific contribution to the state of Tasmania.

Mr CAICA (Colton): I rise to support this motion and will be very brief in my comments. I was fortunate to meet Jim Bacon in my capacity as the national secretary of the United Firefighters Union when it held a national conference in Launceston. Jim kindly agreed to open that conference, and that was not long after he was elected as premier of Tasmania. Of course, for people opposite and others who always place a question mark over the ascent of unionists to parliament, Jim was a prime example of a former BLF secretary who was able to rise to the highest level of government.

I was inspired by the speech that Jim gave to our national conference and by his vision for Tasmania. He was keen to arrest the outflow of people from Tasmania and focus on the pride that he and others felt about their state and, indeed, to create a state that would attract people back—not just people who had left Tasmania but also other people from around Australia.

It is safe to say that he embraced Tasmania but, just as importantly, it was the people of Tasmania who embraced Jim Bacon for all his qualities. I guess I could focus on one aspect of his career, that is, that, as well as being premier, he was also minister for tourism. I will mention the amazing statistics that occurred during his time in that position.

Visitors to Tasmania increased from 500 000 to over 700 000 in 1998 alone; and the amount of income from tourism went from somewhere in the vicinity of \$550 million in 1998 to over \$1 billion in 2003. In 2003 he stated:

Tasmania is a destination of unmatched beauty. We have an enviably clean environment, fondly preserved heritage buildings, superb local produce and, arguably, the friendliest people in the world.

And Jim Bacon was among the people whom he described as 'the friendliest people in the world'. He opened up Tasmania to a level to which it had never been opened before, and he was a man who was proud of his state. He became a great Tasmanian and will be remembered as a great Australian. We send the commiserations of this house, and mine particularly, to his wife Honey, his sons Mark and Scott, and stepson Shane.

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I would also like to add my condolences and support for this motion. I had the fortunate opportunity to know Jim Bacon quite well for a number of years as a trade union official, particularly when he was secretary of the Trades and Labor Council in Tasmania and I was working at the United Trades and Labor Council in South Australia. Our councils, along with the other trades halls around the country, had a lot to do with each other and worked on a number of campaigns, particularly on workers' rights but, most notably, on health and safety, as well as entitlements for work and family responsibilities. I remember Jim being very much an advocate in those areas and also being very keen to ensure that the rhetoric was matched by the action. I think that is the main thing for which I remember him.

I would also like to say that, as a BLF unionist in his earlier time, Jim had a lot of the characteristics that those of us from the union movement knew in the BLF—the sense of humour, the larrikin tendencies that came forward, and an interesting love of culture and the arts (whether it be music or the visual arts). I know that Jim was particularly keen to ensure that the arts portfolio was one of his important areas. Many people will be aware that a number of initiatives in the arts community flourished under Jim as premier.

I particularly remember his going-away party at Trades Hall, I think in 1996, when he was slightly hesitant about becoming a member of parliament, talking about what would be the main needs of Tasmanians. It was obvious then that he was going to be a great member of parliament, as he was a trade unionist. I was very impressed, when I was elected to parliament in 1997, that he rang and congratulated me and said, 'We have to ensure that we continue the fine tradition of trade unionists as good members of parliament.' I am very sad that he has left us. With his progressive views and his absolute determination that social justice be achieved by all Australians (not only Tasmanians) he was always dedicated to making sure that people got a fair go. For me, he will always be a role model for people who believe in a progressive way forward.

The SPEAKER: I add my own condolences to those which have been offered by the Deputy Premier, the Leader and other members. May I say also that I will ensure that the family receives a copy of the *Hansard*.

Motion carried by members standing in their places in silence.

HOSPITALS, NOARLUNGA

A petition signed by 384 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to provide intensive care facilities at Noarlunga Hospital, was presented by Mr Brokenshire.

Petition received.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

Petitions signed by 398 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to pass the recommended legislation coming from the Constitutional Convention and provide for a referendum, at the next election, to adopt or reject each of the convention's proposals, were presented by the Hons D.C. Brown and G.M. Gunn and Messrs Brindal and Williams.

Petitions received.

CHILD ABUSE

A petition signed by 733 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to establish a royal commission to investigate the extent to which the Police, Family and Youth Services, Department of Police Prosecutions Office, Correctional Services and Public Service Sector have properly investigated allegations of child abuse and investigate allegations of wrongful convictions, denial of rights and the extent to which these government departments and agencies have implemented effective policies to ensure the elimination of adverse practices and activities, was presented by Mr Brindal.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that written answers to the following questions on the *Notice Paper*, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 238, 253, 279, 300, 301, 302, 320, 331, 365, 371, 391 and 396; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE OFFICES

In reply to **Hon. R.G. KERIN** (3 May).

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development has provided the following information:

I am advised that:

At 1 July 2002, South Australia's network of overseas offices comprised:

- Tokyo
- Jakarta
- Bandung, West Java
- New York, USA
- Shanghai, People's Republic of China
- Jinan, People's Republic of China
- Hong Kong
- Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- Singapore
- Kuala Lumpur

The Economic Development Board (EDB) in its *Framework for Economic Development in South Australia* recommended (Recommendation 51) that the Government liaise with industry and Austrade to determine the most appropriate and cost effective means of delivering in-market support services of most benefit to South Australian exporters.

The recent review into the (former) Department for Business, Manufacturing and Trade (now the Department of Trade and Economic Development) also considered that there should be a continued focus on rationalising the Government's overseas offices.

The government is committed to ensuring the State's overseas representation advances South Australia's interests and provides value for money to the tax payer.

The government had recognised the need for an assessment of its network of overseas offices as early as 16 September 2002 when Cabinet resolved to close the overseas offices in Tokyo and Jakarta effective from 30 September 2002. At the same time, Cabinet also agreed to a 12-month watching brief on the office in Bandung, West Java. Following an assessment of that office during early 2003, Cabinet decided that this office would also be closed effective from 31 July 2003.

On 13 October 2003 Cabinet approved the closure of the New York office effective from 31 January 2004.

The government still maintains a direct office arrangement in Shanghai and Jinan, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

The government's current assessment of the overseas office network is by far the most wide-ranging review of its type for some years. It involves not only re-testing first-principles but also developing a rigorous methodology to measure new and emerging markets and determining the most appropriate form of in-market representation from the many choices available.

I am also advised that an aspect of the recent trip to China by the Minister for Industry, Trade and Regional Development adjunct to the Vaile-China mission has afforded him an invaluable opportunity to experience first hand how the Government's current overseas office network operates in China and Hong Kong and how it supports peer-to-peer business relationships. This knowledge will be a valuable ingredient to the current assessment process.

ROADS, OUTBACK

In reply to **Hon. M.R. BUCKBY** (30 March).

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The honourable member's claim that hire-car company "Thrifty is refusing to hire cars to people intending to travel on South Australian outback roads as a result of their bad condition, which condition Thrifty maintains has eventuated since the outback road gang funding was cut" is at odds with information provided to my office by the head office of Thrifty. In contrast, information given to my office by Thrifty is as follows.

Thrifty's policy for vehicle rental, which is an Australia-wide one, and is published on their website as the terms and conditions for rental, states that any vehicle rented must not be used:

On any unsealed road (being a road not sealed with a hard material such as tar, bitumen or concrete) unless the Vehicle is a 4WD in which case it may also be used on graded unsealed roads. No Vehicle (including 4WDs) may be used on off road conditions. Off road conditions include but is not limited to fire trails, beaches, sand, tracks, fields or paddocks.

This policy has been in force for at least 11 years.

When asked about there being any roads excluded from this policy, the Company stated unequivocally that there are no roads in outback South Australia that are excluded from travel by vehicles rented from their Company.

In summary, a sedan vehicle may be driven only on sealed roads and being a sealed road is the criteria, not the geographical location of the road. A 4WD vehicle may be driven on any graded, unsealed roads in any area of South Australia.

COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY FUND

In reply to **Hon. M.R. BUCKBY** (2 December 2003).

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: The total income budgeted for the fund for the 2003-04 financial year is \$53.4 million. Budgeted expenditure on road safety policing and projects is based on that income and includes payments of \$29.6 million for policing and \$23.8 million for budgeted transport infrastructure projects and other road safety initiatives. I am advised that funds received to the end of March 2004 total \$21.1 million.

Any new project over and above those budgeted for would require revenue into the Fund in excess of the projected budget. At this stage speed camera revenue is below projections and, as a consequence, it is unlikely any further projects or initiatives beyond those initially planned will be possible in 2003-04.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the committee entitled Emergency Services Levy 2004-05, which has been received and published pursuant to section 17(7) of the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991.

MINISTER'S REMARKS

The Hon. DEAN BROWN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order relating to the privileges of parliament. On 22 June this year, in answer to a question I asked during estimates, a set of detailed figures on a year by year basis for the enterprise bargaining agreement with the Nurses' Federation was provided by an officer of the minister. In a personal explanation today, the Minister for Health has said that the information provided was inaccurate, but she has not provided figures to replace the incorrect figures, and I seek your ruling. If a minister is correcting misinformation given to the parliament, then the minister must give the correct figures rather than just say that the previous figures were wrong.

The SPEAKER: I will take that inquiry on notice and bring back an answer to the question before the chamber rises this day.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Environment and Conservation): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.
Leave granted.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Thank you. The sympathy of my colleagues is noted. I rise to inform the house that this morning the Full Bench of the Federal Court has handed down its judgment on the South Australian government's

appeal against the commonwealth's compulsory acquisition of land for the proposed radioactive waste dump. The full bench of three judges has unanimously upheld South Australia's appeal. The state's appeal was based on two core propositions: firstly, that natural justice was denied and, secondly, that the minister was not entitled to take into account urgency related to the passage of the Public Park Bill. The court ruled that the federal government misused its powers through the compulsory acquisition of land in the far north of this state. The court also ruled that the federal government pay all South Australia's cost, including the costs of the trial and the appeal.

I might ask one of my colleagues to finish this statement, if you do not mind, Mr Speaker.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE: This victory sets a precedent for state's rights—that the federal government cannot trample across state's rights when it comes to the compulsory acquisition of land. The federal government may now seek to restart the process to establish a dump in our state or it may appeal today's decision to the High Court—that is a decision for the Prime Minister. What appears certain is that a federal election will be held before this dump can be built. I call on the federal government to accept the court's ruling, and to accept the will of the people on this matter. Plans for using South Australia's north as the national radioactive waste dumping ground should now be scrapped. Today's Federal Court ruling is a comprehensive victory for South Australia.

The SPEAKER: The minister, of course, has my sympathy. I trust that the headline on tomorrow morning's newspaper will not call into question the abrupt termination of his career, as the same disease caused it to do about mine!

QUESTION TIME

MEMBER'S REMARKS

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Police. In relation to the minister correcting the parliamentary record earlier today, will the minister advise whether the Police Commissioner has actually told him that the officer was 'not acting in an official investigative capacity'? This morning, the minister told the house:

Whilst I told parliament this support was provided outside his normal working time, I am now of the view that it would have been more accurate to say that this was done as part of his normal duties but not in an official investigative capacity.

That statement is very much at odds with an email sent by police to the witness involved, which states:

... Acting Operations Manager, Detective Sergeant Brian Swan, from Major Crime Investigation Branch, has read your document and has agreed with me in taking a course of action. . .

The email then sets out what actions the police were going to take.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister for Police): When I made my statement at 6 o'clock that night, I had just finished a telephone call with the Commissioner. I indicated that my recollection of that brief conversation was that the officer may have been acting, I think the words were, 'outside of his normal operational time' (that is, that he was doing it in his own time). A subsequent written briefing and verbal briefings with the Police Commissioner, the Assistant Police Commissioner and an officer we had reviewed the case after it was raised by the Leader of the Opposition about this matter, I discussed this matter further with the Commissioner. The

advice I was given was that the officer assisted this person in an official capacity up to a point where it was clearly not going to be an ongoing investigative role, and that the officer continued to assist this person—I think the words suggested by the Commissioner were 'in a compassionate role'—and that the ongoing support provided to this person was not part of a normal investigative process.

