HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 27 June 2006

The SPEAKER (Hon. J.J. Snelling) took the chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

ASSENT TO BILLS

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, assented to the following bills:

Gas Pipelines Access (South Australia) (Greenfields Pipeline Incentives) Amendment,

Superannuation (Administered Schemes) Amendment.

VISITORS TO PARLIAMENT

The SPEAKER: I draw to the attention of honourable members the presence in the chamber today of students from the Port Adelaide TAFE, who are guests of the member for Florey; members of the Flagstaff Hill Probus Club, who are guests of the member for Fisher; and students from the Valley View Secondary School, who are my guests.

CHILD SEX ABUSE

A petition signed by 101 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to introduce a separate, specialist court for child sex abuse cases that will expedite cases quickly and efficiently; employ experts in child abuse; and development; and use inquisitorial rather than adversarial methods, was presented by the Hon. I.F. Evans.

Petition received.

EDUCATION, SKILLS AND TRAINING

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am announcing to this house today that the government is undertaking an unprecedented program to ensure that South Australians are trained and have the skills they need to take on the jobs being created by our thriving economy. There is a jobs boom occurring in the state, particularly in the defence and mining industries. In its first term the government made an unprecedented commitment to tackle the problem of early school leaving and to make sure that all young people are engaged in education, training or work; that is, learning or earning.

We raised the school leaving age to 16—after more than 40 years—and we invested $28.4 million in a package of initiatives designed to keep young people focused on learning. We set a target in South Australia's Strategic Plan to increase the school leaving age to 17 by 2010 to ensure that young people are either in school, employed or in structured training, and we are on track to deliver this. We will raise the school leaving age to 17. They will either be earning or learning or in training.

These are ambitious but essential goals and we are making headway. The latest figures indicate that South Australia's school retention rate has reached its highest level in a decade. Our extensive review of the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) lays down a plan for significant reform of the senior years of secondary education. The review headed up by a panel of three people, including the immediate past president of Business SA, Ms Patricia Crook, was widely embraced by industry and business. To meet the changing skills requirements of our state, we are forging a much more direct link between school and work to give all young South Australians a contemporary education that leads them to further education and to fulfilling and rewarding employment.

The government is expanding the education and skills development of our young people beyond the confines of the school gate. We are establishing 10 new trade schools across the state, linking business, TAFE and schools, in order to give young South Australians the best opportunities for their future. The first of these 10 new trade schools will open in the 2007 school year. In an initiative to assist the rapidly expanding mining industry, we are establishing the Mineral Resources and Heavy Engineering Skills Centres. The centres will work in partnership with industry and education and training providers to forecast what skills will be needed by the mining sector and by when. The centres will act as a one-stop shop for industry. They will help coordinate schools, TAFEs, universities, and other education and research bodies to engage industry in developing solutions to its work force needs. The centres will also work to secure funding from industry and from the commonwealth to complement the state's investment because this is a shared responsibility. Training and skills are about a partnership between governments and industry.

The centres will have staff engaged on projects in Adelaide, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Whyalla and Ceduna. They will provide job-ready workers to mining and resources across the whole spectrum of the work force: semi-skilled workers; up-skill trade assistants; apprentices in mechanical and electrical trades; post-trade qualified tradespeople; and in other areas. The Mineral Resources and Heavy Engineering Skills Centres will assist more than 300 additional apprentices each year into training and employment in the mineral resources industry. They will also assist more than 300 additional job seekers each year into employment opportunities through job readiness and prevocational programs.

We have won $10 billion in defence contracts in the last 12 months or so. We must now work hard to ensure that these projects are delivered by maximising South Australian workers and their skills and talents. So, at Techport Australia at Osborne in Port Adelaide, where the $6 billion air warfare destroyers will be built, we will establish a dedicated Maritime Skills Centre. That centre will help train the workers to support the AWD project—the most complex in Australian defence industry history. The centre will also provide valuable skills to other related industries.

This is but a part of the government's aggressive skills thrust for defence, which includes a focus on high-end skills in defence technology. Although, as the latest BankSA *Trends* publication points out, 'the outlook for South Australia is the best in a generation', we are working to lock in those gains for the future. A major effort is required to replace the skilled workers who are expected to retire in large numbers over the next decade. In addition, the demands created by our success in winning major projects, such as the air warfare destroyers contract, pose an even larger challenge. We have achieved a record number of South Australians in apprenticeships and traineeships. We are meeting the challenge of skilling South Australians for the sectors (and this is where I will make a significant announcement to the house today), and we will fund at least an additional 2 000

training positions, combining apprenticeships that align with the needs of the new growth sectors, existing skills shortages, and the needs of regions. These 2 000 training positions are in addition to the 600 new training positions for the mining industry I have just outlined—so, a minimum of an extra 2 600 training positions.

Areas we are targeting to alleviate skills shortages, and to ensure South Australians receive maximum benefits from our booming economy, include the provision of trade skills and qualifications in:

- mechanical and fabrication engineering;
- automotive trades;
- electrical and electronics trades;
- construction and plant operators;
- locomotive drivers;
- community health service workers, including child care, aged care and disability;
- manufacturing leadership and organisation;
- road transport drivers;
- sales and service workers;
- middle management and supervisory positions; and
- primary and environmental industries.

Since we came to government more than 50 000 extra jobs have been created in South Australia, and most of them have been full time. We are reforming and supporting our high schools to produce confident and able young South Australians with the right mix of skills to take up these local job opportunities. To lock in the gains of the past four years, we are working hard to skill South Australians as never before. Today, we are announcing to this house an extra 2 000 apprenticeship and traineeship positions.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Transport (Hon. P.F. Conlon)—

Regulations under the following Act—
Development—Review of Fees

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

Public Trustee—Report 2004-05
Regulations under the following Act—
Justices of the Peace—Code of Conduct

By the Minister for Health (Hon. J.D. Hill)—

Ceduna Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service Inc—Report 2004-05
Optometrists Board of South Australia—Report 2004-05
Regulations under the following Acts—
Environment Protection—Civil Penalties
Psychological Practices—Fees
Public and Environmental Health—Cervical Cancer Screening

By the Minister for State/Local Government Relations (Hon. J.M. Rankine)—

Local Government Grants Commission South Australia—Report 2004-05

By the Minister for Gambling (Hon. P. Caica)—

Regulations under the following Act—
Gaming Machines—Fees and Charges.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY

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 inform the house about plans to make corporations that are operating in South Australia more accountable for employee safety. I am pleased to announce that, this week, cabinet has approved government plans to triple the maximum fines for corporations that are convicted of offences under the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986. This means that big business in South Australia will face penalties of up to $300 000 for a first offence and $600 000 for any subsequent workplace breaches that risk injuring workers. The maximum penalties can be further doubled when aggravating circumstances are proven, as per the current law.

Statistics show that, of the 28 convictions recorded under this act in the last financial year, 25 related to corporations, most of which faced a maximum $100 000 fine. These divisional penalties were last changed in January 2001, and the government has decided that our laws must go further to reinforce the fact that breaches will not be tolerated in South Australia. We must distinguish between penalties imposed on corporations and individuals to hit them where it hurts. This should be seen as a warning to rogue employers to ensure that they abide by our workplace safety laws. As penalties only apply for criminal convictions, where these corporations have failed to provide a safe working environment they will deserve what they get.

I want to make it very clear that this is just the first step relating to penalties, and there is more work to come in the government's push to ensure that workers are better protected at work. I have consulted Tom Phillips, who chairs the new SafeWork SA Advisory Committee, about these proposed changes, and I am pleased to acknowledge his support for tripling these penalties. Of course, the committee is continuing to examine the broader review of current penalties, including the maximum five-year gaol term, the existing aggravated offence provision and the debate about industrial manslaughter: death in the workplace. I have asked that it report before the end of August to allow for the government's timely consideration of its findings. Any workplace injury or death is one too many. This government will always look to enhance prevention.

QUESTION TIME

ABORIGINAL SUMMIT

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): My question is for the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. Does the government support a proposal to monitor truancy to ensure that indigenous children go to school, and how and when will such a proposal be implemented? A national rollcall of indigenous school-age children was agreed to at yesterday's summit to address violence in Aboriginal communities.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): The answer is: yes, we do support such a proposal. It was raised by the commonwealth and, certainly, we thought it was a sensible idea. The commonwealth decided that it wanted to play a role in relation to truancy. We could not presently see how it was going to do that, but any help that it wished to put on the table in that respect was regarded by us as something that we should explore further. Some of the other states and territories did not necessarily agree but, certainly, the South Australian government did not have a difficulty with that proposition. I should say that, with respect to some of our remote communities, we have been putting in an extraordinary effort to grapple with the question of truancy. I think the evidence

is in the retention rates in the APY lands, which have substantially improved. Certainly, they have a long way to go but, over the last few years, they have substantially improved.

One point made at the national summit was that we need to make sure that we are accurately measuring school retention and, indeed, school attendance rates by matching up the number of young people of school-attending age with the actual enrolments so that we are looking not only at enrolments and testing our attendance against enrolments. That is one aspect that emerged out of the summit, and we are certainly prepared to take that on board.

TAFE, UPPER SPENCER GULF

Ms BREUER (Giles): My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. How is TAFE SA working with industry to address skill requirements in the Upper Spencer Gulf?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I acknowledge the commitment of the member for Giles to training and education matters in her electorate and, indeed, all matters within her electorate. TAFE SA for the first time has formed a partnership with OneSteel in Whyalla to train new apprentices for this major steel manufacturer. A specialised skills training centre for engineering apprentices—dedicated specifically for the use of OneSteel apprentices—has been established at the Whyalla campus of TAFE SA.

The first 25 apprentices will commence their training in July, with a further 25 commencing in January 2007. OneSteel will manage the process of obtaining local apprentices; and, I am informed, it has had a positive response to advertisements for positions in Whyalla. TAFE SA will run the skills centre. This will enable OneSteel to take advantage of TAFE SA's expertise and excellent training resources. OneSteel's policies, procedures and safety practices will be incorporated into the training. This will ensure that apprentices obtain hands-on skills and a clear understanding of the culture and expectations of their employer.

This innovative partnership will help people in the Upper Spencer to obtain long-term employment with OneSteel, which is very optimistic about this partnership with TAFE SA. I am pleased to say that OneSteel views it as a long-term commitment to training regional people for regional jobs. Apprentices in the first intake will comprise fitters, electricians, boilermakers and a machinist. The second intake will include instrumentation apprentices. This initiative contributes to achieving several of South Australia's Strategic Plan objectives, which include increasing TAFE participation, increasing the proportion of people with non-school qualifications and reducing regional unemployment. The partnership between TAFE SA and OneSteel has strengthened TAFE's ties with other regional industries. Both organisations are optimistic that other regional industries will utilise the facilities for their own apprentices.

The government remains concerned that the South Australian Strategic Plan target relating to the youth unemployment rate continues to track above the national average. However, it is important to recognise that gains have been made on this front. Only two months ago we achieved the lowest annual average youth full-time unemployment rate for 15 years, and the most recent quarterly figures indicate that the vast majority of our 15 to 19 year olds—almost 85 per cent—were satisfactorily engaged in the labour market or in education or training. For those young people who are not satisfactorily engaged in work, education or training, the state government, as mentioned by the Premier earlier, will be intensifying its efforts to boost opportunities for their engagement by increasing the school leaving age to 17 years and by continuing our successful efforts to boost apprenticeships and traineeships.

The state government also funds the SA Works program to the tune of $22.6 million, and significant amounts of this funding are targeted towards assisting young people to re-engage with learning and work. The TAFE SA/OneSteel program is an excellent example of the kind of communication and collaboration between government and industry that is needed to address our state's work force development issues, including the issue of how best to prepare our youth for the tremendous employment opportunities that lie ahead in our state.

ABORIGINAL SUMMIT

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): My question is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. Will the government accept the commonwealth offer to provide funds on a dollar for dollar basis to attack abuse and neglect in the Aboriginal communities in South Australia and, if so, how much state funding will be channelled into new initiatives?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): That was a remarkable intervention by the shadow minister for aboriginal affairs. He wants me to try to negotiate a deal with the commonwealth whereby we commit ourselves to matching every commonwealth dollar. I was proposing to do a deal with the commonwealth where the commonwealth put up all the money and gave us credit for the $25 million we are already putting into remote Aboriginal communities. That explains why members opposite had a little trouble balancing the books when they were last in government. When one looks at one measure, the federal minister has put on the table—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The shadow minister says that we are not taking up the offer. We are doing better than that: we are not only taking up the offer but we will do a special deal for South Australia in respect of our remote Aboriginal communities that will be the envy of the other states. I will give an example of an area in which it would not be that sensible to pick up the notion of the honourable member. I do not even think the federal minister is asking me to match funds in some areas. Members opposite want me to throw away millions of dollars when the federal minister does not want me to do that. The shadow minister is not well informed.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: To give an example of an area in which we have moved and where the commonwealth is proposing to broaden the scheme for other states, we have negotiated already and moneys are available in our forward estimates for the recurrent funding for a drug and rehabilitation facility on the APY lands. The commonwealth is proposing the capital dollars to match those arrangements. In the new arrangements for the whole country in remote areas, it is proposing to pick up both the recurrent and capital dollars for a drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility. We are certainly already putting in in relation to remote communities.

There is an extraordinary extra amount that needs to be done and, in due course, I anticipate that I will be asked to explain further about the outcomes of the summit.

SOCCER, WORLD CUP

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): What is the Premier doing to try to attract a future World Cup to Australia, and what support has he for his endeavours?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): If only the standard of the refereeing in the World Cup equalled the standard of the players! I would like to thank the member for West Torrens for his question and for his strong support for soccer in South Australia and particularly for the clubs in his own electorate. It is my belief that it is time for Australia, as a nation, on the back of such a fine performance by the Socceroos in Germany, to step up to host the world's biggest sporting event.

On behalf of all South Australians, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Socceroos on their inspirational performance, with special mention, of course, to our very own John Aloisi, the only South Australian to have scored a goal in a World Cup final. Congratulations also, of course, to the coach, who we hope will be honorary Australian of the Year, when it comes to Australia Day next year.

On 7 June I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister requesting that the development of a bid for a future World Cup be included on the agenda for the upcoming Council of Australian Governments meeting, to be held on 14 July. To that end, I would like to see a national bid planning team formed to develop not only a bid but also the infrastructure, facilities and security planning needed to host the 2014 World Cup, if only to establish our credentials to secure the 2018 World Cup finals. I was very pleased to hear the comments of former FIFA board member, Basil Scarsella, on radio this morning endorsing such a proposition. But if we are to make a bid, planning must begin this year.

For Australia to be successful, the Australian government and all state governments would have to be involved in preparing a bid, which would have to be driven, of course, by the Football Federation Australia. My letter to the Prime Minister points out that Australia has proven without equal in staging international sporting events, where organisational skills have been matched by world-class facilities. Of course, so far, however, the FIFA World Cup has remained beyond Australia's reach.

I have been very encouraged by the support I have now received from the Premiers of Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales (on Friday), and also Queensland. I was pleased to hear that the Prime Minister, on radio, has lent his support to a future bid. I am hopeful that the Prime Minister will see the enormous economic opportunities available to Australia as a nation, if we were to host this event, which would attract tens of thousands of people from around the globe to our nation over the month-long finals.

South Australia, with its strong soccer traditions, is keen to be involved in the bid planning team at the very highest level, and I think that we have an opportunity now. It will be worth billions to Australia and put us up in lights. There should be no spectacle, no achievement that is beyond Australia's capability, and we look forward to working with the Prime Minister, the other premiers and FFA in developing a bid.

ABORIGINAL CUSTOMARY LAW

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): My question is again to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. Will the government agree to remove customary law in sentencing from the South Australian statutes, to enable South Australia to be part of the commonwealth funding initiative to tackle abuse and neglect in Aboriginal communities? Section 9C of the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act 1988 prescribes conditions pertaining to Aboriginal sentencing, including information to the court on cultural advice.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I thank the honourable member for his question. It is a good question, because the role that customary law plays, or should not play, in the criminal law process is a very interesting and vexed issue. Obviously there is the cheap headline you can get by saying, 'One Australian law for the whole community'. I think, in a broad sense, that everybody agrees that there is indeed only one Australian law that binds all the citizens of this state, whatever cultural background they come from. But, when the commonwealth actually had to put some meat on the bones of this rhetoric and had to sit down and design a law to address this so-called difficulty of the use of customary law as a defence, it then had to ask itself what was the mischief it was trying to remedy.

The first thing that we found out is that customary law, to the extent that it is raised by accused persons in a criminal trial as an excuse for child sexual abuse, or violence against women, is, of course, nonsense. There is no customary law that authorises such a thing. The debate misfired in a sense because it was seeking to rely upon a misrepresentation about what a cultural or customary law may authorise. There is no customary law that authorises the sexual abuse of children, nor is there a customary law that authorises violence against women.

So, that is the first proposition, and it is very important to make that point publicly because, when elected leaders leave open room for the proposition that such a thing may be the case, they are appallingly denigrating Aboriginal people and their culture. That was a very strong point that all states and territories made at this meeting. If you are going to seek to address the very limited number of circumstances where it appears that a lawyer—not necessarily an Aboriginal lawyer—decides to advance a spurious defence on behalf of an accused person facing some form of sanction, and elevate that to the status of Aboriginal customary law, then you are doing a disservice to Aboriginal people to suggest that that is any proper exposition of customary law. So, we wanted to make it very clear at the outset of the conference that we did not share the view that customary law indeed did authorise those abuses. That was the first element of the joint resolution addressed by the summit.

Then the commonwealth said, 'We hear what you say about that—that customary law excuses are often used spuriously—but we do not want anybody to make a submission of that sort, and we want to amend the commonwealth legislation accordingly.' When they tried to do that, they realised that they could not do it just for Aboriginal people, because it would have been in breach of the Race Discrimination Act. So, they had to remove that provision within the sentencing provision of the Crimes Act which talked about taking into account cultural factors.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Which the law of provocation has for decades.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That's right. So, now at a commonwealth level—assuming this legislation goes through the parliament, and I think the commonwealth will probably abandon it by the time it gets there because it will realise how unworkable it is—it is proposed by the commonwealth that any cultural background, any religious background—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That's right. You might have gone to a private school, you might have been a Catholic, you might have been a Muslim—it does not matter. No part of your cultural background can now be taken into account in relation to the criminal law process if the commonwealth—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: What does that do to the law of provocation?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That's right; it is very interesting. It has been a basic tenet of the law for as long as anyone can remember. The state of mind of the accused is a very relevant factor to working out the moral culpability of the crime, and the state of mind of the accused is, of course, determined having regard to all their antecedents including their culture. So, the commonwealth was out very early with the rhetoric saying that this would happen. When they looked at it closely they realised that it was a limited number of spurious cases. Certainly the Northern Territory has dealt with that by suggesting that one should not proffer a cultural excuse or any submission about cultural law without being forced to put to proof about it, and perhaps that is something that could be looked at.

It is a matter that has been referred to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General. The state ministers have decided that that is the proper place to do it, and I do not want to speak for the Attorney, because he will no doubt have a point of view about this matter, and he no doubt will address that in that context. The federal minister is determined upon this task, but I do not believe that this will be any barrier to South Australia's concluding a very satisfactory deal for our remote communities to benefit them and to stamp out abuse in those communities.

ABORIGINAL SUMMIT

Ms BREUER (Giles): My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. In view of the interesting responses to the member for MacKillop's questions, can the minister tell us what were the outcomes from the summit on violence and child abuse in indigenous communities that was held yesterday in Canberra?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): I will not traverse any of those other matters, unless people are interested in a further exposition of customary law because it is a very interesting topic. I say at the outset that the commonwealth approached this summit, in my view, in a constructive fashion. The commonwealth said a number of things that gave us comfort. The first is that it distanced itself from Tony Abbott's comments about new paternalism, which we found comforting albeit a little unusual that a federal minister would do that in the lead-up to one of his colleague's summits.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: The distancing.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The distancing, yes.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Comforted by the distancing.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Yes, comforted by the distancing from the comments. The next thing that the federal minister said that also gave us comfort was that he believed that any of these measures could only be effective in partnership with people in remote Aboriginal communities. You could not work except but in partnership with those communities and their leaders, and that was an important point. The other point that I think was important is that the commonwealth has put on the table $130 million of propositions that it seeks to advance which are focused on law and order issues, and we will certainly be taking up our share of that offering.

In particular, money has been set aside for additional police stations and police housing in remote communities. This will match up with the state government's commitment to put an additional four police on the lands—an additional four sworn officers in addition to the eight sworn officers who have already been committed to the APY lands. We will be very much assisted by the commonwealth's commitment to fund the capital cost of new police stations and police housing. The commonwealth has also put in place funds for drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services about which I spoke earlier. It is also proposing $6 million for safe houses and other support services for victims of violence, and $4 million will be committed to the leadership development program which is intended to empower indigenous leaders, often women, who have taken the leadership role in speaking out against violence and abuse in these communities. The commonwealth has also committed to creating a new national police intelligence unit, and we welcome that new role for the Australian Federal Police. It has committed to work in conjunction with state authorities in that regard.

One thing that the states put on the agenda very firmly—the commonwealth stated that this summit was only to deal with law and order—is that we are unlikely ever to achieve a resolution of the challenges in remote Aboriginal communities unless we address fundamental issues of overcrowding through the lack of housing and also the question of a future for these lands in order to provide economic opportunities for people so that they can grow up with the aspirations to have a job and a future like all other South Australians. We put that very clearly on the agenda; the commonwealth knows that. There are great hopes for a further set of reforms arising out of COAG in July, and we also look forward with great expectations to the next housing ministers' meeting in September, where the commonwealth has committed to come back with an investment package for more houses in remote Aboriginal communities. In the meantime, South Australia will be pursuing its own bilateral arrangements with the commonwealth, and we are hopeful of a positive outcome for the APY lands.

AUTISM SA

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Minister for Health move immediately to provide transitional funding to Autism SA to ensure services are not being undermined by the government's budget delay? I have been contacted by the parent of a child who has been diagnosed recently with Aspberger's syndrome. Autism SA has advised this family that, due to the budget delay, the organisation will not have the funds available to provide the necessary support until October.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): Autism SA is funded through Disability Services. Prior to the last election we increased funding to Autism SA by providing an additional one-off $180 000 to

clear the waiting list. This means we have been able to increase the capacity for assessments from six per fortnight to 12 to 15 per fortnight.

The state government funds early intervention programs, including the Flinders University Early Intervention Program, the Autism SA Early Development Program and IDSC's Early Childhood Service. In the context of the last election we made a further commitment to increase funding to Autism SA, and I think all members will acknowledge that that particular commitment was greeted positively by the autism sector. Like everyone who is awaiting the outcome of the budget, they will have to wait until then to see whether we have met that commitment, but I am very confident that those services will be provided under our next budget.

HOSPITALS, WINTER DEMAND

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is the Minister for Health. How are our public hospitals coping with the extra demand during the winter weather?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I thank the member for Reynell for her important question. Earlier this month I announced a comprehensive winter demand strategy to be applied to our hospitals. This strategy coordinates our public and private hospitals, GPs and ambulance services to cater for the extra demand that is placed on the system during the colder months. It is entirely predictable. Each year we get extra demand during the winter months, and over the last month our paramedics and emergency departments have been particularly busy. During May (which was a particularly cold May), on average, Adelaide's public emergency departments saw 913 patients a day come through their doors. That is about 65 more people each day, on average, than last year—in other words, a 7 per cent increase. To cope with this the government has opened up extra beds, and up to 150 will be available to be opened across the system when the demand is at its highest. So far we have been using an average of 77 of these beds every day, although I am advised that on one particularly difficult day 103 beds were opened.