The officers who work in this area are extremely committed, decent officers who clearly do not simply just deal with people when they are investigating and then terminate the investigation. I am advised that this officer continued to assist this person for compassionate reasons, but it was not part of an official investigation. Indeed, it is almost certain that that work, I assume, would have occurred during his office hours, but it may have occurred outside his office hours. Where I think I was incorrect when I first gave the advice to the house was in giving the impression that it was done off duty. It was done outside of a normal investigative role. In fact, some notes have just been handed to me. I discussed this whole matter with the Police Commissioner.

When the Leader of the Opposition raises such an important matter and there is conflict, I needed to be sure, as did the Commissioner, what occurred. I met with the Commissioner of Police, the Acting Commissioner for Crime, Madeleine Glynn, and the Acting Officer-in-Charge of the Major Crime Investigation Branch, John Venditto, who did a review of the case to ensure that the police were correct in the way in which this was being conveyed to the house. The Commissioner of Police was at that meeting, and I have some notes from that meeting.

As I have already said, the allegations were based on a recurring dream. All avenues of inquiry were quickly exhausted, and it was concluded that the allegations had no substance. The advice I was given in that briefing was that the detective involved continued to provide a support role, for compassionate reasons, following the determination that the allegation had no substance, rather than an official policing role, that is, an investigative role. I was further advised that the officer went beyond what an officer would normally do. He was not doing it in his official capacity as an investigative officer. That is the sort of context of my discussions with the police.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Yes; that is the point I am making. By giving an immediate response to the house at 6 p.m. on that day—straight off the telephone from the Commissioner—I think I gave the impression that he was working outside his working hours.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Yes; and I came back and corrected it as soon as I realised the error. That is what you do when you make an error in this place: you do not try to cover it up or hide it; you admit it and you move on. I quickly corrected it. It is a matter of degree, but the important point is that an officer went beyond what would be a normal investigative role to offer a compassionate, supportive role to a person, and I think that is a good thing.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The member for Bragg interjects that I should not try to demean it. I was not the one trying to demean it: I was the one supporting our police. I was not the one making the accusations that the Leader of the Opposition was. From memory, I think they were that the police failed to follow up a murder investigation. If you want to talk about demeaning the police of our state, I consider it

somewhat demeaning when the Leader of the Opposition issues a press statement that infers that the police had not followed up a murder investigation. In my view, that is demeaning.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I have a supplementary question. This morning, when the minister told the house that he believed that the officer was not acting in an official investigative capacity, was he told that by the Commissioner?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I will walk the honourable member through it again.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Is this what the Commissioner told you?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Yes, the Commissioner—

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Put it on the record.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No. Let's just clarify this very carefully. I issued a media statement, and I will quote from that, because this was following advice from the Commissioner:

The Police Commissioner has assured me that the allegations of murder were handled appropriately.

If members will recall, the initial allegation was that the police, I think the Leader of the Opposition said, failed to follow up a murder. I said in my press release:

Today the Commissioner sought additional assurances from the Acting Officer in Charge of the Major Crime investigation branch in relation to the documents that form the basis of issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition in state parliament yesterday. Detective Inspector John Venditto then concluded the following—

and it is very important that this be put on the record—

'I have read all documents that relate to this matter held by (the detective). I have spoken to (him) and his senior officer at length and on this basis I have found that there is no evidence that could amount to a reasonable suspicion of homicide having been committed by any person. My review has found that (the detective) acted well within the investigative process expected in the situation. I note that (the detective) informed the author on 13 February 2004 that the matter raised by the author did not constitute an official police investigation in the sense of a homicide or paedophile investigation.'

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: I rise on a point of order, sir. The question was quite specific: it was about whether the information the minister gave the house this morning was what he was told by the Commissioner.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will not interject. He has not been asked a question.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am putting important information on the record, and I am coming to the answer. I am advised that the officer continued working with the complainant in a supportive role for compassionate reasons, rather than in an official investigative role. Clearly, the officer had an official investigative role up to a certain point, and that is what I was advised. They investigated whether or not there was any substance to the allegation and then determined that there was none. The officer in question continued to offer a supportive role to the person involved for compassionate reasons. That officer did so, not in an investigative role but in a supportive role.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No. What I said this morning was that it would have been more accurate to say that this was done as part of his normal duties, but not in an official investigative capacity. You brought to the house a number of emails, from memory, that talked about a period of time and a police investigation. What clearly occurred, and what I have been advised, and I repeat to the house to make sure that there

is no ambiguity about this, that the Commissioner of Police and his acting Commissioner for Crime advised me:

... the allegations were based on a recurring dream. All avenues of inquiry were quickly exhausted, concluding the allegations had no substance. The detective involved continued to provide a support role for compassionate reasons following the determination that the allegations had no substance, rather than an official policing role that is investigative.

The Acting Commissioner of Crime went on to advise me:

... the officer went beyond what an officer would normally do, not in his official capacity as an investigative officer.

I cannot be much clearer than that. With the issue that I raised here a week ago, I did not want to leave the impression to the house that the officer was doing this outside of his normal working hours. He was doing it when he was on duty—

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Why is he making commitments if it's not in an official capacity?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Leader of the Opposition says: why was this police officer making commitments when he was not doing it in an official capacity? I just come back to what the Commissioner and the police have advised me.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Sometimes they act out of human kindness.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: An allegation was made to the police about a murder. An officer interviewed the person in question. It was a recurring dream, and the advice I was given is that—

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Well, the Leader of the Opposition shakes his head and says that's not right. Well, that's what the Police Commissioner has advised me. I will go through it again.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Answer my question.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Commissioner advised that it was a recurring dream. The officer involved investigating saw it—considered the matter—it was a recurring dream. But the officer when then terminating that investigation, or those inquiries, or whatever it was, then decided that he would continue to give the person some support for compassionate reasons.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: So he had been acting in an official capacity before that, had he?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Well, somebody lays a complaint—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is out of order in interjecting with further questions, and the Deputy Premier—

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Mr Speaker, the important point was that the impression I left the house with the last time I was here was that the officer involved was providing assistance outside his normal working time. What I told the house earlier today was that it would have been more accurate to say that this was done as part of his normal duties but not in an official investigative capacity. He did it in working hours. If there has been any confusion given by me, I apologise to the house. I do not think there has been. If the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that I said something that I should not have, I apologise. I cannot be much clearer than whatever official capacity the officer in question was operating in was for a brief period until he determined that there was not a matter of substance. He then went on to offer support, not in an official investigative capacity. But the

important distinction that I tried to make with my statement today was that he did it during his working hours, not when he was off duty, which is the impression I think I left the house with a week or so ago.

LPG PRODUCTION

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): My question is to the Minister for Energy. What is the impact on consumers from the lack of production of LPG in South Australia, and when will SANTOS resume producing LPG from its Port Bonython plant?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): The house will no doubt remember that, on 1 January this year, there was an explosion and fire at the Moomba gas plant which led to a crisis in the supplies of gas in South Australia. The public was also well aware of the difficulties faced in South Australia in those first few months until the Moomba plant could return to partial production in January and fuller production as we went on. What was not so well known was that the production of LPG and the separation of liquids also stopped at that time. The methods put in place for the supply of gas were not methods that allowed the separation of liquids and their transportation down the line to Point Bonython.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Well, I am going to say something nice about one of you here, so you should pay attention. Let me go on.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Don't do it, Patrick! It is not worth it.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Credit where credit is due. It was not until 1 June, in fact, that the production of liquids was started again from Moomba. It takes some 17 days for them to travel from there to the plant at Point Bonython, so during that time the state had been relying on reserves stored at Point Bonython that otherwise would have gone to export and supplies shipped in from interstate. Unfortunately, at some time in May this year, I was advised by Santos that those supplies had actually run out at Point Bonython and we were entirely reliant on the interstate supply of LPG, both for auto gas and bottled heating.

Mr Hamilton-Smith: You would be very good in the Senate, I can tell you. You would be a very good senator.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You guys have been trying to get me there for six years—good luck.

Mr Hamilton-Smith: I suggest you run.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I can understand why you might not want me here; I can truly understand that. I can understand why Homer Greenspan over there would not want me here. How is that MBA going, mate? This presented a very tight supply situation in South Australia. We did all that we could, including things such as the registering of new heavy vehicles to increase the capacity to bring supplies from interstate; but supplies were very tight, to the extent that in May we had to consider whether rationing was an option. On the best advice that we had, we decided that imposing rationing would probably cause a scare which would be greater than any benefit that would flow from it. Also, in May, in fact, on the very same day that I discovered this situation, I spoke to the Leader of the Opposition about it and indicated to him that it was my view that a rationing of supplies would be counterproductive and more inclined to cause panic than any benefit.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition; he has made no attempt to exploit that politically or the ongoing briefings that

we gave him. I indicate now that, since 18 June, Point Bonython has been producing LPG and relieving the extremely tight supply. We are very grateful to have got through it without incident. The public were unaware but, on this occasion, ignorance certainly has been bliss. We are grateful for the constructive role of the Leader of the Opposition and, of course, for industry and the individuals who assisted—

Mr Venning: As always.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The member for Schubert says 'As always', and if only that were the case. Believing as in the art of war in a consistent system of rewards and punishments, on this occasion I must thank the Leader of the Opposition and, no doubt, I will have other things to say in future.

CHILD ABUSE

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Attorney-General. Given that, on 2 June the Attorney stated, 'I am considering an inquiry or options short of a royal commission,' what inquiry or options is he considering? When will he make a recommendation to the parliament?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I had conversations about that matter on Monday, and I am still considering it.

SPECIALIST REVIEW AND INVESTIGATION UNIT

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Families and Communities. In which department is the Specialist Review and Investigation Unit recommended by the Layton report to investigate complaints against decisions and actions against FAYS located? Who heads this unit? To whom does it report?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): This question provides me with an opportunity to bring to public attention this important reform, which was in fact a measure put in place by my predecessor, the member for Ashford. The specialist unit that is called for within the Layton report has indeed been established. Its work commenced some months ago, and it plays the very role contemplated within the Layton report. Within the Department of Human Services, which is now earmarked to be split between the two agencies from 1 July, it will be located within the broader notion of the Department for Families and Communities and report directly to the chief executive of that department. It is an important element of the accountability measures that have been called for in the Layton report.

It will focus on complaints of inappropriate conduct by foster carers or, indeed, FAYS workers in relation to children within the care of the system. It provides a first level, I suppose, of independent scrutiny of the conduct of the division that is presently called FAYS within the child protection system. This is not the only accountability measure. Two very important additional accountability measures were announced as part of the budget announcement. One is the guardian for the child and young person, Pam Simmons having been appointed to that role. The second is a very important committee, the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, which has also been established through the funds provided within the budget.

So, we have three crucially important accountability measures that have been called for in the Layton report and have now been provided by the government through funding both in the last budget and the completion of those tasks in this budget. I do not have with me the name of the person who heads that inquiry, but I will provide the name for the honourable member: a well-credentialed person experienced in carrying out investigations.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: As a supplementary question on that unit, what moves have been made to ensure that the clients of FAYS are aware of the appeal process?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I will bring back to the honourable member a detailed answer about the protocol but, if one is suggesting that this is a matter of a complaint against a particular FAYS employee, the usual grievance process is, first, to take the matter to the head of the district office in question. If that does not lead to a resolution, it is escalated possibly to a further level, and each time, if there is dissatisfaction from the person making the complaint, they are made aware of the next step in the grievance process. The Special Investigations Unit sits within that hierarchy. But I will provide a detailed answer to the leader.

LAYTON REPORT

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Minister for Families and Communities. Has a specialist unit been sited within the Ombudsman's office to manage complaints in relation to FAYS actions and decisions as recommended by the Layton report?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): I thank the honourable member for highlighting another of the important reforms that have been introduced by the government in response to the Layton report. There are two similar recommendations within the Layton report. One calls for the establishment of a unit within the present Ombudsman and the other notes the establishment of the health and community services Ombudsman and calls for the establishment of a special unit within that body to deal with questions concerning child protection. When the government considered that, on balance it thought that it was best for all the child protection Ombudsman measures to reside within the one Ombudsman's office.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: When and if it passes the parliament, with the support—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is a genius interjection by the member for Bragg—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —who points to her obstruction and that of her party of a fairly elementary reform. We are trying to promote reforms to the child protection system, and the member for Bragg helpfully documents the obstruction of those opposite to those sensible reforms.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Sir, I have had trouble getting the message across about the obstruction of the opposition, and the member for Bragg is doing a much better job than I have been able to in terms of bringing this to the public's awareness. Certainly, we have chosen to collapse this complaints mechanism about service—and this includes all service providers, whether they be in the private, non-

government or, indeed, government sector. They will now all reside within the Health and Community Services Ombudsman. A commitment has been made to establish a special unit within that ombudsman's office for child protection matters so that it will be a one-stop shop for complaint mechanisms about quality of service in relation to service providers. So, those four accountability mechanisms have been introduced by this government. This is an open and accountable government.