Of course, it is also essential that we have good coordination and communication between our hospitals to avoid stresses in some of those hospitals while others are coping more easily. To this end we have set up good communication links with local GPs and the ambulance services. We are also transporting step-down patients to hospitals with available resources. A recent example of this was when the Flinders Medical Centre was experiencing high demand and eight stable patients were transferred to Noarlunga hospital in the space of four hours. This freed up beds at the Flinders Medical Centre to be used for higher emergency patients.

Each year, of course, this high level of demand for emergency attention puts stress on the number of elective surgical procedures that can be performed in our hospitals. One element of the demand strategy has involved trying to prevent elective surgery from being cancelled. I am advised that this is working very well so far, with the average rate of cancellations being only one per day across the entire metropolitan hospital system—a very good outcome. Whilst it is regrettable that anyone should have their surgery cancelled, one per day on average is not a bad outcome.

It should also be noted that elective surgery in general is also being better managed this year. More bookings, of course, are made during the months when there is less demand on emergency departments, so the hospitals try to balance out their emergency and elective demands. To treat these extra patients we need more staff, and our existing doctors and nurses will be working extra shifts. I pay credit to them and thank them for their commitment and dedication to these very difficult jobs. Our work force levels usually spike over the winter months, and that is happening again this year. Between January and April we have increased our metropolitan nursing work force numbers and we are expecting—with extra recruits, extra agency nurses and extra shifts—that these figures will rise even higher. I will be pleased to further inform the house as the winter months proceed.

DRINK DRIVING LEGISLATION

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): My question is to the Attorney-General. How many drivers whose licences have been taken pursuant to the drink-driving licence disqualification regime are affected by yesterday's full court decisions in the cases of Police v Conway and Police v Parker?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): We do not know, but we are finding out.

Mrs REDMOND: Does the government intend that its move to correct the problem with the regulations on licence disqualification will operate retrospectively?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The correction of the typo has not been expressed to apply retrospectively.

Mrs REDMOND: What response, if any, does the government intend to make to the comments by the full court in yesterday's judgment in the case of Conway regarding the respective roles of the police and the judiciary?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: That is a good question. I want to read to the house what the Supreme Court had to say about this legislation. Its comments could apply equally to the juvenile justice legislation of 1993, which allow police to issue formal and informal cautions to youths; and it could apply equally to the hoon-driving legislation, which contains provision for preconviction punishment in the form of impounding of motor vehicles. When referring to the drink-driving legislation, the full bench of the Supreme Court (consisting of Justices Bleby, Gray and Anderson) at page 1, paragraph 1, said:

> The scheme permits a police officer by notice to impose an immediate licence disqualification or suspension before a complaint is made and without due process where the officer reasonably believes that an offence has been committed.

On page 8, paragraph 26, it continues:

> It is unsurprising that the minister described the process as severe. A penalty is imposed by an administrative act without a complaint having been laid, without any court process, without any adverse finding and without the right to be heard. It can be readily foreseen that particular hardship could follow from immediate licence disqualification or suspension.

I am pleased to tell the member for Heysen that I read the entire judgment before I had my press conference yesterday. On page 10, at paragraph 31, it continues:

> These legislative amendments build upon a legislative scheme previously recognised as encroaching upon the civil liberties of individuals[12].

The footnote is to another Supreme Court decision. It continues:

> Indeed, the provisions take that encroachment a step further. The new provisions further impinge upon the rights of individuals. They permit a penalty, normally viewed as a punishment for a crime, to be imposed without any finding of guilt and in the absence of procedural fairness. Importantly, section 47IAB has the potential to

jeopardise an individual's right to silence; a right derived from the privilege against self-incrimination, which is a fundamental tenet of the Australian legal system.

Finally, on page 11, at paragraph 36, their honours say:

Another fundamental principle that underpins the organisation of our society is that it is the role of police, on behalf of the executive arm of government, to detect crime and detain suspects and bring them before the courts. It is then for the courts, a separate arm of government, to administer punishment. By empowering police officers to impose immediate licence disqualifications or suspensions as a form of punishment, parliament has legislated for a derogation of this fundamental principle.

I do not think I am misrepresenting the Supreme Court justices when I say that they are most critical of our drink-driving legislation—and the member for Bragg smiles because she knows that what I say is true. They criticise our drink-driving legislation because, if someone blows .148—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: —.184, sorry, if I can correct the Leader of the Opposition, because he is wrong (do not worry, that was a typo by the Leader of the Opposition)—parliament has decided, Liberal and Labor alike, that in those circumstances a police officer should be able to deprive the motorist of his or her licence forthwith. But we have a let-out in the legislation, and that let-out is that the motorist can, the next day, go to court and argue that the licence should be returned to her on the basis that she has a reasonable defence and is going to pursue that when the case comes to court.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes, for the benefit of that 'femocrat' the member for Mitchell, in this case 'her' also means 'him'—it is just that we are dealing with Sharon Lee Conway, and she happens to be a her. Parliament was agreed on passing this law. I do not quibble with the right of Supreme Court justices to give the parliament a shellacking for passing a law which they believe violates fundamental civil liabilities in the same way, if we follow the same reasoning, that police cautioning of juveniles violates civil liberties, and in the same way that impounding the cars of hoon drivers for 48 hours violates their civil liberties. I am going to take the Supreme Court decision on the chin, and I have moved swiftly this morning to reverse its effect in so far as it rests on a typo in a footnote in brackets in a police pro-forma handed to the motorist pursuant to the schedule to the regulations of the act. I will take it on the chin. We can fix that. But, when the Supreme Court judges come out and express what is an avowedly political view, I reserve the right to argue with them.

DRIVER LEGISLATION

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): My question is again to the Attorney-General. Given the problems with the implementation of the 50 km/h speed zone legislation, the drug-driving legislation and now the immediate confiscation of licences legislation, what steps does the government intend to take to ensure that its future legislation is correct and enforceable?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): The problem with the 50 km/h speed limit was that we had a court case. This is the contribution of the member for Waite. That is the problem. We won the court case, of course, so the legislation was good. So, why did we not prevent people taking court action against our legislation?

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: And he follows up. He cannot help himself. We wanted their support for retrospective legislation to make sure and make a good thing of it, a case we expected to win. That is what was wrong. That is something we did for them on a number of occasions when we were in opposition and they were the government. What utter hypocrisy. What utter hypocrisy from this officer and a gentleman.

Mrs REDMOND: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: But I apologise if I offend the sensitivities of elderly members of the fourth estate.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs REDMOND: My point concerns the relevance of the minister's comments to the question, which was specifically about action the government intends to take in relation to other legislation.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I think the minister has strayed into debate.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: When the explanation includes problems with the 50 km/h speed limit that exist only in the fevered imagination of the member for Heysen, I will take the point. If the opposition is going to put a falsehood in the explanation, I will take the point. I come to the question of what we do in future. We will continue to rely on the advice of parliamentary counsel, as the opposition did. The difference is that we understand that those people, being human, can make an error. In my view, on this occasion they did not. In my view, and I am sure I will get into trouble with the court, I think the court has been overly harsh. But we will continue to rely upon them, just as the opposition did. The difference is that, if we think it is necessary retrospectively to validate something, we will do it.

That is what we did with you, when we supported you. However, I will obtain the information and bring back for the honourable member the number of occasions on which we did it for her former minister, the Hon. Di Laidlaw, I think it was. We did it on a number of occasions. The thing is that you would not do it with us because you wanted difficulty. You hoped for difficulty. You prayed that the 50 km/h laws would be invalid so that they would cause difficulty. Well, they weren't. Your question was wrong. This is wrong. In the future, we will continue to rely on parliamentary counsel for whom I have had very high respect. They do a difficult job; they do it under pressure; and they do not deserve to have their work called into question by an opposition which relied on them, too, and which got our support in fixing retrospectively small errors that were made. This is a matter of the greatest hypocrisy.

CHILDREN IN CARE

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Families and Communities. Will the minister confirm whether an investigation into the Department for Families and Communities has commenced, as recommended by the state Coroner, Mark Johns, arising out of the death of Myles Smith, a young child who died as a result of morphine toxicity; and, if not, why not?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): I do not quite understand the purport of the question. As I understand the matter, it was a matter that was before the Coroner. The Coroner has made a finding about that matter and has also referred the matter to the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I think the issue to which the honourable member refers is that there was a communication between the Coroner and the department about making a submission—and there appears to have been some difficulty with the making of that submission. I think it has something to do with someone being ill and that particular submission not being made. I also understand that there is a question about an involvement of some other family members in a Youth Court matter which raised questions about whether the submission was appropriate. I am not particularly satisfied with the explanation I have received about why the department did not make a submission to the Coroner and I have asked for that to be looked at. However, as for the substantive issue—that is, what was the role of the department in relation to the death of this child—without wishing to pre-empt the findings of the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, I understand that there is no relevant culpability of the department.

Indeed, the department had very little to do with this family for an extended period leading up to the death of this child. There has not been any proximate involvement by the department, nor was there any request for the involvement of this department. Anyway, be that as it may, the whole matter will be investigated by the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, and that will be an appropriate forum for them to make any relevant remarks about the conduct of the department in relation to the unfortunate death of this child.

FOSTER CARE

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Minister for Families and Communities. Why are foster carers being left with the legal responsibility for any mistaken administering of medication to infants placed in their care, when the foster carer has not been forewarned or instructed by the Department for Families and Communities of the care and medical requirements of that infant? I am informed by a foster carer that, in May 2006, she had a two month old infant placed in her care without being informed that the infant required morphine to be administered every four hours. Further, she was not provided with any documentation regarding the needs and plans for the infant.

The foster carer had been given no placement loading for the extra responsibility of work and she has now received advice from the department that she would be legally liable if the infant was mistakenly given more morphine than was prescribed. I refer to the letter, which states:

> While I think it very unlikely a mistake would be made and that if one was made the foster parent would be held accountable, there is always the likelihood that a parent may initiate some form of legal action.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): The first thing to say is that we ask an extraordinary amount of foster parents who care for children who come into their care in circumstances where their parents have been addicted to illicit drugs and when that has a particular effect on the unborn infant. Indeed, as a matter of practice and policy, we inform the relevant foster carer that the child who will be placed in their care (often at very short notice) will be one who has special needs. I am advised that in this case the particular foster parent in question was advised that the child had special needs. Whether the needs were articulated as clearly as they should have been is, perhaps, a matter that needs to be looked into, and I have asked that it be looked into.

I have had questions in successive weeks. One was about why we place young people in motels with paid carers. I am criticised for that, yet when we, in an emergency situation in the middle of the night, need to find a special needs foster carer and ask them to care for the child, I am now being criticised for putting that child in the care of a foster parent. I think there needs to be some consistency in the approach taken by those opposite. Having said that, for those people who are generous enough to open their homes and deal with a child with such difficult needs, we need to do everything we can to support that foster parent. Clearly it seems that in this case that parent has not felt supported, and I have asked for that matter to be looked at as a matter of urgency.

HOSPITALS, WINTER DEMAND

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Health. In relation to his winter demand management strategy, to which he referred today, how many extra nurses have actually been employed in hospitals since 22 May 2006, and to which hospitals have they been placed?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I can advise the member that, from memory—and I will get this checked if it is not correct—between January and April we employed something like 300 or so extra nurses in the system. How they have been applied I cannot tell you exactly, but they have been applied across the metropolitan system in anticipation of the demand that upsurges at this time of year. In addition to that, nurses have been working extra shifts. Some people who work part time have been working more hours, and other agency nurses have been applied too. The net effect of that has been the capacity of the health system to open on at least one day 103 extra beds and an average of 70 beds. I think that the best indicator of the extra capacity is the number of beds that have been opened up in individual hospitals. I am happy to provide for the member the average of the number of beds that have been opened up in the metropolitan hospitals.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, the nurses are there to support the beds. That is the best indicator. It is sometimes difficult to get the figures that the member requested. I am certainly happy to attempt to do that for her, but, as I said, the extra capacity is provided not just by having new bodies but by requesting existing nurses to work longer hours. It becomes a little bit academic as to what is an additional nurse.

Ms Chapman: You promised 240 extra nurses.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I said to the member, if she would listen, I am happy to get for her whatever information I can. But the best indicator of extra resources is the number of extra beds that we have been able to open in the existing hospitals, and I will certainly supply that to her.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. Given that the chief executive officer for the Department for Health is leaving in 10 days, why has the minister not announced a replacement? Is it because he cannot find anyone for the job?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The question is disorderly and an attempt by the deputy leader to offer an answer to the question, is highly disorderly, but the minister may want to answer it, or attempt to.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): The question, as I understand it, was: is the reason I have yet to announce the new CE of the Department of Health because I cannot find one? The answer to that question is no.

HEALTH, RURAL

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Minister for Health. Given that the regional health boards are to be abolished in four days' time, will the minister confirm that the new Country Health SA department will operate out of Port Augusta?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I made an announcement today, through the media, and the head of Country Health SA, Mr George Beltchev, made an announcement during an interview on one of the radio stations, that the new board of Country Health SA has decided that Port Augusta will be the headquarters of the new Country Health SA, and I am sure the local member will be pleased about that. Port Augusta was chosen for a variety of reasons: it is central in regional South Australia—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, it is central to the South Australian regions. It is more easily accessed than many other parts of regional South Australia; and it has good—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member for Stuart, I know, is strongly behind this initiative.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I can assure you that this is not being done for any political reason. It was done because they decided that it was the best place to have it. It is central to the state, it has good communication and transport systems, and the infrastructure there is suitable, so there will be very little additional cost to establish it there. I also advise the house that we will have a number of other centres for the Country Health Board, which will be providing services. The board itself has—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Are you saying that it should be Ceduna? I am also advised that the board itself has decided to meet not exclusively in Port Augusta but that it will hold its meetings around country South Australia, so that the board can see first hand the needs of rural South Australia.

SCHOOLS, REGIONAL BUSES

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): My question is directed to the Premier, and I am looking forward to an excellent answer. Will the Premier take action to ensure that small communities like Hawker are not socially disadvantaged with the removal of its school bus? The education department has an inflexible bus policy—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Never! Stating a fact; fact is not—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes; I will repeat it so there can be no misunderstanding.

The SPEAKER: Order! No; it is not necessary to repeat it.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The education department has an inflexible bus policy, which will see at the end of this school term the children at Hawker not being able to access a school bus. In view of the fact that they like to participate in the Premier's Reading Challenge, they may not be able to attend the school. I point out to the Premier that the department is also attacking the Orroroo school bus system and the Peterborough school bus system.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am willing to offer some indulgence to the father of the house, but that is disorderly. The Premier.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): How many years has the member for Stuart been here? Is it 30?

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: 36.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thirty six years; I am approaching my 25th. The honourable member is the grandfather of the house and I am the father of the house. Can I just say that I would like to pay tribute to the honourable member. In fact, we were recently in Peterborough together. I am looking forward to the 125th anniversary of the railways coming to Peterborough and to taking my cabinet colleagues to Peterborough, and I hope the member for Stuart will join us, as we walk towards the sunlit uplands of Peterborough and enjoy its fantastic hospitality.

I have just been advised by the acting minister for education and children's services that there has been a formula for bus services for many years. In fact, it was a formula, I am advised, embraced by such distinguished former ministers for education as the Hon. Rob Lucas, the Hon. Malcolm Buckby and, probably, the Hon. Greg Crafter, the Hon. Susan Lenehan and other ministers. Exactly the same formula applied in the previous government. I have also been advised by the distinguished acting minister—and I say this with all humility—that apparently about 100 buses were discontinued by the former government under the reins of Rob Lucas and Malcolm Buckby.

I think we all remember the outstanding job done by the member for Giles in lobbying for the people at the school at Mintabie. However, the same formula applied then as applies now but, somehow, we did not quite hear the ructions from members that we are hearing now.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: That's because I got the decisions overturned.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The member for Stuart had the decisions overturned but his colleagues did not, because there were a hundred—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: So, there was political selection. It was a sort of Darwinian principle of political selection. One hundred buses went, but not for Graham because Graham got two overturned on a day. The formula could be applied rigorously, except when it came to the member for Stuart. We will discuss this at Peterborough, but I understand that the formula has been in place for at least 20 years. I will certainly obtain a report from the Minister for Education and Children's Services when she returns—from the Somme!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I would like to ask the Premier another question. My question concerns the disadvantage that the students at the Orroroo school, particularly those on the Black Rock bus route, will face when their school bus service is changed. I point out in explanation—

The SPEAKER: I think we need the question first.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I am coming to that, because I do not want the Premier to be under any misapprehension. It is a very important question. We have two students in year 11 and, when the school bus stops, they will not be able to go to school. The question is: will the truancy officer be visiting those parents because they will be unable to get their children to attend the Orrorroo school and do matriculation? The Premier wants students to go to school until they are 17 but he is not going to provide any transport.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): We have to share the pleasure in this place: I am delighted to take this question on behalf of the Minister for Education and Children's Services and will be happy to obtain a full report for the honourable member about the proposed mechanism to ensure that students in the Orroroo community are able to access their school. When a bus service is removed, as it has been (as the Premier said) over 100 times by the former government because of change in enrolments, that is not the end of the matter.

Negotiation occurs with the school community about other ways of providing services. I am sure that those discussions will be held with the citizens of Orroroo to make sure that the children of that community are able to attend school.

ISOLATED CHILDREN

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is for whoever is representing the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Perhaps the Minister for Transport will do this one. Will the minister support the Isolated Children's Parents Association and increase the school travel allowance to a more appropriate rate? Currently, the school travel allowance reimburses parents at 17.4¢ per kilometre and falls far short of the current cost. This amount was set in 1993 when petrol was approximately 68¢ a litre. Although this allowance was never intended to cover the full running costs of a vehicle, current petrol prices are as high as a 1.45¢ a litre.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I thank the member for his question.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: He didn't change it for eight years.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, apart from the fact that the opposition didn't change it, you can always tell the sincerity of a question when the practice in government is the same as the practice in opposition. However, when the practice in opposition is different from that in government you know that a political point is being made. It is political posing; it is not deep-seated concern. This is about political posturing—that is all it is about—but I will happily obtain a response from the Minister for Education, as the Premier says, when she returns from the front.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: The Somme.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The Somme.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Once again, I assume the Minister for Health will answer this question. Will the minister support the Isolated Children's Parents Association to utilise the Hawker Childhood Services Centre and other rural and remote preschool sites for the purpose of child care? At the annual conference of the South Australian Isolated Children's Parents Association held recently in Peterborough, the following motion was carried by members:

That the SA State Council of ICPA write to the Minister for Education and Children's Services requesting that the Hawker Childhood Services Centre and other rural and remote preschool sites be utilised for the purpose of childcare centres.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for the question. I am sure the ICPA will write to the minister, as it indicated, and I am sure that when she receives the letter she will respond to it in an appropriate way.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

HEALTH SERVICE, MALLEE

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): Six years ago the hospital boards of Pinnaroo, Lameroo and Karoonda commenced a process of community consultation (outlining the population base and health needs of the area) to bid for the appropriate commonwealth and state agreements to form a multi-purpose service. This arrangement required the amalgamation of the three boards and a culture of cooperation across the three sites. The bid was successful as the Mallee Health Service was formed four years ago. This board is chaired by Kathleen Gregurke and it is made up of members from each of the three communities.

Efficiencies in financial management and the best use of human resources from this voluntary amalgamation have led to increased and coordinated services for the clients of the Mallee, particularly in the areas of community health and primary health care. The board's strategy is to promote healthy communities and also to allow the elderly and infirm to stay in their own home for as long as possible.

Financial efficiencies have allowed the Mallee Health Service to complete a significant upgrade of the aged care facility at the Pinnaroo Soldiers Memorial Hospital at a cost of approximately $500 000. This upgrade includes the conversion of the theatre complex into a gymnasium and the establishment of a health promotion room. The health promotion room was established in memory of Sister Florence Casson (enlisted from Pinnaroo whilst she was matron of the hospital), who died as a prisoner of war on Banka Island in World War II.

Karoonda and Districts Soldiers Memorial Hospital has a new roof and the day centre is currently undergoing a much-needed extension and upgrade costing approximately $100 000. The community health team is mobile over the catchment area of the Mallee, with offices at Lameroo. This team is not large enough to service the Mallee and requires extension or relocation as services and needs grow.

Recently, I launched a mobile health promotion van for the Mallee Health Service. The van will assist with health promotion activities at shows, field days, sporting and community events. The van will also be used to service the Mallee Health Service's smaller satellite communities of Parilla, Geranium and Jabuk. The van, built by Gawler Caravan Centre at a cost of approximately $90 000, will be available for use by other health services and community groups.

From 1 July 2006, Pinnaroo, Lameroo and Karoonda will all have a resident GP. Pinnaroo has been without a doctor for several months but has recently been successful in the recruitment of another doctor. The Mallee Health Service had (and continues to have) enormous support from the Rural

Doctors Work Force Agency and divisions of general practice to achieve this outcome. Each of the three sites (Pinnaroo, Lameroo and Karoonda) have an executive officer/director of nursing, and there is an acting director of community health for the whole Mallee Health Service.

From 1 July 2006, the new Country Health Board (in conjunction with two city boards) will take over the control of all country health services in administering health services in this state. We will follow this new arrangement with interest, but I know that the Mallee area will have its voice heard with Kathleen Gregurke of Parrakie appointed to the Country Health Board. I congratulate Kathleen on her appointment. We will keep a close eye out to ensure that adequate health services are delivered to the Mallee.

SOCCER

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson): I rise to congratulate the Australian soccer fraternity for its on and off-field success during the past three years. Those in charge, such as Frank Lowy and John O'Neill, have taken the game from a domestic, ill-disciplined and self-destructive rabble to an international force duly recognised by the world's best footballing nations. Like so many South Australians, many in this house would have stayed up into the small hours of this morning to watch what for 91 minutes was a brilliant match, where the Socceroos matched it with the ever-dominant Italians. While many would like to criticise the referee, we should stop right now and set an example for our children and others in the community. Whatever we think of the decision, referees and umpires in all sports should be shown the utmost respect. There is nothing worse in junior sport than seeing parents and children attacking officials, who are, in many cases, just teenagers themselves learning the ropes. We need to fight childhood obesity, and we will not do it if the kids are not out there participating in sport. We will not do it if the kids out there as umpires are being criticised by adults from the sidelines or by kids on the field. We want to make it a nice, friendly place for kids to participate in sport.

Children learn bad behaviour from those around them, their parents, media commentators and coaches. As with most things in life over which we have no control, we need to accept the ref's decision. We should get on with celebrating the positives of this morning's game and savour the build-up to the greatest moment in Australian soccer history. From the time Australia beat Uruguay last year, a momentum built up across the nation as the Socceroos went off to Germany to compete in the World Cup finals for the first time since 1974. After beating Japan, losing gallantly to Brazil and drawing with Croatia, the Aussies were through to the second round and up against one of the giants of world soccer—Italy. The Australians showed pace and flair but could not get the ball past the greatest goalkeeper on earth. Seconds before full-time, Italy scored and the game was over, with Australia knocked out of the cup competition.

But we are winners in so many ways. We have new-found respect around the world thanks to the way the Socceroos went about their business. They carried on the great Australian tradition of turning up and fighting above our weight on the world stage. Coach Guus Hiddink and the players, including Lucas Neill, John Aloisi, Harry Kewell, Marco Bresciano and company, are the new heroes for South Australian schoolchildren and set to be revered in the same way as the kids love Warren Tredrea, Mark Ricciuto and Andrew McLeod.