DISABLED CHILDREN

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): My question is also to the Minister for Families and Communities. Has the minister set up a specialist investigation unit to cover children with disabilities for whom no formal order of care exists. The former minister stated in April 2003 that the government would consider the establishment of a specialist investigation unit through FAYS to handle complaints involving children in alternative and residential care and also to cover children with disabilities for whom no formal order of care exists.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): Yes, we have, and I will explain. That is the special investigations unit about which the Leader of the Opposition asked earlier. That is the unit that investigates particular complaints against foster carers or, indeed, FAYS workers in their relationship with children in respect of whom the department may have had some responsibilities. So, that unit does exist and also has responsibilities for the particular circumstances of children with disabilities.

We know from the Layton report that they are children with a special vulnerability and, sadly, as has been seen by the number of institutions mentioned in the popular media recently, those children are particularly vulnerable—often because of their inability to communicate what has happened to them and the misreading of circumstances and conduct that they may be engaged in, which is evidence of abuse but which may not be recognised by service providers. This is an especially vulnerable population. They are often not ambulant and often have many different people providing services to them. So, a large number of people come in contact with them and there is a special need to take care. This special investigations unit will enable us to act on the complaints of people who seek to bring these matters to our attention.

Mrs REDMOND: I have a supplementary question. Can the minister advise how many investigations that unit has undertaken or is undertaking?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I thank the honourable member for her question. I am not certain of that. I think I was advised—but I will stand corrected and bring back a detailed answer to the house—that something in the order of 90 investigations have been completed in a very short period. They certainly may have been commenced, but I am not entirely sure how many have been completed. I will bring back a detailed answer to the house.

PAEDOPHILE TASK FORCE

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Police. Given the number of cases of child abuse currently coming to light, will the minister commit to ensuring that the paedophile task force continues to investigate complaints? On Monday 21 June the Paedophile Task Force Superintendent said on Adelaide radio

that the Paedophile Task Force was temporary and that he hoped to scale down the task force dramatically in approximately four months' time.

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Minister for Police): I will ignore that interjection from the member for Unley, as I must, because it was really quite distasteful. The Paedophile Task Force was the creation of the Police Commissioner. Clearly, it is an operational matter. For the benefit of the Leader of the Opposition, it is not my role to tell the Police Commissioner how to do his job. It is for the Police Commissioner to judge how he will—

Mr Brokenshire: Clearly, this government does not therefore care about the Paedophile Task Force.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: That was an inane interjection from the former police minister that this government does not care about the Paedophile Task Force. I wish members opposite could resist the temptation to play politics with such a serious matter. Members opposite had eight years to do something about paedophilia and child protection in this state, and they did nothing. We brought in the Layton inquiry. We have put in the biggest reforms in child protection for many years, if not in this state's history. This government is putting 250 extra social workers, psychologists and support staff into the field. This government is resourcing our police. This government has overseen the establishment of a police task force on paedophilia. As we saw last weekend, there were eight or nine arrests as the first—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The other great reform that we have brought in is that we lifted the pre-1982 provision, something which the former government would never do. The former government was happy to protect paedophiles who offended pre-1982; this government was not.

Mr BRINDAL: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. In answering the question, the Deputy Premier accused the previous government of protecting paedophiles. I find that personally offensive. It is a matter for debate and should only be canvassed by substantive motion. I ask him to apologise and withdraw.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I apologise and withdraw for any hurt incurred by members opposite. All I can say is this: it was this parliament, with this government in power, that lifted the pre-1982 provision which meant that people could not be investigated if—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: To make sure that the record is correct, it was at the initiative of the Hon. Andrew Evans MLC (Family First) and supported by this government. This was something that the last government would not do. So, when it comes to attacking paedophilia, this government has taken more decisive action than any of its predecessors—in my view. The Paedophile Task Force is adequately resourced, and it will continue to get the support of the resources that the Police Commissioner thinks is appropriate and that he requests.

The Police Commissioner and I work well together. We talk often and we consider these issues and, where assistance from the government is required to supplement the police force, there is never a blank cheque but it is always keenly considered by the government and in most cases provided within a short space of time. As we saw last weekend, there were numerous arrests, many of which go back to pre-1982. What we have to do is put the policies and resources in place

to allow our police to do their job, which is to catch the most evil people in our community, charge them, bring them before the courts, and let justice be done.

CHILD ABUSE

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Has the minister turned the allegations of serious child abuse and the files on such matters related to paedophilia which are in her possession over to the Paedophilia Task Force and, if not, why not? On 24 October 1997, the member for Elizabeth wrote to then minister for human services, Dean Brown, on behalf of a constituent—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Unley knows that he does not refer to any honourable member by their name.

Mr BRINDAL: Sorry; I apologise—on behalf of a constituent Mrs Cynthia Jenke. The letter concerned child abuse allegations prior to 1982 and raised serious concerns regarding the suitability of a foster carer. At that time, immunity existed from prosecution of those parties who may have sexually abused children. However, the then minister for human services took the matter so seriously as to reply as follows:

In view of the seriousness of the allegations, a letter will be prepared by FACS Field Services Division indicating that the information provided by your constituents would preclude the applicant from becoming a foster carer.

Therefore, I ask whether the member, in her capacity as minister, has handed that very serious file to the Paedophile Task Force?

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I recall the letter and I certainly recall the former minister for human services reply to me in relation to that matter. No; I have not passed that matter on to the Paedophile—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

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

The Hon. L. STEVENS: —Task Force, but I will certainly give it some consideration—it was some years ago.

Mr BRINDAL: My question is to the Deputy Premier. In view of the Premier's and Deputy Premier's statements on the evils of serious child abuse and of their public calls for the resignation of the Anglican Archbishop, will the Deputy Premier also call for the resignation of any others who aid abusers by ignoring victims and covering up complaints, regardless of faith or organisation? Similarly, will he hold his ministers and public servants accountable if evidence emerges which shows they have acted in an identical way to the Anglican Church administrators?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): That is an extraordinary question and an extraordinary allegation. I reject any inference that I called for the resignation based on any prejudice I may have towards the Anglican Church.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: That was how I inferred the question. If I inferred it incorrectly, well, that is how I inferred it. I was asked a question on 5AA at 10 past 7 one morning. I was asked whether I agreed with a very prominent former Liberal member of parliament, who I would have thought was a close ally of the member for Unley, Jennifer Cashmore, who wrote a letter to *The Advertiser* putting out a well-structured argument that Archbishop Ian George should resign. I had seen the Archbishop on television on the

weekend denying, from memory, certain aspects of some communication that he had or had not seen from, I think, the bishop from Hobart. I had also read the report and looked at other matters.

After having had the letter from Jennifer Cashmore explained to me, I was asked whether I agreed. I ask anyone who has not read that letter to read it, because it was a well-argued, well-structured argument for the resignation of Ian George. I simply said 'Yes', because I could not think of any other correct answer to give, because it was such a well-structured argument. I have no regrets for my action and, in fact, since I have had further briefings and meetings with various people, I am even more satisfied that I made the right call, and had not, in any way, misjudged the matter at hand. The member for Unley has been making all sorts of accusations. From memory, I think he has information on up to 15 cases of paedophilia inside state institutions. I repeat the call—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: If the member did not say that, I am not quite sure where they occurred. However, the member has said that knows of 15 incidents. I say to the member what I think the Premier said; that is, 'Do what you should: take them to the police.' I assume that the member for Unley has met with the police today, because he cannot make an accusation and then not deliver it immediately to the police. I look forward to those 15 cases being hand delivered to the police, and they should be delivered today. There should be no hesitation in bringing those forward. I challenge the member for Unley that, if his allegations are serious, they should be given to the police today.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: So, we are not going to have them today. I think that more than adequately answers the question.

The SPEAKER: Can I help the house understand that the member for Unley, or any other honourable member who has taken notes of interview from constituents, has done that in privilege and they need to check before they pass that information onto anyone as to whether or not—

Mr Brindal interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! —that constituent would allow or wish that to occur. The member for Bragg.

TEACHERS, CONDUCT

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. How many teachers employed at government schools have been deregistered or disciplined by the Teachers Registration Board for improper conduct or disgraceful behaviour toward a child in the past three years? Notwithstanding the debates in relation to the royal commission and/or inquiry, the Teachers Registration Board annually conducts inquiries of its own motion. Last year alone it conducted inquiries into the conduct of four male teachers in schools who had recent criminal convictions for possessing child pornography and pursuing improper relationships with students.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Bragg for her question relating, I understand, to the previous three years of accounts from the Teachers Registration Board. We take those matters very seriously and have recognised the observations from the Layton Report. There are recommendations that relate to 132, 137, 138, 139, 144, 145, 146, 147 and

205, which relate to deregistration of teachers in some areas and how we manage those complaints. I do not have at my fingertips the exact numbers who have been deregistered, but I will get for the member those numbers for the last three years. If I understand the member correctly, she wants the numbers for 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04.

Ms CHAPMAN: I indicate that the Teachers Registration Board reports on an annual calendar basis, so that would be for 2001, 2002 and 2003. As a supplementary question: how many teachers employed at government schools have been disciplined or dismissed by the Department of Education and Children's Services, or have resigned, prior to disciplinary proceedings being taken as a result of improper conduct in the past three years?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am very happy to give the same answer as to the previous question.

HOSPITALS, ADMISSIONS

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): My question is to the Minister for Health. What are the figures for the annual increase in the total number of people admitted to our metropolitan hospitals over the last three years and how many patients are being cared for in hospital while waiting for a commonwealth-funded aged care placement?

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Minister for Health): I thank the member for Florey for her very important question, because demand continues to increase at our metropolitan public hospitals. In the metropolitan booking list hospitals—the Royal Adelaide, the Repat, the Lyell McEwin, the Women's and Children's, the Queen Elizabeth, Flinders and Modbury—2001-02, the total number of admissions in 2001-02 was 244 000, an increase of 16 000 over the previous year. In 2002-03, the number increased by a further 9 000 to 253 000 admissions. So far this year, an extra 8 850 have been admitted to metropolitan hospitals in the first three-quarters of the financial year compared to the previous corresponding period.

The state government is fighting above its weight, providing record resources for our health services and implementing the recommendations of the Generational Health Review, but we need the commonwealth government to accept its share of responsibility as well. For example, during May an average of 89 people each day were cared for in our metropolitan hospitals while they waited for a commonwealth funded aged care placement. On an annual basis, this number represents a cost in acute beds of \$19 million a year. The commonwealth must play its part by increasing GP numbers, increasing the number of nurses and doctors being trained, increasing aged care places and by reversing its decision to cut \$75 million from health funding to South Australia over the next five years.

APY EXECUTIVE

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is to the Deputy Premier. What action will the state government take to prevent the APY executive sacking its general manager before the forthcoming elections? The government has accepted crown law advice that serious doubts have existed since last December about the authority of the APY executive. Consistent with Bob Collins' recommendations, an election will soon be held for the executive and chair. Last week, the chair of the APY executive, Gary Lewis, allegedly

attempted to sack the General Manager, John Buckskin. What is the government doing about this?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): I am aware of this issue—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Well, I try to keep my finger on the pulse of many things, and I stand to be criticised.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No; I do not.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacKillop is out of order.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Thank you, sir. I should not respond, and I apologise. I will take that question on notice and obtain an answer for the honourable member. I am concerned by the allegation but, by its very nature (that is, it is an allegation made in parliament), with all due respect, I would want to have it verified.