I also congratulate the Premier on his work in trying to secure the World Cup finals for Australia in 2018. For those who have not caught up with the latest edition of *China Daily*, it contains an article on how Premier Mike Rann is trying to get other state and territory ministers and the Prime Minister to get behind a united Australian bid to host the World Cup finals in 2018. We are all behind him and wish him well in that regard. While on the subject of the World Cup, I congratulate the media for their excellent coverage. SBS's telecasts were outstanding, newspapers around the country ran soccer on their front and back pages for days on end, and we were pretty well served here by coverage on local radio in terms of interviews from Germany and soccer-related stories from our own state. *The Advertiser* deserves a special mention for its efforts today. Putting a special full-colour publication on the streets just hours after the final whistle takes an almighty effort. So, congratulations and thanks to the journalists, photographers, subeditors and production crew at *The Advertiser*.

The only disappointing aspect was the fact that the elderly, the frail and those living outside the SBS coverage area had no live access to last night's game, or any of the other World Cup matches, because ABC Radio did not buy the rights. However, as with the referee, let us not dwell on the negatives. Despite Australia's exit, the wonderful World Cup goes on. If you are interested in staying up late just to cheer on Aussies, Wimbledon started last night, so get behind Lleyton and Alicia. The Tour de France starts at the weekend, so go Stuart O'Grady!

BUDGET DELAY

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Recently I brought to the attention of the house the predicament of Consumers SA, South Australia's volunteer consumer watchdog. This organisation had received a small amount of funding to pay a part-time staff person and had its newsletter, *Consumer's Voice*, printed by the department of consumer affairs. The department has ceased printing the newsletter because of budget constraints, and government funding for the part-time worker has not been confirmed past the end of this month.

Today during question time I brought to the attention of the house how the budget delay is preventing autistic children from accessing the support that they and their families so desperately need. These effects of the budget delay are being felt in all sectors of people's lives, and one cannot help but wonder whether the government is waiting to see who protests. If no protests are heard or are muted, will these funds be cut altogether when we finally see this long delayed budget?

I now draw the attention of the house to yet another budget in limbo. I recently visited Precision Labels Pty Ltd, one of the largest and most modern wine labelling manufacturers in South Australia, which is located at Regency Park, to see for myself the incredible benefits I had heard about with respect to the Department of Trade and Economic Develoopment supported Quick Changeover Competition. This competition, which is run by Peter Cesco, is helping to improve the efficiency of our businesses to enable them to survive and grow in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

At my original briefing I commented on how I had seen similarly motivated staff and efficiency as described at the

R.M. Williams factory that I had visited with SA Great only a few weeks before. I was told that it had won this competition three years previously. The benefits are obviously great and long lasting for both these factories and their fantastic staff and augur well for their survival into the future.

I would like to see this competition extended to as many businesses as possible, and not only manufacturing businesses. I could envisage that other businesses, including retail, agricultural, fishing, and even offices, would benefit from similar programs. However, I am very concerned that the funding the competition is currently receiving is on a monthly basis, which provides no security for anyone involved, and I would like to see this rectified by the minister as soon as possible to enable proper business planning into the future to be undertaken.

I am well aware that the budget has been delayed until September. However, leaving programs in which the government is involved hanging because of an arbitrary decision of the government to delay the budget is not good business practice and is not fair on the people involved. It does not give a good impression of the government's financial ability or understanding of the need for security and continuity for people and businesses in the real world.

To provide an understanding of this competition, I will read from the brochure provided for this year's 2005-06 competition. The brochure states:

> The 2006/07 Quick Changeover Competition provides industry with an incentive to reduce changeover times and provides a vehicle to encourage and train shop floor personnel to gain an understanding of operational efficiency in their specific work area. Last year's competitors made direct financial gains of approximately $15 million for their companies, averaging direct financial savings of $672K and reducing changeover times by 69 per cent.

The winners of last year's competition give us an idea of the high calibre of the businesses entering the competition. The overall winner, and winner of the Print Ink division, was the Detmold-Holweg 2 team, which reduced an eight hour one minute changeover to 30 minutes 20 seconds. This 93 per cent improvement will save $155 610 this year if it is maintained, and it will be rolled out to one similar machine. The Print Converting Division was won by Amcor Cartons.

The Automotive Suppliers Award for Excellence was presented to the Castalloy-Warrill team. The Innovation Award was presented to the Penfolds-Fosters Wine Estates team. The Plastic Moulding Award was presented to Caroma Industries. The Food and Beverage Award was presented to Yalumba. The Metal Stamping Award was presented to Carr Components. The Miscellaneous Division Award was presented to the Castalloy-Warrill team, which reduced a four hour 30 second changeover to 48 minutes 50 seconds. And the Graham Spurling Award for Sustained Excellence was presented to Electrolux, which will save $2 700 000 this year through the six machines entered.

TAFE, WHYALLA

Ms BREUER (Giles): Today I want to talk about the important question answered by the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education regarding the new apprentice skills centre for Whyalla. I was very pleased to hear this announcement, and it is of vital importance to my community. I rise today to congratulate the TAFE Whyalla campus for its efforts in securing this initiative and getting it off the ground. Also, I extend my sincere congratulations to OneSteel for finally taking on apprentices in an area where it is very much needed.

The first intake of 25 apprentices will commence on 24 July, which will include fitters, electricians, boilermakers and a machinist. A second intake will commence training in January 2007, and 50 apprentices will be trained at any one time. OneSteel is very positive about this partnership, and views it as a long-term commitment to training regional people for regional jobs. I believe that this partnership is an example of industry and government working collaboratively together to build the necessary work force skills for our state, particularly for my part of the state which will experience this huge expansion of the mining industry.

It is important for me today to acknowledge publicly in this place the excellent commitment by OneSteel to our city and to our young people with its announcement of these apprenticeships. OneSteel is a major employer leading by example and employing apprentices. Many years ago (back in the late 1970s and early 1980s), I worked for the former commonwealth employment service in Whyalla. I worked there for many years, and each year our role was to find up to 300 apprentices per year for BHP to train. This was an incredible job. The population of Whyalla was much bigger then, but we had to go outside Whyalla because we did not have enough young people to fill those positions.

Virtually anyone who was interested in a trade or a long-term career was able to obtain one of these apprenticeships. We involved every sort of trade, including electricians, fitters, machinists, boilermakers, welders, etc. It also involved some very obscure trades, such as moulders and tenth-scale loftsmen—trades that one very seldom hears about now. In those days BHP was a major employer of apprentices, as well as training young people. For many years employers, for one reason or another, did not employ apprentices, and we now have this huge trade shortage not only in South Australia but across Australia.

BHP introduced group apprenticeship schemes, which employed numbers of young people, but it never really filled that void left by employers not committing to training their young people. I believe that this is a great commitment by OneSteel. Certainly, it does mean regional jobs for our young people. Whyalla has more than halved its employment rate in the last four years but, at more than 40 per cent, the rate for young people is still very high. My sincere congratulations to OneSteel.

Recently, I visited the Magnet project at Whyalla. Again, this is a great commitment by OneSteel to our community. The amount of work involved in that project and the security for the future will guarantee these young people jobs for many years. Today I was given a briefing by BHP Billiton about the expansion of Olympic Dam. It is mind-boggling to think about the amount of work that will be occurring there for probably the next eight to 10 years, as well as the amount of training that will be required. It will be incredible for our part of the state. Not only will there need to be training in the mining industry and in the trades, but all sorts of infrastructure will be involved. Not only will BHP Billiton be involved but also companies such as Oxiana, which probably will be mining in the north of our state; and a number of other projects are also in development.

With respect to Olympic Dam, for example, infrastructure will be very important, as well as in our other communities. Not only will we need those mining trade positions but also we will need to be training our professionals for the future, because getting professionals to come to our country regions is a serious job. We are now recruiting mainly overseas-trained professionals to come to our part of the state. I cannot

finish without saying that I wish that University SA would take a leaf out of TAFE's book, which responds to local and regional needs. TAFE does come up with solutions and it does train people in our part of the state.

Certainly, I would urge the University of South Australia to look at the future positions that will be available in our part of the state, in particular teacher training. This is an ongoing issue. We need to have teacher training at the Whyalla campus, but I congratulate TAFE Whyalla and OneSteel for their efforts.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Ms FOX (Bright): It is timely to remind ourselves that, while the World Cup has showcased many nations' sporting prowess, the story behind many of these teams, particularly those from Africa, is one of real struggle. I rise to speak today about an award-winning photographic exhibition coming to Adelaide in the latter half of this year. I am talking about this today because it is easy to talk about the World Cup, how wonderful it is and how great it is to see all these people doing these great things. Behind every nation's team is a story. Every nation has a team and their stories are not always good ones.

The exhibition has been put together by some very famous war photographers. The exhibition has been received with critical acclaim in New York, Europe and Asia and is currently on its way to Australia. It is called DRC: Forgotten War. The DRC—the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire)—has the world's highest death toll as a result of conflict—some 3.9 million to date since the Second World War. This is one of the most lethal and largely unnoticed humanitarian disasters of the last decade. Although a peace deal was signed between warring parties more than three years ago, approximately 1 250 Congolese die every day through war-related causes. I remind members that that is the size of an ordinary high school: 1 250 people who die every day. The troubles of this nation never make the news here. Some people might know it as the setting of Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, whence comes the quote 'the horror, the horror'. The aid group Oxfam estimates that the United Nations' tsunami appeal raised $US550 per person for every person in need. In comparison, each person in need in the DRC receives just $9.40 in humanitarian aid. This country is not so far from Australia, but like much of the African continent it seems to exist largely outside our consciousness.

The exhibition of 50 photographs seeks to shine a small ray of light onto a volatile nation, whose people's terrible suffering remains ignored. The exhibition is the centrepiece of Médecins Sans Frontières Australia's campaign to raise awareness of this situation in DRC. Médecins Sans Frontières is a leading humanitarian medical emergency aid organisation that sends voluntary health care professionals to populations in danger. I understand that at least three doctors from Adelaide are currently on mission with MSF.

I applaud the Adelaide Festival Centre for agreeing to showcase this exhibition, and I encourage all members of this house to go across the plaza and see it when it arrives. We in this place live in a comfortable world by any standards and it behoves us to sometimes leave our comfortable world and confront the stark, horrific realities faced by our African neighbours, albeit through the safety of a photographer's lens.

FIREBREAKS

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I am pleased to have a chance to say a few words on some issues which I am sure will be near and dear to the heart of the member for Giles. I am pleased the Minister for Health is here, because I was interested to read in *The Weekend Australian* that the Queensland government has had enough wisdom and commonsense to provide some decent firebreaks in that state. They have even put 20-metre firebreaks on Fraser Island. We are not allowed to do it here in the mallee, but in Queensland they are going to put a 20-metre firebreak that will extend for 100 kilometres. That is a sensible and practical thing to do. The way things are going, we will not do anything here, unless we burn a few people. If that happens, people will get terribly excited and something will have to be done. We have five metre firebreaks in South Australia and they have 20 metres in Queensland. You cannot say that Fraser Island is not a sensitive area.

Ms Portolesi: A beautiful place.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I have been there once. It is not my wont to travel very much, but I have been there. I am very pleased that they are going to protect it from the ravages of bushfires, from environmental cranks and other difficult characters who, unfortunately, live in a closed society and do not understand practicalities. My colleague the member for Hammond understands what happens with large conservation parks where proper protective measures are not put in place.

As we move forward into the bushfire season, I call upon the government to ensure that landholders can take positive steps. In the local newspapers on the weekend there were advertisements calling on people to plan for bushfires. If they carry out productive exercises, they are liable to be prosecuted. I think we have to change the whole structure, and I will be looking at that in relation to some amendments to necessary acts in the next few months.

The second matter refers to questions I asked in question time. It should be the hallmark of a decent society that services are not taken away from people who live in a small country community. At the end of the day, to have a small school bus at taxpayers' expense is a pretty reasonable thing to expect. Why should the small community of Hawker, which does not ask for very much from the government, get less? Now they are going to lose the only school bus they have. It is a good little school which is well supported by the community. It is a good community. Economically it is in an area which has certainly had some difficulties. Why can't they have one school bus?

I bet if it was down at Mount Gambier it would not happen. As for the bureaucrats, what appalled me was the arrogant attitude displayed over the radio this morning by some technocrat from the education department. I would say to him, 'You obviously have been in a protected organisation for too long; you have not been in the real world.' Not only is Hawker being affected, but assessment officers have been up to Orroroo. I went for a walk down the mall today (I do not often do that) and met some constituents of mine from Peterborough. The first thing they asked me was, 'Are you aware of what they are doing to our school buses up there?'

Cabinet is coming up full of goodness and glad tidings, when it is there, but the first thing it needs to deal with is to just keep the existing services. Do not talk about new ones; keep the existing ones. The kids have to get to school. We want to keep them in school until they are 17 and we want to create opportunities. This is not unreasonable; these people

expect a reasonable result. To start taking these services away in the middle of the year is absolutely unacceptable and unnecessary.

Someone indicated that political decisions were made by the previous government. What the previous ministers did was to apply a little commonsense and compassion to ensure that kids in isolated communities got to school. When I went to Malcolm Buckby on two occasions he acted responsibly and stuck up for those small communities, and so did the other ministers. In the time of minister White I made some representations and she saved the school bus at Hawker two years ago. The time has come to do it again. If there is a need to make savings elsewhere, that is unfortunate.

Time expired.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (NEW RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 22 June. Page 636.)

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): I indicate that I have the carriage of this bill through this house but, that said, I do not intend to keep the chamber unduly long in dealing with it because I think it is relatively straightforward and certainly was afforded speedy passage through the other place last week. I note that the reason for bringing it on so rapidly after its introduction—indeed, I was not even aware of its introduction in the upper house when I was advised last week that we would be dealing with this matter—is that the rules proposed by this legislation are intended to come into force on 1 September, and we would be extremely short of time were we to wait until after the winter break to deal with this.

The bill essentially brings into place a whole of range of amendments, in the first instance to the acts which govern the way in which our courts operate: the Supreme Court Act, the District Court Act, and the Magistrates Court Act. It is my understanding that the judges of at least the Supreme Court and the District Court got together and revised the rules, and it is at their request that the changes in this bill are being proposed. I would like to thank the Attorney's officers who provided the briefing on it because, although it turned out to be relatively straightforward, this bill amends some 80 pieces of legislation—70-plus, in addition to the Supreme Court Act, the District Court Act and the Magistrates Court Act.

It has been brought in at the request of the judges who have quite thoroughly gone through the legislation and decided (for better or for worse) that some things are anachronisms and should be removed and that some things are, perhaps, anachronistic in their form of expression, although as a practitioner of the old school I am not entirely persuaded that it is appropriate to get rid of terms such as ex parte. Nevertheless, this bill, largely, goes through these 80 pieces of legislation and removes references which may not be readily understood by Mr MITS, the average man in the street.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Is that Mr MITS, the man on the Clapham omnibus?

Mrs REDMOND: That's the one.

The Hon. J.D. Hill: Was that his name?

Mrs REDMOND: No; 'MITS' is another expression commonly used for man-in-the-street. The point I make—in spite of the interjections of the Attorney and the minister—is that I have read the contributions in the upper house, particularly those of the non-lawyers, and they are hopeful that these changes will demystify some of the legal process. For instance, as the Attorney pointed out, 'ex parte' will be substituted by 'without notice to any other person', which is what 'ex parte' generally means. A number of terms such as 'motion', 'petition' and 'demurrer' will be replaced by the single concept of application. Those of us who practise law read legislation fairly easily without finding that these words trip us up. However, even as a practitioner of some years, there have been occasions when I have had to stop and think what was precisely meant by a particular term and why a particular case was started by application, or by petition, or by cases on the affidavits, as we used to run them.

'By leave of the court' is to be substituted by 'with permission', which seems to me to be self-evident. A range of these terms have arisen and some of them are simply to be replaced by the more usual words. On some occasions, the changes are such that it has been necessary to reword the entire section. Thanks to the comprehensive briefing which I had from the departmental officer (in company with the Hon. Robert Lawson in another place), I was able to go through each of these amendments and ascertain that there was no change to the essence of the legislation, that it was merely a rewording of the original intention, other than where something such as 'under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act' was determined to be an anachronism which did not need to be in the legislation any more and was removed altogether.

So, having had the request from the judges, having been advised that the Law Society has been consulted and raises no objection, and knowing how thorough the judges that I know generally are in approaching any task such as this, I am confident that these rules will correct the inadequacies and difficulties that they are trying to overcome. I believe that they will make the legislation with which we are dealing, particularly in the courts, more consistent throughout the state and, hopefully, in addition, they will also serve to demystify the legislation so that people without any legal training, theoretically, can read the legislation and understand its intention. On that basis, therefore, I indicate that the opposition has no objection and does not intend to suggest any amendment. We are happy to afford this bill speedy passage through the House of Assembly. I understand that the Legislative Council has agreed to receive messages in relation to such legislation passed by us this week while it is not sitting and, therefore, these new rules of civil procedure should be in place well and truly in time for their commencement of operation on 1 September.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I note that the Attorney-General has brought in legislation to effectively rewrite a lot of the court rules. A posteriori, many of the rules were difficult to understand by the lay person—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: That would be the lay man.

Mr HANNA: The Attorney-General interjects that I refer to a lay man but, of course, it is a well known fact to the law that both men and women can lay and, so, I say that I am ad idem with the Attorney in relation to the proposals which have been brought by him to the parliament and by the honourable judges to the Attorney. The legislation corrects various errata in the legislation, and there is nothing in it that

I can see contra bonos mores or contra legem, which one might think by definition or, as I might say, ipso facto.

These proposals, in relation to the jus civile, are beneficial and will be beneficial de futuro, and I commend the Attorney for bringing the legislation into the parliament. Normally, I am critical when the Attorney conducts his debate in the parliament with ad hominem arguments, but we have been blessedly free of that today. So, I simply salute him for this fiat, and I am sure that we will, as a society, enjoy the benefits of this legislation in the future. For those readers of *Hansard* who are keen to see plain English put into practice, they simply have to review the legislation res ipsa loquitur.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): The member for Playford, when he was once acting deputy speaker, ruled that it was entirely in order for a member to address the chamber in Latin. I congratulate the members for Heysen and, particularly, Mitchell on their contributions.

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

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN (AMENDING AGREEMENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 31 May. Page 340.)

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder): I confirm that I will be the sole speaker for the opposition on this matter today.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You cannot say that! What about other members of the opposition; don't they have any rights?

Mr GRIFFITHS: They certainly do, but they have chosen not to be here.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Every member is in the house at all times; it is a convention.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I appreciate the lesson. The opposition supports the bill. My understanding is that negotiations attached to the basis of this bill are from the early 2000s and involved discussions with the commonwealth and the New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian governments. This resulted in the Premier of South Australia signing the amended agreement, which reflected the positive outcomes that South Australia, as a state, certainly needed in April 2002. I offer my thanks to the shadow minister, the Hon. David Ridgway in the other place, for passing on to me the information and details that were provided during the briefings.

There are some details that I would like to place on record. I am aware that, following discussions leading to the South Australian signing of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement Amending Agreement 2002, a separate bilateral agreement between South Australia and Victoria was negotiated which resulted in the River Murray Environmental Flows Fund being established by South Australia and Victoria to improve the health of the River Murray in these two jurisdictions. Certainly, we would all acknowledge that the Murray is absolutely critical to South Australia, not only in terms of environmental issues but also for the economic well-being of our state, and I commend the actions that have taken place.

As part of the corporatisation process, the Australian government and the governments of New South Wales and Victoria have agreed to progressively restore up to 282 gigalitres for environmental flow, 212 gigalitres for the Snowy River, and 70 gigalitres for the River Murray. In the first seven years, and based on the contributions already committed by governments, the intention is to get 140 gigalitres of the Snowy River commitment and the full 70 gigalitres commitment for the River Murray. This latter amount is being funded by the Australian government. South Australia is not actually a signatory to the Snowy River agreement and will not contribute financially to this goal. Therefore, no specific funds are required as a direct consequence of the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement Amending Agreement 2002, although there are tangible benefits, including returning flows to the river and the environment.

The bill highlights the efforts being made to improve the health of the River Murray, which is critical to our state. The Liberal opposition believes that the bill is relatively straightforward. I again confirm that we have no objection, or a requirement for any amendment.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Minister for the River Murray): I thank members of the opposition for their contributions in relation to this matter. Also, I thank the opposition for its support for the bill, which is to put into legislation the rules under which the Snowy hydro is operating at this time; and I look forward to the passage of the legislation.

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

Ms BREUER: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

A quorum having been formed:

STATUTES AMENDMENT (ELECTRICITY AND GAS) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 8 June. Page 507.)

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to indicate that the opposition will be supporting the bill. We understand the reasons for its introduction by the Minister for Energy on 8 June 2006. Essentially, the bill comprises amendments to the Electricity Act 1996 in order to address concerns in safety and technical areas, which have become apparent to the Technical Regulator in the course of administering the legislation. It also includes amendments to the Gas Act 1997 in order to mirror some of the amendments proposed to the Electricity Act. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for the briefing that was provided; in particular I thank Michelle Bertossa from his office and Rob Faunt from the Office of the Technical Regulator. It was a very useful briefing, and I thank the minister for it. I know it is not always possible, but it would be helpful if as much forewarning as possible could be provided. In this case we had a week in which to talk to stakeholders about the bill. We managed to get to most, but I know, having been in government, that this is not always possible. In future, it would be helpful if as much notice as possible could be provided.

Key features of the bill include a new definition of 'electrical equipment' (which is added) and the terms 'electrical installation' and 'electrical infrastructure', which are defined in the bill so that they can be expanded or limited by regulation. Regulations applying to 'electrical infrastructure' are more lighthanded because companies such as ETSA have more technical expertise. Regulations applying to 'electrical installations' are more prescriptive and apply to electricity workers and contractors. The bill also reduces the

required notice period for entry to undertake required vegetation clearance work from a minimum of 60 days to 30 days because ETSA has reported that the current 60 day period is too long, especially in relation to bushfire risk work. I know local councils have an interest in this issue, as do other stakeholders, but no-one has raised concerns with the opposition about that measure so we will support it.

Refinement of the obligations of a network operator are also included in the act with respect to connecting an electrical installation to its network, differentiating between initial connection and reconnection that follows disconnection for safety reasons. There is also a requirement that a network operator must test to ensure correct polarity and phase relationship where work carried out on its behalf could affect the safety of connected installations. As was explained during the briefing, that can be quite a significant safety hazard if not carried out correctly. This will now become an offence, with the emphasis on the importance of carrying out such testing.

Contractors and registered electrical workers may be prosecuted for up to two years after the commission of an alleged offence, as defective work or another breach may not come to the attention of the technical regulator within the currently applicable six-month limitation period. Thus, the bill makes things safer, for both tradespeople and customers.

A person other than a contractor or registered worker will now be required, if they personally carry out prescribed work on an electrical installation, to do so in compliance with the requirements imposed by the regulations. This is an area that raised some concern on our side. There were some questions about how it might apply to, for example, farmers, primary producers or others who might do work at home but, on balance, we understand that the aim is to save lives and protect people from accident and injury and, therefore, it is incumbent on people doing electrical work at home or at a place of primary produce to basically get it right and do it in accordance with the regulations. So I guess, in fact, that will mean probably less jerry-rigging of electrical installations on farms and perhaps more professional advice and assistance to ensure that it is safe. We all know it is easy to come along—perhaps you bought a farm or are visiting—and you suddenly put your hand on the wrong wire and you are cactus. At least, once this bill is passed, one will have some comfort that when you go to a farm the only barbecue you are going to get is the one that the farmer intended you to receive orally rather than by touch.