I am sure all members are aware that former Senator Bob Collins was involved in a very serious motor accident a few days ago in the Northern Territory. He was airlifted to Adelaide, and he is in intensive care in a very serious condition. Albeit brief, his work to date had been extremely productive, and some announcements will be made shortly about some initiatives on which Bob Collins had been working, with support from the federal government. I take this opportunity to say that the hearts of both the government and the opposition go out to Bob Collins and his family. We hope that he has a very speedy recovery from a very serious accident.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

TEACHERS, REGISTRATION

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Why has the government not introduced amendments to the Education Act regulations to require teachers to undertake a mandatory notification course every three years to gain and maintain registration as a teacher, as recommended by the Teachers Registration Board in its 2003 annual report and which the former minister for education announced would be done on 23 November 2003?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): As I suggested in my previous answer, we have taken very seriously the recommendations of the Layton report. This matter has to be dealt with with some urgency, and it will shortly go to cabinet. I hope that the drafting instructions can be dealt with in the next sitting period. It has been progressed in some ways significantly. We now have agreements between the various sectors of schooling in South Australia that there will be sharing of information. Reporting standards of the non-public schools have improved dramatically, and I hope that the registration board's legislation will be changed in the very near future.

SCHOOLS, FUNDING

Mr CAICA (Colton): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Does the Schools Assistance Bill 2004, announced recently by the federal government, provide a real increase in funding for South Australian government schools?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for

Colton, who I know is committed to public education in this state, for his question. The state and territory ministers have repeatedly called on the Australian government to fund public schools to the minimum level of funding that private schools receive. Unfortunately, our calls have again fallen on deaf ears. The Australian government prefers to behave like a schoolyard bully, threatening to cut funding to state schools unless a new range of conditions are met. Our government believes, however, that whilst we strongly support setting high standards for quality teaching in our schools, and reporting for parents, and in providing adequate support to schools to enable them to meet their goals—in fact, we believe that our schools and teachers need support, and not threats of punishment to make a difference. Whilst the federal government is taking a big stick to our schools, government schools will not receive a single extra dollar above normal inflation increments to meet the Howard government's new rules.

Unlike the federal government, this state government's commitment to education such as increasing physical fitness, better literacy, and improved school retention, are all backed up with funds. This includes the \$35 million for early years literacy in this year's budget. The Rann government continues to invest significantly in education and this year's budget delivers a 3.7 per cent increase in total education funding. This increase per school student is even higher with 4.3 per cent, or an extra \$381 for each school student, bringing the three-year cumulative increase to 16.7 per cent. In comparison—and the member for Bragg might like to note this, the commonwealth budget papers—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: And the member for Bragg might well like to listen to this—the commonwealth budget papers reveal an increase between 2003-04 and 2004-05 in the federal budgets. The increase to our schools is 1.4 per cent. One clear question mark remains to be answered, and that is: where does the opposition stand on schools funding? Do they stand with the 160 000 students who attend our public schools or do they stand with Brendan Nelson and John Howard and their unfair funding model? The member for Bragg has nailed her colours to the federal government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the minister quoting from some document?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: No.

The SPEAKER: That is clear debate; it is the minister's words. The Hon. the minister needs to answer the question rather than bash the opposition up.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I apologise, Mr Speaker. I would never bash the opposition. So in answer to the member for Colton's question, there are no extra funds to meet the new demands that the federal government has made. These are the old increments, the old funding models. It is just that the rules have changed, and if schools do not meet the new rules money will be taken away. We believe that school improvements should be linked to additional funds. We do not believe that new rules and new guidelines should be linked with a threat to remove the funds that schools already receive, and we would ask for the opposition's support in supporting public education in this state. It is support we have yet to receive.

EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Why isn't the new child protection curriculum being implemented in schools, given that the former education minister announced this initiative on 23 November last year, that the education department would be reviewing the current child protection curriculum and that the new program would be trialled early this year?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Bragg for her question. My understanding is that there is a draft child protection curriculum, and that further developments and trialing are expected to incorporate children with disabilities and indigenous students.

Ms CHAPMAN: This question is also to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Given the government's claim and the minister's commitment today of taking child protection seriously, why is it not mandatory for all DECS employees to report to the Teachers' Registration Board any allegation of improper conduct towards a child as recommended by the board in its 2003 annual report?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Clearly, honourable members want to debate. However, this is question time.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I thank the member for Bragg for her question. I am surprised that she is so suddenly aware of child protection issues when they had not been acted upon when her government was in power to the extent that we have acted to respond to this serious issue. The reality is that mandatory reporting is part of DECS policy.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a supplementary question. Is the minister suggesting that it is mandatory for all DECS employees to report to the Teachers Registration Board? I would suggest that that is not the case at all. It is necessary to report to the minister responsible, next door to you.

The SPEAKER: The member for Bragg may seek information, but she does not have to engage in rhetorical answers to her own questions.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I thank the member for Bragg. She would like to know whom the reporting is to; we will get a report to her on that. We will come back to say whom they are reporting to. It is not necessarily to the board.

CRISIS ACCOMMODATION

Ms RANKINE (Wright): My question is to the Minister for Families and Communities. What action is being taken to address the need for emergency and short-term alternative care placements across South Australia?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): I thank the honourable member for her important question. I value her parliamentary secretary role in relation to this crucial issue of child protection. She is providing invaluable assistance to the government in that role. We are taking direct action. We are spending \$3.85 million for the purchase of 10 new houses to be located near each regional office. I will explain why that is so important. When a child is in need of crisis accommodation, at the moment there is such a shortage of accommodation that often those children have to be put into community residential villages or cottages, which may house youth offenders or other

children who may not necessarily be the sorts of children whom you would not want to put next to somebody who has been taken immediately into care.

Often, if these children are from a country region, we do not want to bring them into the city and necessarily contaminate them with other behaviour and conduct which we are trying to work against and try to work with them to stabilise that child. It also enables us to keep them in their communities. It enables us to keep them in their schools. Crucially, for the FAYS staff in those district offices, instead of getting a telephone call at 5 p.m. on a Friday evening and having to try to find a hotel room and organise a FAYS staff member at short notice to actually look after a child in that emergency accommodation situation, there will be a ready-made transitional accommodation facility available. This is something that has been cried out for by FAYS staff. It is a message that has been given loud and clear for a long period of time, and we are very pleased that we have been able to find the funds to provide these houses. Eight of the houses have been purchased, and two will be procured within the next week or so. This will fit importantly into the new alternative care arrangements that will commence on 1 July which include a statewide foster care recruitment service. FAYS has resumed responsibility for identifying, assessing and supporting relative carers.

This emergency management placement response will provide stability and professional support for each child. There will be therapeutic services. It is crucial that, when we put children into their first foster care placement, they are not put in at a time when they are set up for failure. They are stabilised, provided with some services, so that they do not move from one foster family to the next, which is disastrous for their welfare. This is a crucially important reform. It is in addition to the money that has been announced in the budget and will make a massive difference to the standard of care and protection for children and young people in the alternative care system.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

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

That for the remainder of the session the Clerk may deliver messages to the Legislative Council and the Speaker may receive messages from the Legislative Council when this house is not sitting.

Motion carried.

HUMAN SERVICES MINISTER

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: Earlier in question time today the member for Unley asked a question of the minister for human services in relation to a matter I raised some years ago as a local MP on behalf of a constituent to the former minister for human services, the current deputy leader. There is no current minister for human services and the question should have been directed to the Minister for Families and Communities, and I have referred it to him.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I bring up the 24th report of the committee.

Report received.

Mr HANNA: In accordance with the preceding report, I advise that I no longer wish to proceed with Private Members Business Bills/Committees/Regulations Notices of motion Nos 2 and 3.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

CHILD ABUSE

Mr BRINDAL (Unley): I begin this grievance by saying that I believe the Deputy Premier in some measure mistook in his answer the purport of my question in respect of the Anglican Archbishop. The question sought simply to establish that, having established a standard, that standard would be universally applied, whether it was applied to any other faith, any other organisation or the government itself. I do not necessarily agree—and this is on public record—with the Deputy Premier commenting on what may well be church matters. However, his having commented on them, I am more anxious to see that a universal standard is applied in respect of anyone, any organisation or any place in which this comes up.

I commend the current Minister for Families and Communities, at least in so far as in estimates we had a number of very interesting questions and interesting and frank answers. One of those was reported in part by the ABC. We had been talking about the application of funds and I had spoken about a significant study that showed that child sexual abuse by natural fathers was rare. I was somewhat dismayed the next day to have a significant number of women ring up somewhat distressed because they themselves had been the victims of sexual abuse by their natural fathers. I would like to put on the record that I do not excuse that extraordinary breach of trust and care: there could not be anything more heinous. My comments were not so much seeking to diminish what those women must have suffered through all of their life, but to talk about how the government could best apply its funds.

Can I also say that I think no-one in this house would disagree with the proposition that the only way to fix some of these matters is to apply enough funds so that you do not have to pick and choose which cases you will concentrate on—to apply enough funds so that every case which warrants any degree of investigation should be investigated as thoroughly as is humanly possible. That is the ideal we all want to achieve; but the context in which the minister, my colleague the shadow minister and I were discussing it was the context of limited resources.

However, one of the things asked by a number of those women, and a number of academic women, who rang was: what was the source of my study? As all members know, I try to be accurate and honest in this house and, I must say, I did a double flip and thought, 'I hope I have everything right.' I went back and checked and am glad to inform the house that the study was done by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, a very august authority in the United Kingdom which started campaigning (as you would know, sir, and you would be one of the few who would know) on behalf of children in 1884. It commissioned a study which

was released in November 2001 entitled 'Child Maltreatment in the United Kingdom: A study in the prevalence of child abuse and neglect'. Their web site is www.nspcc.org.uk.

They have a child protection help line and, in this instance, they took a large random probability sample from the general population of 2 689 children aged 18 to 24 years, and they used computer-assisted personnel to conduct interviews (and, again, sir, you would be one of the few to realise this) which enabled them to enter their answers directly and with confidentiality into the computer. It was a result of the Full Stop program which they launched in 1999, and they received a 69 per cent response rate, which is very high for surveys of this kind. That showed that 1 per cent—and I repeat, 1 per cent—of young people suffered sexual abuse by a parent or carer. In fewer than four in 1 000 cases, the person who had perpetrated the sexual abuse was a natural father. Again, I do not excuse anybody from abusing anybody, but it is interesting that, of the 3 per cent who were not the parent or other carer and who were other relatives, the abuse was 75 per cent perpetrated on women.

Time expired.

BARLEY SINGLE DESK

Mr RAU (Enfield): In my short contribution today I wish to refer to a matter that was raised in the earlier debate by the member for Schubert. In so doing, I would like to say that I have always found the member for Schubert to be a very cordial person, and I continue to hold that view. He has always been a gentleman in my dealings with him and nothing that I am about to say should reflect upon that very high esteem in which I hold him.

However, the member for Schubert came into this place today and accused me, in particular (and I hope I have his words right), of playing politics, for goodness sake, over the issue of barley. Nothing could be further from the truth. The member for Schubert was saying, in effect, that because of suggestions by me that the federal Treasurer has something to answer for in respect of the dreadful circumstances that are now imposed upon the South Australian parliament by the federal treasurer, I am somehow playing politics. Of course, that is not the case. For the member for Schubert, and others, who might repeat this fantasy over and over again I am sorry to inform them that repetition of a fantasy will never make it any more of a fact. It remains a fantasy.

Here are the facts. First of all, let us not forget who hands out the penalties under national competition policy. The answer of course is—and I would love to be able to do this in unison—everyone say together: Mr Costello. He is the one who hands out the penalties. The second indisputable fact is: let us not forget who has the discretion to refuse to accept a recommendation from the National Competition Council—and the answer is: Mr Costello. That is another fact, an uncomfortable one I know; nonetheless, it is a fact. What the member for Schubert is doing—I am sure mistakenly; I do not think he would do this deliberately—is blaming the victim (in this case, the South Australian government) for an act of constitutional thuggery on the part of the federal government through the actions of none other than the Treasurer, Mr Costello.