So, on balance, we are quite happy to support that measure but will be looking at the regulations in regard to it, which I think is covered by clause 9(4), mainly to ascertain whether there is any red tape or extra costs burden upon small businesses in order to comply. I suppose it is unavoidable that there will be because, instead of doing things on an ad hoc basis, they will now need to get professional assistance, or certainly satisfy themselves they are doing it in accordance with regulations, so there will be a cost. We will look at how that works on the ground and, if people raise it as a concern, we will come back to the house. Perhaps the minister can assure us during his closure of the second reading how this might work in a practical way for a farmer or a place of primary produce—if not today, then perhaps between the houses, noting that we are ahead of ourselves.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Yes, we can do that. The business of the house has got a bit ahead of the advisers.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: That is a testament to our efficiency, minister, and how well organised the minister's office is in this regard to advance this matter so efficiently. There is a requirement in the bill that electrical burns, as well as electrical shocks, will be reported. There is an empowering of the technical regulator, as well as an electrical entity, to approve lines extending beyond one property. The bill also provides for the empowering of the technical regulator to issue public warning statements about electrical and gas equipment, components and appliances that in the technical regulator's opinion are or are likely to become unsafe in use; about the use of electrical and gas equipment or installation practices that pose a danger to persons or property; and about other dangers to persons or property associated with electrical and gas equipment installations and appliances.

I know that is quite a mouthful but we had a question about that during the briefing, because, almost by the stroke of a pen (as a consequence of this legislation), a technical regulator could deem a particular device to be unsafe and therefore virtually pull it off the market. That can have a pretty catastrophic effect on a business. We seek some assurance that the way in which this will work in practice will be one where at least the manufacturer, the small business, or the large business producing the items has some opportunity to explain, comment, or at least participate in the decision-making process, if only through offering advice and information, before the technical regulator just comes in, rams the shutters down and says, 'Right, your products are banned and off the market.' In fairness, there ought to be some test, some way for the manufacturer to at least explain. It might simply be a misunderstanding, and we would not want that company put out of business or that product pulled off line through a misunderstanding.

I suppose I am seeking some explanation or guidance from the minister as to how that might work in a practical sense. In the short time available, the opposition has consulted with a number of agencies from both the private sector and the public sector—electricity companies, institutes, industry associations, Business SA of course, building associations, mines and energy associations and electrical and communications associations. We have consulted with over a dozen companies and a number of minor issues have been raised but nothing major. A number of them indicated that they were aware of the bill's existence and that there had been some consultation. However, I will touch on a couple of points that have been drawn to the opposition's attention in making the observation that major problems with the legislation are not perceived by industry but there are some minor issues.

Of course, it gets to the inevitable point about the regulations and the devil being in the detail. We do not have the regulations before us, but industry understands that they will be important. The second reading explanation assured us that consultation will occur with industry before any regulations are made. I suppose that is a point that industry has picked up. They do hope that that consultation is thorough, particularly in the electricity industry, so that participants can ensure that practical implementation of the changes once they get to the regulation stage.

Regarding the determination of 'electrical installations' versus 'electricity infrastructure', the industry feels that, in this case, this might become a bit of a grey area. Companies need a process of appeal to challenge a decision by the technical regulator should it be considered inappropriate or unfair. The minister may be able to assure us that this process already exists, but again it gets to the point I raised a moment ago of industry players at least having an opportunity to comment and to offer a way out or a way through the problem

before the technical regulator suddenly slams the shutters down. It is an extension of that point.

Of course, if the status of a building is changed under this bill—for example, if an office building goes from being 'an electrical infrastructure' to 'an electrical installation'—some in the industry have commented that the impact should not be retrospective. Perhaps this is picked up in the bill (I might have missed it), but we are assuming that, once the bill takes effect, it will not be incumbent upon people to—if you like—go back and enact the intent of the bill retrospectively.

I cite a very simple example. If a farmer has set up some electrical arrangements on the farm that are not strictly in accordance with the requirements now set out in this bill, is the farmer or the small business now obliged to go back and go to the expense of rectifying that, or is it the government's intent that these new requirements will take effect only from the date of proclamation of the bill and forthwith? We would not necessarily want the requirements to be retrospective. Of course, over time, they will have effect in any event, but that is an issue that has been raised. Perhaps the minister, if not today but between the houses, could come back and advise the house on that point.

Generally, I think the housing industry is happy with the regulations, as are some of the major electrical companies. Local government has not made extensive comment to us about the bill, but it will have an interest. Should that comment come back to us between the houses, noting that this bill will not be dealt with in the other place until after the long break, we will make sure that we raise it there should any late advice come in.

The opposition notes the involvement of the Electricity Technical Advisory Committee in the preparation process for this bill. I would like to read into *Hansard* the names of the people on that committee, so that when industry reads *Hansard* it will know who has been involved. I am not exactly sure what are each of these people's roles and what organisations they represent. They are: Phillip Cheesman; Grant Cox; Wendy Eyre; Rob Faunt, the chair, who helped us with the briefing; Victoria Gailit; Robert Geraghty (I do not know whether there is any relationship)—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: There certainly is.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: If there is I am sure it is very eloquent and well-informed.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: He's not on there for the marriage; he's on there as the secretary of the electricity union.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Good stuff. I think I met him at a parliamentary function, and I am sure he would make a great contribution to the group. The members also include: Charlie Hoare; Darren Inge; Rainer Korte; Eric Lindner; Laurence Moore; Tim Murray, whom I understand is being replaced by Ian Heard on 22 June—that has, no doubt, already occurred; Rafael Orschulok; Greg Thompson; and Peter Tromans. Should industry, as it reads *Hansard*, seek more guidance, it can contact those people, many of whom will be known to them, and seek further guidance and advice as to how the bill was prepared for the house.

Notwithstanding the points I have raised, the opposition commends the government for bringing it to the house. I do not foresee a need to go into committee; I think the bill can pass forthwith. If any further concerns are brought to the opposition's attention between the houses, we will raise them in the other place. I note that the minister's advisers may not be present. If he could give us an undertaking to address those matters that I have raised between the houses, I will see to it that my colleague in the other place raises them again and seeks clarification.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Energy): I thank the member for Waite for his measured contribution and support. This bill reflects the way in which the community increasingly does not accept the risks that might have been acceptable in the past. I can remember my father, when we first came to this country, rewiring houses. I am surprised he lived for as long as he did, given the way in which he used to work on—

Mrs Geraghty: With a licence?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: No; he had no licence. He did the plumbing, the electrical wiring, and the gyprocking—he did everything, and he did it pretty well, too. He did try to kill himself, but he did not succeed, so that was all right. The truth is that that level of risk is not acceptable in the community in modern times. In regard to the individual questions from the member for Waite, in general, I can assure him that my experience in dealing with the technical regulator has been that, rather than his office being a burden on industry, I have had remarkably little complaint in that regard. What I can recall is that on occasions the technical regulator's office has been able to exercise flexibility, such as the clearances between wires and new structures, where the possible strict enforcement of the law would have been a big burden on the developer. I can remember occasions where the officers exercised flexibility in that regard to save the person doing up the building very substantial funds, and that has happened on a couple of occasions, in discussion with people such as ETSA staff. I am confident that the office, with Rob Faunt, has a very good balance. Having just arrived, and given that we have a very lengthy period, I will ask the office to take a detailed look at the issues.

In relation to the issue about giving notice, I understand and sympathise with the view that there should be a way for a company or business that might be affected by a notice to have a viewpoint upon it. In relation to the technical regulator, we have to remember that he (and it is a he) will sometimes be placed in the position of being criticised if he does not make a warning in a timely fashion. So, there will have to be a balance. However, we will get detailed information about how the technical regulator sees the use of that power. As I have said, I have found in the past that the office is quite facilitative of business and respectful of not placing an unnecessary burden in the pursuit of safety.

In regard to retrospective effect, certainly in our view those matters that deal with installation have no retrospective effect, but I have to say that it has not been considered by parliamentary counsel to a great degree. What we will do is turn our mind to any possible effects that the member might be worried about between the houses and provide a full explanation. If that is satisfactory to the opposition now, I will conclude my remarks and look forward to providing the information to the opposition, which has been helpful in the passage of this bill.

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

Mrs GERAGHTY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the state of the house.

A quorum having been formed:

DRINK DRIVING LEGISLATION

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I table two documents pertinent to questions in question time today. One is the application for review of licence disqualification suspension of Sharon Lee Conway, lodged at the Christies Beach Magistrates Court on 9 December 2005. The second is an affidavit of police officer Steven Andrew in the matter of Police v Sharon Lee Conway.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (CHILDREN IN STATE CARE) (PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 22 June. Page 650.)

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): I thank the house for the opportunity to continue my remarks which I commenced at the end of last week somewhat unexpectedly. I have probably already said more than I needed to, having kept the debate going for some little time while we sorted out the matter of the upper house receiving a message from us once we passed this legislation.

We have indicated our support for the legislation. For the benefit of members who may wish to speak on this matter, I will reiterate briefly that the essence of this bill is the confidentiality of the work of the Commission of Inquiry into Children in State Care. Commissioner Mullighan has been hearing evidence for some two years and it was, I think, the first bill that I had the privilege of leading through the house when I became a shadow minister in opposition in 2004.

Commissioner Mullighan has taken evidence from almost 900 people and, of the matters that he has heard, he has referred almost 100 to the police. When he refers those matters to the police, he does so on the basis of providing the bare bones of the allegations; that is, who the complainant is, who the alleged perpetrator is and, if possible, when and where the offence occurred. But it is always up to the police to establish their own brief and to build their evidence so they can make a decision as to whether they are going to prosecute the case and whether they can win it, and to deal with all those documents which they create for that purpose.

The current fear is that the police are about to lay charges in cases which have been referred to them by that process and in which they have built up their body of evidence. If they lay charges, there is a possibility that a defendant or a defendant's lawyer might seek a subpoena from the court to access all of the documents held by the commission. This goes to the very heart of the confidentiality that has been guaranteed under the legislation and, if it was allowed to happen, there is a very real fear that the commission would effectively collapse because it would badly damage that essence of confidentiality which has encouraged people, over two years, to come forward. For some people the effects of the abuse which they suffered has been so profound and it has been buried in them for so long that it has taken two years, since the commission was set up, before they felt that they were confident enough to come forward and go through what, for many of them, is quite a traumatic process.

In this amendment we are not seeking to change any of the usual rights. Any documents that the police create in the course of their investigation would still be subject to the normal processes. So, if they are currently available to the defendant, they would remain available to the defendant. What we are seeking to protect is simply those documents that are in the possession of the commission.

The difficulty that we alerted the government to before this bill was introduced was that in its original wording there was a proposal to include all documents which had been received by the commission. That potentially created a situation where a person who brought to the commission a document that they might consider unfavourable, once it was received by the commission it would be arguable that it would have gained the protection of the legislation that we are about to pass. That would present an unfair disadvantage to a defendant and an unfair advantage to a person who alleged that they had been abused.

So, the government, wisely, I think, decided to amend the legislation before introducing it so that we removed at least that part of the problem. We still have some difference with the government and, although I do not have an amendment with me on such short notice to put to the house, it may be that we will table an amendment under someone else's name before this debate concludes. But, in essence, we are at one with the government concerning the documents that are created by the commission and, indeed, any documents created specifically for the commission. For instance, if someone wrote a submission, or wrote down their thoughts or their story, or whatever it was, specifically for the commission, that is covered within the concept of what is being protected by this bill.

Where we have a difference is simply that it seems that there could be documents which are not created specifically for the commission but which come into its possession, and which could become subject to the protection given by this bill. As I said, we still have a slight difficulty with the government's proposal in that regard. They are prepared to rely on the assurances of the commissioner that the commission would not receive, for instance, a police file if it were the only police file. They think it very unlikely that they would receive the only police investigation file and that, if they received anything, it would be a copy; and that, in any event, the commission would hand back such documents.