So, we are in this funny situation where the federal government is holding a gun to the state government's head threatening to pull the trigger unless the state government fiddles with the barley single desk, but the member for Schubert identifies the victim not as the South Australian

government but as the thug who is holding a gun to the government's head. That is a very strange situation. I am sure that when he reflects on it he will appreciate that it is exactly as I say and he will come around to my point of view. If the member for Schubert is serious about this, then he is playing politics, not me, because he knows damned well that we should all be standing shoulder to shoulder on the side of the victim, which is the South Australian government, which is being subjected to an act of constitutional thuggery by the federal government in relation to this very important issue.

The sooner we identify that and say in unison to the federal government, 'It is time to stop,' the better. That would be good for all of us. Let us not forget that the barley growers of South Australia are only one of a disparate coalition of the afflicted, a group of individuals from completely diverse industries all being afflicted by national competition policy. It is about time that a little bit of integrity was brought into the debate. I close on this point: this is constitutional blackmail, pure and simple. Let us nail the infamy for this on the door of the person to whom it belongs: that is, Mr Costello.

CHILD ABUSE

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): A lot of shots have been taken in this place at people who are not able to defend themselves. The history of child abuse in this state is something which I do not think any member of this place should use for political gain. People have said that there have been a number of arrests over the last week or two. We have also had two suicides. Trial by media must stop; this issue has to be treated much more seriously.

I have been liaising for many months with parents of children who attended St Ann's Special School, and I have asked the Premier to seek the Catholic Church's report into the abuse of children at St Ann's School and table it in this house. As yet, despite having written to the Archbishop and having received a letter from Monsignor David Cappo that the Archbishop was away and that he would get back to me, I have not received a response from the Archbishop. I have not seen a copy of the report via the Catholic Church, but I do have a copy of the report. The Premier has not sought to raise this report in the house, and I will leave members to draw their own conclusions as to why. I refer to a letter that I have received from the parents of a child who attended St Ann's Special School. It states:

Dear Duncan,

We have listened to Premier Rann speak strongly in public in the past week or so concerning the report from the Anglican Inquiry. We are exasperated that no similar statements have been made by him about the Report from the Inquiry into St Ann's, considering its findings are also damning. It is as though it has been completely ignored.

Last Friday (18 June) [this person] rang Peter Chataway, Premier Rann's Adviser to ask if the Premier had been provided with a copy of the report as he seemed to be unaware of its contents. [He] felt that Peter replied rather defensively, explaining that the Premier had previously asked the Archbishop if he would provide a copy of the Report for presentation in Parliament. He went on to explain that if the Archbishop did not supply the Report then there was nothing the Premier could do.

We attended the Anglican Synod last Saturday 19 June and have a copy of a statement by John Collas, Anglican Administrator in which he states on page 2 that on 'Friday 28 May, the Premier's Office rang indicating that they wished to table the Report in parliament on Monday 31 May. Arrangements for this were put in place and for Archbishop George to respond. Over that weekend, many of the people identified in or associated with the Report were advised of its public release'. The rest is now history.

These two examples of cooperation are in complete contrast. Is the Premier reluctant to request the Report to be made public or is the Archbishop stalling? Both are being particularly coy. We also understand that you have never received a response to your request for a copy of the Report. We wonder just what needs to be done for this Report to receive the same sort of public scrutiny that the Anglican Report has received. As you are aware from our previous notes to you, we have particular concerns that should be addressed. We wonder if the Catholic Church in Adelaide is so powerful that it has become untouchable.

Is it appropriate for a question to be asked again of Mr Rann whether he has received the Report to be tabled in parliament. If not, has he asked the Catholic Archbishop again if he is willing to provide the Report to parliament as he did with the Anglican Church? If the Archbishop refuses to provide a copy of the Report, what are his reasons.

The report is some 30 pages long and it raises a lot of questions. Questions have been raised by parents of the children who are the subject of the report, which was compiled by Mr B.R. Hayes QC. For example, why did Mr Hayes work from draft terms of reference rather than the official terms of reference for this report? The parents have major concerns about Mr Hayes' instructions from his instructing solicitor, Mr Tony Fuller of EMA Legal, who I understand is employed by the Catholic Church. No records were signed. Mr Hayes did not seek or speak to anyone about these statements and it was not even part of his brief to do so. No statements were given on oath. Persons making statements have not been examined to test their veracity. Mr Hayes can only report 'upon the facts provided to me', to use his words. These parents believe that Mr Hayes has been given a very limited brief on which to report to the Archbishop with a deal of inconsistent and contradictory information provided to him. They were appalled at the unprofessional nature of the interviews. They say that there has never been a police station at Mitchell Park and wonder whether it had anything to do with the photographs in police evidence. It goes on and on. It is a very unsatisfactory report.

FLOREY MEDICAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION ART SHOW

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Art plays a very important part in our lives. Not only does it inspire the soul and enhance the senses but it can also raise money. A very special art show will open on Saturday 26 June at the Busby Hall in the National Wine Centre at 6.30 p.m, preceded by an opening night cocktail party at the same venue, to raise funds for the Florey Medical Research Foundation at the Medical School of the University of Adelaide. There has been an overwhelming response from art schools, commercial art galleries, art teachers and kindies, as well as amateur and professional artists, and humbly I must inform the house that I, too, have been approached by the Florey Foundation and contributed a piece, my first acrylic and my first effort in the art area since leaving school, ably assisted in the production of same by a fine and respected local artist, Mr Mick O'Shea. I understand that over 400 paintings are involved, and every one will be offered for sale at \$250. All are unsigned, so you will either get a really good bargain if you choose something by a professional artist or something that you like. Either way, you will be supporting and providing the much needed funds for research for the Florey Foundation.

I must acknowledge the work of Robert Pontifex and his staff in preparing the exhibition, and also the recent award in the Queen's Birthday Honours to the former Florey Research Foundation stalwart, Mr Frank O'Donnell. Never has so

much been done by so few. In particular, the project will aid the Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study, which is also the recipient of the current 2004-06 Florey Medical Research Grant. This important study is being led by Associate Professor Gary Wittert. He and his team will use their \$450 000 to undertake a major study into the health and ageing of that threatened species—the Australian male. The project aims to study 1 000 men in Adelaide's north-western suburbs, home of the finest of the species, I am told, in what is believed to be the first national study of its kind. The study will attempt to identify a range of factors contributing to current health outcomes. It will look at the reproductive, physical and emotional aspects of health and their impact on the ageing process.

We all know that men, unlike women, have taken some time to address the neglected area of their health. More men die in every age group than women, except in the over 65s. This difference is due to diseases and accidents that are largely preventable, and include things such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and workplace injury. The loss and cost to family and community is enormous. South Australia has the oldest age profile in Australia, and this demographic feature will have significant impact and provide a great challenge for our health system as 24 per cent of the state budget is allocated to health. Work by the Florey Research Foundation will help to ensure that men enjoy longer and healthier lives. One particular preventable disease is smoking induced cancer—something highlighted by the recent death of former Tasmanian premier Jim Bacon.

Apart from his legacy of great work on behalf of that beautiful state, his message is: 'If you do not smoke, do not start; and if you are, you must stop, because if you smoke you are an idiot.' This may yet prove to be his greatest legacy. I urge all members in the house to note his warning; I know that some members are working very hard to stop their smoking habit. More than 19 000 Australians die each year from diseases caused by smoking. This means that almost 50 Australians per day die because they smoke. Approximately half of all people who smoke regularly eventually will be killed by their smoking habit, with many of these deaths occurring in middle age. I think the figure of 10 years has been promoted as the amount of time you cut from your life by continuing to smoke.

I urge all members, if they have time, to go to the exhibition—perhaps they could go on the opening day—and to buy something from the exhibition. By buying something you take the message back that prevention is better than cure, particularly in relation to smoking to as many people as possible, particularly by example, showing that smoking is a silly thing to do. We will all support smokers as they try to reform and, in doing so, ensure that they have a longer life with their loved ones. The other reason that I hate smoking is that smokers seem to drop their butts everywhere. At a recent working bee at a local school, I spent most of the day picking up cigarette butts. At the very least, if we can cut out the habit of smoking, we can improve people's health and reduce the waste in the waste stream.

YORKE PENINSULA PIPELINE

Mr MEIER (Goyder): I certainly endorse the member's remarks about cutting out smoking. The effects of smoking on our health system is incredible and anything we can do to draw that to people's attention is for the better. I say it as an

ex-smoker, and I know the negative effects on my health from the years that I did smoke.

Today I want to talk about several items. Recently, in my electorate I was shown some of the pipes which carry the main reticulated water supply to Yorke Peninsula and which would be part of the system that delivers water to the Paskeville storage dams and then down the whole of the peninsula. Much of that major pipeline is above ground and exposed. It is showing signs of rust in so many areas. You can also see many examples of where it has been repaired in previous years with the appropriate silver oxide paint, or whatever they use.

In taking me along sections of the pipeline, one of my constituents showed me just how bad it is and indicated that, in earlier times, the then E&WS personnel used to carry out regular maintenance and repairs to the pipe. That has not been done for some years—perhaps as a cost-cutting measure. However, it will not be a cost-cutting measure in the long-term. It would be an excellent project for the federal government's work for the dole scheme. It would be an easy skill to teach anyone. It would also be useful for them to learn about the preparation required prior to painting and, most importantly, it should give whoever is engaged in such a scheme a sense of satisfaction and a sense of making a real contribution to our society, because water is very important to Yorke Peninsula, my electorate, South Australia and Australia. I hope that the state government can give encouragement to the federal authorities, via the appropriate channels, that this is an excellent opportunity to take up.

I also want to highlight a matter that I have raised with the Minister for Transport in relation to possible changes to the legislation and procedures in obtaining identity and full roadworthy inspections of motor vehicles. Apparently, this has been carried out by the local police officer in country areas, but there is concern that that will not occur in the new financial year and that Regency Park will be the inspecting agency. I think that Regency Park is overworked already. Certainly, people such as those who buy cars that have been involved in minor accidents and seek to repair and resell them (and, certainly, quite a few second-hand motor vehicle dealers do that, all very legitimately; it is all above board, and in fact there are some excellent cars; and they have to undergo a roadworthy check) are very concerned, first, that there will be extra fees in the order of, I believe, some \$200 and, secondly—and more importantly—the fact that they may have to wait some weeks, or possibly even months, for inspectors to carry out an inspection.

As I said, I have raised this matter with the minister. I have been told by one of my constituents that, apparently, it has been put on hold for the time being. If that is as a result of the minister's personal action, I want to thank her. I hope that the parliament will have the opportunity to consider this matter if the appropriate regulations are brought before this house and, certainly, I will have something more to say in that respect. I ask the respective members of the Legislative Review Committee to please keep their eyes open for regulations that may affect the procedures that currently apply.

PARLIAMENT, REFORM

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): The idea of reforming our parliament is not a new one. Back in September 1999, I presented my ideas for reforming the South Australian parliament to the lower house. Today I again raise the issue

of parliamentary reform and why South Australia needs more proportional representation. Ours is a representative democracy, but what does this really mean? Once every three or four years we get the opportunity to elect representatives to whom we delegate the power to make decisions regarding the way our society is run. However, our current system of preferential voting in single member electorates has limitations. For example, no one single person is likely to represent our views on every issue. Most of us find that the MP of our choice is not elected, denying us the representation that we would prefer. However, we do not want a dictatorship, and our society is too big to be run by direct democracy—although we do retain that right in the form of referenda for some major decisions, such as changes to the constitution.

So, how can we create a more representative parliament? First, we need to consider the goals that we wish to achieve in structuring our parliament. The first goal must be fairness. As I have said previously, the key issue to be resolved in terms of fairness is the correlation between political party support and political party representation. This is the principle of proportionality. A second goal would be stability. By this I refer to the ability of the duly elected government to carry out its declared program while retaining a viable opposition able to regularly challenge the dominance of the executive of the day. Another goal should be ensuring a considerable degree of connection between particular communities and the members of parliament who represent them. The Australian Electoral Commission says that an electoral system should:

- result in a legislature that reflects the electorate's wishes;
- a government that reflects the majority opinion;
- be easily understood by the electorate;
- ensure a quick result;
- allow for stable government;
- allow effective constituent representation; and
- allow elector choice of candidates.

So, how does our current system measure up against these goals and criteria? On the positive side, it is fairly easy to understand. It does give relatively quick results and it has in the past generally led to stable government. Even in the past two South Australian parliaments, when the governing party has not had a majority in its own right, we have enjoyed stable government.