The commission further indicated that, if it suddenly received documents that it had not been receiving for the past two years and then found that, since this legislation had passed, documents had started coming to the commission that were clearly prejudicial to someone's evidence, if the commission felt that it were being used as a parking place to hide such documents from the defence team, it would recognise that and ensure that those documents did not stay and, therefore, were not caught by the provisions in this bill and did not get the protection of confidentiality which is being guaranteed, because what we are guaranteeing is the documents created by or for the commission.

However, ultimately we also have to deal with what happens to documents created by the commission when it comes to an end. I do not expect that the commission will finish within the next year but, some time possibly towards the end of next year, if and when it does finish, whether that be this year, next year, the year after or whenever, a considerable body of evidence will have been taken up by the commission. It might not be evidence admissible in any court of law; indeed, it might be evidence that could be highly prejudicial to people without the benefit of a fair trial. So, it is not the sort of information that one would want to get into the public arena, but it is information that will, no doubt, in due course have considerable historical significance,

particularly in the future for sociologists looking at the abuse of children in state care.

The bill also provides for the protection of documents not only which are held currently but also which may be held by the commission when it concludes its deliberations and presents its final report to the government. As I said, it is agreed by both sides that we need to protect the integrity of the commission and ensure that people have confidence in going there and that what they believe to be confidential remains confidential. Under the legislation as it was originally passed, if the commissioner believes that something is so important that he has to override a request for confidentiality, the power already exists for him to do so; to date, the commissioner has never done that.

I would like to include in the record of this debate my response to the government's position that it accepts the commissioner's assurances in relation to which documents he would not keep. My view is that, as legislators, we should always think about the worst possible scenario. I have every confidence in Commissioner Mullighan and his team at the commission of inquiry, and I respect their integrity and good intentions in this regard. However, we have no guarantee as to who may ultimately be in charge of the commission. We expect that it will be Commissioner Mullighan, but we never know what is ahead of us, and we need to contemplate everything, including not only the ability of the commission to recognise when it is being used as a parking place to hide documents but also the situation where people are really seeking to avoid the consequences of the legal scheme and the legal system.

Underlying all this is the fact that, if someone has made prior inconsistent statements in their lifetime, essentially, when they bring an action, the defendant (who is presumed innocent) has the right to test that person's evidence. If their evidence is inconsistent with other things they have said previously, the defence generally has a right to know about that, to take them to task over the inconsistency and to have a court or a jury (if it is a jury trial) make a determination as to which version of events is correct or whether there is any satisfactory explanation for that inconsistency. So, with those few words I conclude my remarks on this bill, and note that we will be affording it speedy passage through the house so we can deal with its effects and bring it into operation before the end of the winter break.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I strongly support the bill, because I would not want to see any action taken that would in any way interfere with or prevent the commissioner from carrying on the excellent work in which he and his colleagues have been involved. I think it is very important that people who have been the victims of terrible abuse should be able to feel confident that the undertakings this parliament gave to them when the original legislation was passed will not be watered down in any way, and they should not feel that the parliament has gone back on its word. When people appear before a commission or a parliamentary select committee and are advised that the evidence they give will not be publicly disclosed under any circumstances, we have a moral obligation and an absolute obligation to ensure that those confidences are not breached. Otherwise, the commission—and other people—will not be able to properly do their job.

I strongly support this legislation, and I believe that lawyers should not be able to use the tactic of trying to get hold of some of this material for the most dubious of reasons. It would compound the unfortunate abuse that some of these people have already suffered to have their names dragged through the courts for no benefit whatsoever. The amendments as set out in clause 3 of this bill are appropriate and necessary, and I have every confidence that the commissioner will exercise his authority and his discretion wisely and appropriately.

We need the commission to be able to continue its work in a speedy fashion and, if it is necessary to bring people to the attention of the police, that ought to be done (and I know that the commission has already done so). I hope that the commission will continue to bring those people before the courts so that justice can be carried out. Whether the victims have been in state care, or wherever they have been, it is not appropriate that these people should be able to get away with the horrendous crimes they have committed against innocent people.

I strongly support these proposals; I support the legislation. I do not believe that it is necessary or wise to revoke the undertaking that was given at the time of the original legislation. I am aware that, a number of years ago, a select committee was established to look at various things and then a couple of parliaments later a member, for the purpose of seeking some publicity for himself, set out to have some of that evidence made public, even though it was the clear intention (and undertakings were given at the time) that evidence that was given would never be publicly disclosed. If we go back on these undertakings, we will never get people to come forward and give the evidence that people such as Commissioner Mullighan require to properly carry out their duties. They already face an onerous task. It must be quite difficult—it would be trying and frustrating—and we should do everything possible to assist him in his deliberations. I am very happy to support the second reading of the bill, and I look forward to its speedy passage.

Mrs PENFOLD secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities): I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

BIRD FLU

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Influenza is a disease that must be treated with extreme caution, because it is caused by viruses that have developed the capacity to change as they transfer from one host to another, hence the impossibility to develop a vaccine against it because virtually each strain requires its own vaccine. The virulence of the H5N1 strain (commonly referred to as bird flu) is alarming for the speed of its progress in human beings and the high mortality rate associated with it. Few survive.

Research appears to indicate that the disease is endemic in some species of birds from which, as the name suggests, it is transferred to human beings. The fact that H5N1 has also spread between certain animals—tigers, peacocks, cats, pigs and several different species of birds—suggests that it would be possible for a transmission to become quite efficient from birds to humans. A book on bird flu by Jo Revill (first published in the UK in 2005) states that Hong Kong saved the world in 1997 by its swift and comprehensive reaction to the discovery of the influenza virus that had been transmitted

from birds to humans and that the virus was in a lethal form. Revill writes:

> The unthinkable had happened. Until this point in history, no-one had imagined that birds could transmit their viral infections directly to human beings. The genetic leap was said to be too great for this to occur.

The culling of all the birds in the colony was ordered and, within the space of three days, 1.5 million chickens, geese ducks and quail were destroyed. The virus reappeared in 2001, 2002 and 2003, and it seemed that the territories would never be free of it. The problem was that the virus was regularly crossing the border from neighbouring Guangdong province in China through the trade of live birds for consumption and also for breeding. Since September 2004, Revill said that the disease had been hitchhiking its way westward across continents, with each new rumour of an outbreak sparking fears, as well as tough farming restrictions to protect national economies.

Migratory birds become possible harbingers of death if infected birds come across national borders during their seasonal flights. No person or group can believe that they are free from risk. It is this realisation that emphasises the importance of being prepared. The federal government has put more than $600 million into research and preventative measures, nevertheless, it is individuals who will bear the brunt of prevention, detection and action should a pandemic occur. South Australia needs to plan on a statewide basis to cope with an outbreak which many believe is inevitable.

The state government should work with local government in developing strategies so that action can be prompt and confusion eliminated, and the state government should adequately resource and finance local government for the job. A proposal put to the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association in March is worth implementing on a state basis. The proposal suggests a database of all birds in the state to be used as a control measure in the event of an outbreak of bird flu. Each local government council could compile a database for its region, thus covering all but the out-of-districts areas for the state.

The state government would fund and coordinate the project. A rapid response through the instant availability of this information to any call by a state or federal government for a specific bird cull could save hundreds of lives. Particular species, or those kept under free-range conditions, could be targeted immediately by response crews using the prior knowledge provided through such a database. The mandatory information might consist of the owner's name, exact location or address, all species of birds, numbers of each species, how kept (e.g free range, cage, aviary, loft, indoor, pet, etc.), and whether it is a commercial venture.

Further information could be included, such as whether or not carrier pigeons are being raced, whether live birds are being bought and sold and whether poultry products (eggs, table birds, etc.) are being sold. Information on wild birds and migratory birds could be sourced from private and government departmental knowledge with months of migration and anticipated numbers as nearly as possible. Revill states:

> Every year, millions of birds fly on different routes around the world to nest and breed. . . thousands of flight paths run north to south and east to west, but still relatively little is known about how many birds follow each route. . . Our knowledge of migration comes mainly from bird watchers and ornithologists.

Australia is the end destination for some birds migrating through Asia. Therefore, the risk of bird flu being transmitted by this source is real. We must be prepared to deal speedily and efficiently with an outbreak whenever and wherever it occurs. It is easy to imagine the chaos and cost that would result if culling crews were sent out without the above information or had to gather the information on the run while an outbreak was in progress.

Poultry farmers in the United Kingdom have been told to prepare for contamination which, though not inevitable, is much more likely now that the virus has reached France. Trade in exotic birds must be included in any strategy to deal with the disease. Revill discusses an incident in Britain in October 2005 that led to a temporary ban on the importing of all captive birds into the European Union from around the world. This affected a sizeable number of creatures, as nearly one million birds and exotic pets are brought into the European Union every year.

William Karesh, the Director of the Field Veterinary Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society in Britain, said that factors that cause the spread of the disease—for instance, movement of domestic poultry and farming methods, such as intensive farming, both indoor and outdoor—should be a focus in the prevention of the disease and its spread. At present, the bird flu virus spreads only from bird to bird or from bird to human. However, a mutant virus spreading from human to human would have catastrophic effects across the world.

Two academics at the Australian National University—Warwick McKibbin and Alexander Sidorenko—modelled the economic effects of a bird flu pandemic. They looked at four cases:

- Mild—similar to the Hong Kong flu of 1968-69;
- Moderate—similar to the Asian flu of 1957;
- Severe—similar to the Spanish flu of 1918-19;
- Ultra—similar to the Spanish flu of 1918-19, but without the anomalously high survival rate of the elderly.

The model attempted to comprehensively describe supply and demand conditions in national and international goods, labour and capital markets, then looked at the effects of a variety of national economic variables: gross domestic product, external current account balances, exports, inflation, share prices, interest rates and exchange rates. Labour force figures reflected both fatalities and absenteeism, while demand reflected changes in the level and pattern of spending by consumers owing to social distancing—for example, cuts to travel, tourism and entertainment spending.

Business costs covered such things as absenteeism and the need to disperse people, while national risks took in such things as changes in financial markets due to higher risk premiums for holding assets (following a pandemic outbreak) in accordance with the quality of a country's governance, health policy and financial stability.

The research, while suggestive rather than conclusive, brought out some interesting things. A mild outbreak would, according to the modelling, cost the world 1.4 million lives and close to .8 per cent of gross domestic product or $US330 billion. In the ultra case, more than 142 million people die and there is an 11 per cent loss of annual global output or $US4.4 trillion. The researchers stated that, given the scale of these costs, it makes sense at both public policy level and at individual corporate and household levels to invest in preventative strategies. Being prepared will make a colossal difference should a large scale outbreak of bird flu occur.

The modelling showed that the composition of the slowdown differed sharply across countries according to their mortality and morbidity rates, the relative importance of the

sensitive industries (trade, air transport, recreational and other services), and the risk premiums that financial markets will demand from them. Morbidity refers to the occurrence of the disease. For instance, in African countries, where a large percentage of the population is HIV positive, there is likely to be a higher rate of morbidity. Also important is the capacity of governments to ease fiscal and monetary policy to offset economic downturns.

Hong Kong appears to be an economy that would be especially hard hit because of its dense population and extensive links with the rest of the world, leading to a rapid spread of the flu. Other factors also applied to make Hong Kong's case particularly severe. In the worst case scenario, Hong Kong's gross domestic product plummets by more than 50 per cent for at least a year before starting to recover. Most Asian nations would be particularly hard hit. However, Australia, despite its close integration with Asia, fares comparatively well. Even in the ultra case its gross domestic product drops only by 11 per cent; better than Asia (including Japan), though worse than the United States and western Europe. That is the big picture. The small picture comes back to individuals, to preparedness at a community level. This is where the state government can take a lead by implementing the bird data base mentioned previously.

Time expired; motion carried.

At 5 p.m. the house adjourned until Wednesday 28 June at 2 p.m.