On the other side, the most obvious problem is that up to half the electorate voted for a candidate who was not elected. Certainly, voters can allocate preferences. Preferential voting in a single member electorate gives the voter the luxury of a protest vote but not much else. This results in a situation where approximately half the electorate is represented by a person whose policies they disagree with. The single member electorate system has two other major consequences: it tends to perpetuate a two-party system, and it tends to advantage one sector of society in determining the outcome of elections and in the porkbarrelling that precedes them—the predominantly middle-class voters in marginal electorates. The current system also fails to produce a legislature reflective of the range of views in the electorate. Thus, our current system meets most of the pragmatic criteria but fails most of the democratic ones and, most importantly, fails the goal of fairness.

The system does not allow for a range of views nor for specific constituencies, unless they happen to be regionally based. This system is no longer adequate for a diverse, pluralistic society such as ours. The alternative is to bring proportional representation (PR) into the House of Assembly.

With PR, voters are represented by parties in more direct proportion to the votes gained by each party. There are two approaches worth considering. First, multimember electorates (MME), where each electorate elects a number of members proportional to their support within the electorate. Thus, most voters will have at least one elected member of their choice and few will feel that their vote has been wasted. This is the system used in the senate, in Tasmania and in the ACT, noting, of course, that there is only one electorate per state in respect of the Senate.

In South Australia, we could, for example, have 11 electorates of five members each. The electorates would not be too large (about the same size as federal electorates). However, the quota for election would be about one-sixth of the vote instead of the current 50 per cent plus one. The second approach is a mixed member proportional MMP, or top-up system, where a certain number of members are elected from single member electorates, with the rest being appointed from lists nominated by the parties in such a way as to make the composition of the house reflective of the votes cast. Members may recall that I advocated this system for this house in this place years ago, so no-one can say that I have not been consistent on the issue of proportional representation.

It has been argued that PR fails some of the more pragmatic of our criteria for a good electoral system, in particular, the requirement for stability. However, it must be pointed out that Australia has, for much of the past 50 years, been governed by a coalition. Indeed, I would argue that South Australia has vastly benefited from the past two parliaments in which the government of the day has had to cooperate with Independent members. The result has been greater scrutiny of the executive. PR leads to voters being more satisfied with the democratic nature of their government, less cynical, more sophisticated, better politically educated and feeling more included in the government of their country.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Transport): I move:

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

Motion carried.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Minister for Transport): I table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to manufacturing strategy made by the Hon. Paul Holloway MLC in the other place.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on motion (resumed on motion):

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

(Continued from page 2499.)

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): In rising to participate in this debate, I think that, out of all the discussions which

took place in the questioning of the budget, the most significant document in all the papers that were presented is contained in Budget Paper 3, on page 2.5, where there is a graph (Figure 2.1) which indicates the general government sector net interest expenses from 1994 to that estimated for 2007. It indicates that in 1994-95 we were in excess of \$600 million in debt. By 2007 we will be paying a very minimal amount of interest on government borrowings. That is a significant benefit to the people of South Australia, because the funds that have been released will allow for further capital expenditure and improvements in general government services. I am not sure whether it is appropriate for me to move to have this particular graph incorporated into *Hansard*, but if it is I would do so. Is it possible?

The SPEAKER: The honourable member may not be aware, but statistical tables at this point are all that can be incorporated into *Hansard*.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: What about a graph?

The SPEAKER: No, statistical tables are all that can be incorporated. Maybe my view is now shared by him at least that other forms of illustrative material could be incorporated, but at present it is not permissible.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker. On another occasion, perhaps I can be successful. I will have to ensure that this particular graph is widely circulated because it will indicate to the public of South Australia that this government has benefited from the difficult decisions made by the previous government, where it has \$600 million—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Thank you.

Mr Scalzi: The Attorney just thanked us.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: And I am grateful for the acknowledgment of the Attorney-General concerning the amount of money that is now available. In discussing finances, Mr Speaker, there has been an ongoing public debate in relation to what role the Royal Flying Doctor Service should provide, particularly in its location at Port Augusta. The house would be aware that the Royal Flying Doctor Service is one of the icons of Australia. It is an organisation which is beyond reproach. It has provided outstanding services to the vast outback and to the travelling public and people in regional and rural South Australia. It has been widely supported.

However, there is a review taking place and it has been suggested that some of those services currently located at Port Augusta may be transferred to Adelaide. That has evoked a very strong public reaction throughout the northern parts of the state, because there is a very strong view that none of the services currently provided at Port Augusta should be removed. The Flying Doctor Service was recently kind enough to write and provide me with some information. It says:

The number of patient contacts made by the Royal Flying Doctor Service Central Operations has increased over the past two years, from 38 745 to 47 797 annually—a rise of 23 per cent. We are sure you would agree that under these circumstances any responsible board would review this situation and ensure that it can continue to meet the increasing call on its services.

As a consequence, in November 2003 an internal review was instigated to undertake a preliminary review of our operations and bases in South Australia with a view to ensuring that we were configured as such as was to provide the highest possible level of medical assistance right across South Australia. Following from this, in March 2004, management presented four possible configurations of our people and capital to the board. At that stage, one configuration was presented with a recommendation for further investigation.

The board of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Central Operations consequently commissioned an external consultant, Healthcare Management Advisers, under the direction of Mr Joe Scuteri, to conduct this next phase of the review.

It goes on to talk about the other particular matters. One of the interesting things that came out of this was:

The foundation of this review was not about funding and up until now the review had been conducted under the premise that our resources from the government were fixed. Our previous representations to the government for additional funding suggested no reason to assume otherwise. The Premier seems to have indicated that this may not necessarily be the case and the board is pursuing this matter.

We understand there is genuine concern in the community as to the future of our Port Augusta operations. At the same time we have been disappointed in some of the erroneous and misleading information that has been circulating.

It is interesting to note that, in the annual report of the board, statement No. 3 indicates SA government grants in 2003 amounted to \$1 202 000. The Northern Territory government gave \$2 962 000, and the federal grant was \$4 451 000. In addition, there was some cost recovery, that is, hospitals paying for transfers and evacuations, of \$6 893 000; other revenue of \$128 000; other grants of \$140 000; and other federal grants of \$330 000, and this made a total amount of \$16 million.

If it is necessary for the state government to put in extra money to make up for any shortfall so that the services can be maintained, I believe that will be money well invested, because we cannot allow a situation where services at the Port Augusta Hospital will be downgraded and medical expertise lost. We cannot have the refuelling services around South Australia reduced or, in some cases, discontinued, because that would create unnecessary hardship and difficulty. The Premier has already become involved by writing a letter to the Prime Minister, although I do not know why he has written to the Prime Minister, because I understand the federal government gave most of the money for the last aeroplane that was purchased. Most of the money for the one previously purchased in South Australia was provided by the previous Liberal government. Unfortunately, I do not think that much money has been provided by the state government for the last Pilatus they bought. However, the government should pick up the tab, because the provision of badly needed health services in rural and regional South Australia and for the travelling public is significant and should not be downgraded.

This public debate has generated a great deal of interest. I come down firmly on the side of those people who want the services maintained at Port Augusta so that they can be assured that they will not have a service which is not as good as that that currently operates. I urge the Royal Flying Doctor Service to approach the government quickly and point out the need to ensure that the services are maintained.

Having briefly made those comments, I turn to another matter of great concern to me. In the company of the member for Schubert, I recently attended an open day at Blanchetown, where Scouts South Australia has a gliding club where young people are taught to fly gliders. It has been established in the corner of my constituency (and Blanchetown will be in my constituency after the next election). The land is owned by a farmer in the district who has given them a long-term lease, which is most commendable—and that person has been the victim of some quite unprofessional and outrageous activities in relation to native vegetation, but I will raise that issue on another occasion.

It is a very good project. We have supported them in obtaining some money, but they need extra funds to bring the facilities up to a better standard to make them more attractive for young people to participate in this very important activity. As someone who has enjoyed flying aeroplanes, I had never seen a powered glider before, and I was most interested in these machines. It appeared to me that the young people were enjoying themselves. I was able to present them with the South Australian flag, which came with the compliments of the South Australian government, which I appreciate. I think that the Scouts are doing a great job, and I do call on the minister to give them that extra financial assistance, which is small when one considers the state budget, but the benefits will help many people. It will create opportunities and it will be in the long-term interests of all South Australians.

On the way back from that event, the member for Schubert and I had an appointment with Mr and Mrs Reimann who, unfortunately, are endeavouring to build an organic fertiliser facility in the Mid Murray Council area. My understanding is that they had the support of the Mid Murray Council, but the Development Assessment Commission has acted in a manner which, to put it mildly, has been less than constructive and less than professional. To put it mildly, the way in which it has conducted its affairs has been quite outrageous.

I think it is deplorable that these people who want to develop a most worthwhile facility, which will provide a much-needed benefit to the wine industry, would be taken through such an arduous and protracted procedure which, in my view, is contrary to the best interests of the people of this state. I received a letter from the people representing Mr and Mrs Reimann and, so there can be no misunderstanding, the application number is 711/0495/03. The letter states:

I have been instructed by my clients B. & M. Reimann, to write to you to describe in detail the events surrounding their Development Application, which includes the involvement of various participants and the information that was presented to the Development Assessment Commission which was the decision making authority. In particular, reasons will be presented on the Commission's refusal decision, which is considered to be an unsafe decision. Your response is requested.

That is, a response is requested from the minister. The letter continues:

Significant detail will be presented because we are aware of the contents of 'extract from House of Assembly *Hansard*' on Monday 21 June 2004 at which there was an interchange between you and Mr Ivan Venning. I understand that you are following 'a path of inquiry' therefore it is requested that you take the contents of this letter into consideration. For simplicity, this presentation will be separated into three areas. I will begin with the Commission's decision because this has been critical to the outcome, and is a final link in a chain of mismanagement. Then the process leading up to the Commission's decision will be described, and finally the presentation of information by other parties will be exposed.

1. Development Assessment Commission Decision.

The Commission's reasons for refusing the development application do not stand up to scrutiny, they are flawed, and are considered to be legally contentious.

There is more to that. The letter continues:

- The Commission's first reason
'the proposal is in conflict with Council wide Objectives 21 and 29 as it is in a location where sensitive land uses exist in the adjoining Rural Living Zone, which is on three sides of the development site.'

The Mid Murray Council says:

Development at the interface between industrial activities and sensitive uses which is compatible with surrounding activities, particularly those in adjoining zones. . . waste management facilities to be protected from incompatible development.

- The Commission's second reason.

'the proposal is in conflict with Council wide Objective 27 as it is not an orderly and economic location for the proposed development given the flooding issues.'

That is not correct. This is a very lengthy document. I call upon the minister to respond to the criticism. I ask the minister whether she is completely satisfied that the people in question are being given fair treatment, that all those involved have acted appropriately, that there has been no conflict of interest and that people have not had access to documents. I am appalled that suddenly the Reimanns have had an offer out of the blue to buy the property. I wonder why. I am interested in the comments made by one of the people who worked for the commission. I have been in receipt of other correspondence in relation to this, and there are other documents in my possession. I really believe that if this matter is not cleared up in the very near future all of these documents may have to be given to law enforcement agencies so that they can have proper consideration, because I believe that these people, who only want to do good and spend a lot of their own money, have not received what one could consider fair, reasonable and transparent consideration. I call on the minister to use her good offices to resolve this matter and allow these people to get on with their project without any further hassle, interference, humbug or bureaucratic interference.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Leader of the Opposition): I suppose today provides an opportunity to comment again on the budget, but also on the estimates process. It is a necessary process, and I think for oppositions it is a very important process. For ministers it should be an extremely important process, and an opportunity for them to take stock of the issues within their department and to get well and truly briefed. Unfortunately, what we have seen in the last couple of years is also a pretty frustrating process. We have seen a lot of filibustering, a lot of lengthy dorothea dixers and a lot of questions taken on notice. We know that questions taken on notice are inevitable but it really seems that a lot of the questions taken on notice this year should have been answered at the time; the information was not all that difficult. It seemed, this year, that questions taken on notice should have been answered by the officers present. I suppose that we now await all the information from questions taken on notice, and we hope that that wait is not too long and that we will receive the information that we were looking for.

It has not given me any more confidence in the budget or the fact that the government actually really understands the fiscal strategy which they say is going to achieve the targets within the strategic plan. It does not seem relevant to where, they say, the state needs to go in the strategic plan. Certainly, so much within the budget is contrary to the goals which the strategic plan sets. It has not changed my view on the budget. Worryingly, some of the ministers showed that they are not across their departments. That has become more evident during estimates and that in itself is a problem.

As far as the budget goes, we have talked about how there was a lot of spin, pre-announcements and whatever else and, when the budget papers came out, a lot of those things turned into disappointment. The time frames were very different from what one would have thought. What was represented as new money was quite often just a continuation of programs, and in some cases even a reduction in programs, but held up as wonderful new initiatives. Once you got the papers you realised that that certainly was not the case.

One of my big problems, and in the budget reply I talked about this, is that the budget is very much an anti-jobs budget. There are several reasons for that. That is not just a bit of rhetoric. It really does not give any confidence that we are going to see a turnaround in the employment prospects for South Australia. South Australia, for a range of reasons, has not done well on the jobs front over the last 12 months. It was going okay until the middle of last year. Unfortunately, this financial year we have seen South Australia lose a lot of full-time jobs whilst Australia has gone ahead and created a lot. This budget is not going to help that situation. It is a high taxing budget. By independent assessment, we are the highest taxing state in Australia. This government is now taking nearly \$600 million more than the previous Liberal government took in taxation, and that is soaking a lot of money out of the economy. That is having a range of effects, but ultimately the greatest effect it will have is a reduction in jobs.

By its own admission, this budget talks about a job target for the next 12 months of 0.75 per cent. That is very low—it is less than half what the rest of the states in Australia are talking about—and, as I said, it comes at a time when we have lost a lot of full-time jobs in South Australia while the rest of Australia has gone ahead. It is off a low base and, if members look at what has happened in the last year and include the projection with that, it means that South Australia will be pretty stagnant over the two year period as far as jobs go. This is at a time when Australia as a whole is looking at a job growth of 3 or 4 per cent over those two years. We also had it put to us that there would be a huge amount of tax relief in this budget. The figure of \$360 million was thrown in. That obviously evaporated. As time went on, we found out that that was over four years and \$180 million of it was the bank debit tax, which had been agreed to some time ago and which does not start disappearing until next year, anyway.

The \$360 million tax relief really worked out to \$40 million in this coming year, and that was basically in two areas. One of those was payroll tax but, when you really look at it, more companies will be paying payroll tax in this coming year than previously, and so the government's income from payroll tax increases by \$8 million. There is not a lot of relief in that area. The other high-profile tax cut was the cut to stamp duty for first home buyers. Much was made of that, but when we compare it with the rest of Australia, we can see that the relief in South Australia is extremely limited and nowhere near the levels of relief given in the other states. From the point of view of taxation, it is a very high taxing budget and a very high taxing government.

The government has to realise that the economy is not about running a big surplus: it is about managing a whole range of issues. If you just soak money out of the economy with taxes, then that is all you will do. This additional take on tax has come a time when, unfortunately, tourism has not performed as well as it has elsewhere in Australia and we have seen a major drop on the export front over a long period (nearly two years now). We have seen it go from \$9.1 billion per annum to \$7.4 billion per annum; that is, \$1.7 billion disappearing from our economy and it is really starting to hurt. With less money coming in as a result of a major drop in exports and the government's taking hundreds of million of dollars more in tax, the money that is available for investing, retail spending, holidays, hospitality and whatever suffers. And when that suffers, jobs suffer.

Retail spending has been weak in South Australia compared with the rest of Australia over the last 12 to

18 months and that has had a direct impact, which is easy to spot when members look at the job situation in the retail trade. We have lost many jobs from the retail trade largely because of the fact that we are not getting the consumer spend not only as a result of exports having dropped but also because taxation has been very high. Unfortunately, if you are looking at jobs, over the last couple of years this government seems to have removed the money from those areas of government which actually create jobs and which create the type of environment in which people will invest. What has happened with the former department of industry and trade has been well documented. We have seen many people disappear from that department and we have also seen many of the programs scrapped. That is starting to impact on jobs. It is impacting on our exports, and it is impacting on a whole range of areas.

On top of that, money has been taken out of tourism. That also costs us jobs. If you are not going to put money into tourism marketing, you will not get the tourists—that is a well proven fact; and, yet again, that cost jobs as well. There is a whole range of those things. The spending on infrastructure is very disappointing. We saw the government come out before the budget was released and give the impression that there was a boost to capital works but, when you actually look at the papers, you see that capital works have actually reduced. All the government has done is treated the way that it accounts for motorcars differently so, if you take that out, it is spending less on capital works than was spent in the previous year. At a time when we are underperforming on jobs that is not a good idea. We will no doubt to pay the penalty for that.

I think it is a budget of disappointments. We have been contacted by quite a few pensioners. I think that they were very disappointed that there was nothing in this budget for them. Country health is an area that really has suffered badly over the last couple of years, and this budget makes it very hard in the area of country health. The people who are out there trying to administer that have some major headaches over the next 12 months with what is actually a reduction in real terms of the funding for country health, which goes dead against the fact that demand on the other side is going up. It is a very disappointing budget as far as economic development goes, with almost a self-fulfilling low target for jobs growth within South Australia. One thing that stood out—and estimates committees certainly brought it out—was that, despite the Premier and the Attorney being out there on a daily basis saying how wonderful this government is and how tough it is on law and order, the fact is that the average number of people in gaol went up by seven in the last year—I emphasise that it was by seven prisoners—which is way below what is happening in the rest of Australia. Add to that the fact that, while this government says that it is going to be so tough on law and order and has an attitude and a public rhetoric that says, 'Let's lock them all up,' we have not seen them get any extra prisoners, but they have also shelved the idea of a new women's gaol. They have shelved the McNally training centre as well. Obviously, they know that they are not going to have many more in gaol, otherwise they would not have put off those important capital works.

I think that estimates confirmed for us that it is a disappointing budget, and there was a lot of spin out there initially. It also showed that there were a lot of ministers who are not really across their portfolios. That has an impact because, unless ministers are across their portfolio, they will not have the policy ideas; they will not be able to champion good ideas

through cabinet; and you really do not get the good initiatives coming through. I think that is well and truly starting to show. We will be keeping a fair old eye on the government. One thing that has come out of it, again, is that I do not think the government has done much at all about what they call the fat cat syndrome—people over \$100 000 a year within the public service. This government promised to reduce their number by 50, but there is no doubt that it is up by many hundreds and that, yet again, is what you would call a broken promise. It also comes about by ministers and the Premier not keeping an eye out; you say something but, unless you monitor it, unless you get your CEOs to actually act on it, it just will not happen by itself.

This is a government that is worrying too much about what is in the media on a daily basis rather than getting back into its departments, watching what the departments do, managing them and making sure that the South Australian taxpayer gets value for the taxation dollar that they have put in. I will leave it at that. Certainly, we are disappointed with the budget. We are disappointed with the fact that this government does not really seem to understand the difference between running an economy and just having surplus budgets.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I move:

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

Motion carried.

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): In coming into this parliament some three budgets ago, I brought with me some knowledge of financial and managerial processes gleaned by education and experience. Full of this knowledge, my initial response to the process of budget evaluation in my first year in parliament was one of some bewilderment. The underlying accounting principles used in the budget process were largely alien to me, and I discovered this was due to the Public Service moving from a system based entirely on cash flow measurement—a tool but not a measure in the private sector—to the more generally accepted method of accrual accounting. As I said in my first speech on this year's budget, we are still in a hybrid situation and the final budget outcome, expressed as either a deficit or surplus, takes the accrual outcome, adds back depreciation and then deducts out capital acquisitions. The result is neither fish nor fowl and would be totally baffling to those in the private sector—if they bothered to examine the budget papers.

I can see some logic in using this measure of budget outcome in that it gives some notion of what remains, if anything, after all budget lines have been expended. What bothers me about the measure at a most profound level is that it treats capital expenditure as an expense and, because of this, acts as a constraint on spending on necessary infrastructure. The budget papers reassuringly indicate that South Australia will be adopting international public sector accounting standards within the next few years, and these appear to be very close to those used in the private sector. For me and those in the larger community with a background in private sector finance, this move will make future budget papers more comprehensible, more accurate and more reasonable in treating capital expenditure as a long-term investment in the state's prosperity rather than a one-off hit on the state's budget position.

Having finally grasped the rather turgid accounting mix that is the current accounting system used in South Australia and other states, and having been reassured that its days are numbered, I have now cast my eyes over the estimates process. The concept itself is excellent and would be further embellished with fewer inane dorothy dixers; fewer questions from the opposition that have no connection with the budget lines under consideration; shorter opening statements from ministers; less stonewalling; and more involvement of senior public servants in the process so that some ministers, in particular, do not appear as ventriloquist dummies but, rather, as competent ministers prepared to admit their lack of knowledge in some areas requiring specific expertise.

In moving from the macro to the micro, I was again struck by the alien nature of many of the terms and measures employed. The glossary of terms did not pick them up the way that the macro terms are, and I believe that this should be remedied in future years. I believe that someone should be able to go into a document and, if a term appears that is not in common parlance, they should be able to go to the back of the document for an explanation.

In the first few days of estimates (before fatigue set in) I assiduously went through each volume, making notes of concepts and accounting treatments for which I could find no explanation or rationale. I now have a list and I am requesting the assistance of a Treasury officer to get on top of the micro aspects of the budget. On the matter of fatigue, does the process have to be so excruciatingly dull and boring? The process is so driven by Hansard and the written word that there is no opportunity for ministers to use visual aids to explain sometimes complex arrangements. The Speaker is keen to have the process of the house recorded by video—and I am now rapidly overcoming my initial scepticism. This is not the 1860s. If the proceedings of the house can be recorded on DVD, then we should do it. This would allow audio video presentations in situations such as estimates to be placed on the historical record, and allow members of the house to be offered the appropriately detailed explanation to questions to which they are entitled.

A further matter I would like to canvass in relation to the performance of financial scrutiny by the house is the lack of a Public Accounts Committee. This is a matter to which the chair of the Economic and Finance Committee, the member for Reynell, and I are committing considerable attention. I have been briefed by the chair of the Western Australian Public Accounts Committee and I have sat in on one session of the New South Wales Public Accounts Committee, an opportunity for which I thank the New South Welshmen. I have also been briefed by the New South Wales Auditor-General on his relationship with the New South Wales PAC.

It is plain to me that this parliament has no formal arrangement for scrutinising budget expenditure as it occurs in the between-budget period of the year. The parliament also lacks the mechanism available to other parliaments, by virtue of their having PACs, to interact on a more constant basis with their Auditor-General and with ours. It is all well and good to pick up on problems after they occur, but it is far better to nip them in the bud before they constitute a major drain on the public finances. In New South Wales, for example, the Auditor-General formally presents each of his reports to the PAC and can suggest that it follows up on his work to ensure that shortcomings identified by his department are actually rectified.

It is my hope that a detailed proposal for the restructuring of the Economic and Finance Committee as a Public Ac-

counts Committee will not be too far away. I believe this budget, in the sense of its allocation of funds, is what is required by the state. I would like a clearer linkage between economic development objectives, State Strategic Plan targets and social inclusion priorities to be more clearly articulated in future budget papers but, in the absence of these in this budget, it is still clear after the estimates process that state moneys are being wisely spent and for the purpose that will clearly benefit the citizens of this state.

Mr SCALZI (Hartley): I, too, wish to make a brief contribution on the estimates process, and I commend some of the ideas of the member for Napier. I have been listening to him carefully. Obviously, as a member of the government he is not pleased with the actual budget process and examination, and there is no question that there is always room for improvement. However, I do not agree with a lot of the critics who say that estimates are a waste of time, and I was not suggesting that the member for Napier was saying that. There is no question that, as the honourable member has just outlined, we need to look closely at this process, but I believe that estimates committees and examination play a very important role in our democratic process.

They make the government accountable; they sharpen the opposition; and, indeed, they make accountable the public servants who are responsible for putting things together. If we were just to look at the budget estimate process, just what happens in this chamber, there is no question that it is an exhaustive process and, at times—

Mr Rau: Exhaustive or exhausting?

Mr SCALZI: It should be more of the former but unfortunately sometimes it is more of the latter. As the leader has stated, what the budget estimates process has done is confirm what we have been saying about the budget: that it is very much on the obsession with the AAA rating; it is very much on the government's obsession with trying to balance and not addressing the issues. Whilst a lot of the funds are welcome, especially in health and child protection, you can see when you really examine them in the budget estimates process that they are spread over a three or four year period and not as generous as they first appear, especially as proposed in the government's press releases and rhetoric.

The process of examining the budget is a little like making sure you polish the kitchen floor to the point where it is so clean that you can eat off it. Nobody suggests that you should eat off the kitchen floor, but it is a good feeling to know that if food falls on it you could eat off it. A process should be in place whereby everything is accountable. The process of what happens in the Public Service and in ministers' departments sharpens us. In reality it is like having an examination. If one only learnt the questions that were going to be asked and gave those answers, they would not have learnt much. In any exam one has to be prepared for anything that might be asked and, in so doing, one gets a broader understanding of the whole democratic process. For those reasons I believe that estimates provide a valuable process for examining the government's budget, its proposed expenditure and how it will do it for the year.

We can look at the press releases. I am pleased that *The Advertiser* article by education reporter Jemma Chapman, about when teachers can and cannot touch children, came out of the estimates committee. The article stated:

Teachers will be given a strict code of conduct for physical contact with children in their care as part of the Education Department review.

This I remember was straight out what happened in education estimates.

We also found in the education estimates how much money was spent on the Sturt Street school. We got the detail of the expenditure of \$144 000 for a lift and how many students are at that school. From my viewpoint, I was also able to ask questions, as can any member, on my area and about what was happening to the former Hectorville school site. I looked everywhere in the budget papers, but could find no mention of what was happening there. I had heard that it had been sold to the Housing Trust, and the minister came back and stated that it was sold to the Housing Trust for \$3.65 million. If we did not have the opportunity to ask questions, we would not have gained that knowledge.

Also in education, the member for Bragg asked about training for counsellors, and we found that this government is very strong on child protection—and I commended it for that and for the money it is putting into the training of counsellors—but we found out that only state school people get that training. It is very poor that there is no assistance to 30 per cent of schoolchildren in this state by way of training for counsellors in private schools.

There is no question that we should have cooperation between state and private schools and, if child protection is so important, the government should assist private schools as well. We are never short on criticism by the government of the federal government when it allocates funds to private schools. We must remember that most of the funds—over 88 per cent, I think—come from state governments, and those funds that come from the federal government receive a lot of criticism regarding the allocations to private versus state schools. However, in relation to child protection, there should be cooperation, and the state government should have a commitment to assist in the training of counsellors for private schools as well. If they have to be accountable to anyone in the same SSABSA process, they should also get assistance to do that. It was an important process in that, as I said, we were able to ask questions. I commend the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education for the cooperation given to me since I have been given responsibility in this area.

Also, we looked at the Youth Action Plan which was promised last year in the estimates. It has not gone before cabinet yet. But one is able to ask these important questions in estimates committees, and it makes the government accountable and parliament is kept informed of what is going on. We have been able to ask questions about support for more volunteer mentoring in schools and so on. These are important questions which we would not normally have been able to ask, especially backbenchers who have to voice the concerns of their electorate. If there was not an estimates process, one would not be able to relate what is in the budget to one's constituents. So, I am pleased that we are able to do that. There were also other comments. Mr Speaker, you noted the lack of facilities in this place (as did the Deputy Speaker) to enable us to function properly as a parliament. Questions are asked and responses are given during estimates committees which one would not be able to get during the questioning process at other times.

As the leader has said, the budget is disappointing in its obsession with balancing the books without addressing the issues of unemployment, for example, and I note that, in particular, youth is still 29 per cent. We know that the government's own projection, in comparison with other states, is very disappointing and, on examination, the budget

does not address that. Of course, this government has had the opportunity, because of its windfall in stamp duties and land tax, to give back more. We must remember that taxation is a leakage in the circular flow model in economics. The more you tax and the more levies you have, the less able you are to promote economic activity in the community.

The Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith: Give us a reference!

Mr SCALZI: A reference?

The Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith: To taxation being a leakage in the circular flow of economics.

Mr SCALZI: It is basic economics.

The Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith: Economics 101?

Mr SCALZI: You are taking money out of the system. You must balance the books—there is no question of that—but you must do it in a responsible way so that you address the needs of the community. This government has had an opportunity, through the windfall from stamp duties and land tax, but has not used those funds to address the needs which it says are a priority—that is, health, education and law and order. An examination of the budget shows that it has taken a lot more from the South Australian community than it has given.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I, too, will be brief in my contribution to the debate because I do not want to hold up the house unnecessarily. I sat on four committees during the course of the budget estimates, and I found the process interesting and rewarding. Some committees were more interesting than others, but overall it was an interesting process and I gleaned quite an amount of information from it. The first committee dealing with Treasury and Finance sat on Wednesday 16 June, and I was one of the representatives of the opposition. A couple of interesting points came to the fore during questioning of the Treasurer and his officials. The first concerned a briefing note which the Treasurer received from the acting minister for transport (Hon. John Hill) concerning the federal government's offer of \$80 million to assist in the construction of the bridges at Port Adelaide, which are part of the significant infrastructure development that is taking place in respect of the third river crossing.

This government is about to embark on its biggest infrastructure project and it will take place in the Treasurer's own electorate of Port Adelaide, but for some unknown reason the Treasurer could not remember the actual dollar amount that the federal government was offering. I find this a little perplexing because, as I have said, this is the biggest infrastructure project on which this government is about to embark and it is in the Treasurer's own electorate, but he could not remember reading the briefing note from the acting minister for transport saying that the federal government was going to put \$80 million on the table. I think the federal government has attached three conditions to that offer, but my two colleagues (one of whom was the shadow treasurer) and I were perplexed, to say the least, that the treasurer of the day could not remember this figure. I do not know why—

Mr Scalzi: Selective amnesia.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: As the member for Hartley says, perhaps it was selective amnesia. Another interesting point that came from that line of questioning was that the Treasurer was not sure—I am paraphrasing—that anyone was discussing this issue with the federal government, yet the opposition was able to ascertain that the Chairman of the Economic Development Board was actually in Canberra that evening to discuss this particular issue with senior government ministers.

So, that is another interesting point that came out of that committee.

There is another issue which the opposition has uncovered. I refer to a press release from the shadow minister in which the opposition exposed the existence of \$226 million of unallocated cash in four separate Treasury contingency lines. The details of this can be seen in the report of the estimates committee of that day. These lines contain unallocated cash which can be used to fund pre-election promises. So, those are two interesting issues that came out of that estimates committee.

I also sat on the emergency services estimates committee and I raised some issues regarding the Country Fire Service in my electorate. That is a crucially important issue in the electorate of Kavel in the Adelaide Hills, because as we all know the bushfire risk during the summer months is extreme in the Mount Lofty Ranges. I asked a series of questions about cold burning in national parks, reserves and government-owned land. I also questioned the minister about new CFS stations that quite urgently need to be built in the townships of Nairne, Birdwood and Mount Torrens.

I believe that the budget estimates process has again demonstrated its value as a tool for probing the government. As I said, the committees have provided valuable detail on the government's revenue raising and spending plans. The government tactic through the estimates process has been to have ministers avoid answering direct questions wherever possible, delivering rambling answers to waste time, and to take difficult questions on notice, thus avoiding media scrutiny. I look forward to opening up the budget in 12 months' time, running up to a state election.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I thank all members for their contribution. I do not intend to speak for long because, as usual, this has been an exhaustive process in the extreme. Hundreds if not thousands of questions have been asked of government ministers—probing, thoughtful questions, difficult questions, tricky questions, good questions and bad questions—the whole box and dice. That is the rigour of the estimates process. It allows all members to probe the budget and give it the degree of scrutiny that it deserves.

I thank opposition members for their conduct during this process and I thank them for their contributions. I take their criticisms as they are meant, that is, they are constructive, not personal. They are balanced and mild, and I will take all those views into account when I frame next year's budget. I look forward to bringing down the Labor government's fourth budget, ensuring that the economic prosperity of this state continues and that we are finally considered an equal to all mainland states of Australia in the quality of our balance sheet.

In closing, I say that what the opposition has failed to do is put down an alternative strategy. It has made criticisms, and that is understandable, but it has failed to present an alternative financial plan for the state. In essence they want to spend more, cut taxes and balance the budget, but that equation does not work. I implore the media at some point to put the opposition under sufficient scrutiny to ensure that it brings forward a blueprint for its financial plan for the future. Until that time, it is a whingeing, whining opposition—a constructive whingeing, whining opposition—unlike myself when I was in opposition, because I was a much more constructive member of parliament.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I suppose that misleading the parliament is an offence. I was as opportunistic as members opposite. I thank all members of the house and I look forward to the speedy passage of the bill through another place.

Motion carried.

The SPEAKER: Whilst I will not stand and members may therefore choose to leave the chamber in the course of the brief remarks that I wish to make, I nonetheless wish to note the fact that the estimates committees do not function in the way in which honourable members might expect or wish them to. They effectively prevent debate of each of the portfolio lines and waste a lot of time through the mechanisms which were alluded to by several members over recent years but especially, on this occasion, by the member for Napier.

If questions were limited to three minutes I would be inclined to say that that was more than adequate; and if the time to answer any of them were limited to four minutes, again, in my opinion, that would be very generous. Such questions have to be explicitly aimed at discovering the amount of money that has been appropriated, or proposed to be appropriated, for a particular purpose in a particular program and state what the goal or purpose is in some greater detail that might be available within the budget papers, thereby enabling clarification of ambiguities and a clearer understanding of the direction of the government, that is, the government in either of its two parts—the bureau and agency seeking the funds and the minister who has political oversight as the elected representative for that agency or department—in answers to such questions.

It is important that we get it right. We can be trailblazers. We were the first state in the federation—indeed, the first place in federation—to produce the budget estimates committees concept. We could have made greater progress, and I had expected that we would have during the last decade, but we have not. We now need to apply ourselves to that so that it is not so much a case of adversarial advocacy within the framework of questioning but, rather, that is taken out of the estimates committees inquiry process and provided to the chamber for short grievances, department by department, portfolio by portfolio, and pass those as three minute grievances on each of the portfolios, rather than as one big lump at the end. That would more clearly enable the public to see the difference between what the government proposes to do and believes is correct and what the opposition suggests as an alternative strategy.

The other strong point I wish to make is that this place needs to have its separate budget so that no treasurer ever again in the future needs to feel nervous, or no government needs to feel apprehensive that, if a decision is made to do something sensible and necessary for the institution of the parliament, it is likely to be opportunistically criticised for the government's proposing to make the change. It prevents the opposition from feeling jealous that the government will get the kudos for such a thing. A separate budget for the parliament would enable all members of the parliament to engage in free and fulsome debate of the appropriation needed for each of the divisions of the parliament, to make it function as an institution and to amend it if necessary without any risk whatever to the government, since an amendment to the budget papers, as we know, for the government itself and the bureaus, is a vote of no confidence in the government and would bring the government down if a change of so much as one dollar in the amount sought were to be passed by the house. That is a longstanding tradition of Westminster parliaments.

No; I passionately believe that the parliament itself needs to be able to debate its own budget openly and without fear or favour and without the government being called to account for any change which the parliament may choose to make to the proposed appropriations brought in through the process that is contained in the bill which I have drafted and which should have long since passed both of the houses, in my judgement—with or without amendment; I do not mind. Unless we do that, we will continue to lash ourselves as though we were masochists and to be ridiculed by the press and the public at large for not having the guts to deal with serious occupational health and safety issues, as well as the security of the building and adequate and appropriate facilities for everyone who must work here, so that the working environment can be more conducive to better outcomes. I thank the house for its attention.

Motion carried.

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

That the remainder of the bill be agreed to.

Motion carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.22 p.m. the house adjourned until Monday 28 June at 2 p.m.