

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 21 September 2006

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.J. Snelling)** took the chair at 10.30 a.m. and read prayers.

### STEM CELL RESEARCH

The **Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher)**: I move:

That this house expresses its support for embryonic stem cell research and application, via therapeutic cloning and subject to proper safeguards, because of its potential to enhance and save lives.

This is a very important issue and one I feel should be considered by this parliament. Members will recall that in 2002 we considered two important bills. They were follow-on bills from the federal Prohibition of Cloning Act 2002 and the Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002.

I believe any issue should be considered by this parliament. There should not be any issue which is hands-off because, ultimately, we are the representatives of the people of this state and they expect us to consider important issues. Whatever our particular individual viewpoint, we need to have an accurate, ongoing debate about key issues. It is not simply a matter of stem cell research. I would argue it also applies to other potentially contentious issues such as abortion, prostitution, and the like.

There is no doubt that, over time, constituents will come to us and ask for our view and perhaps express their own view on issues relating to, for example, stem cell research. So, it is important that we, as members of parliament, as best we can—and some here have a scientific background, others do not—understand the process of what we are discussing when we address a topic that comes under the general heading of stem cell research.

We need to understand the moral implications because there are diverse and differing views within the community in regard to this issue, and I will come to that in a moment. Whatever our particular scientific or moral view on the issue is, I think we should all marvel at the wonder of nature, whether one takes a creationist view or looks at it in evolutionary terms, or a mixture of the two. We are looking at something which is incredibly fantastic in terms of its very composition and the way in which the biology and physiology work.

It is important for not only us, as individual members of parliament, to have a view on a subject such as stem cell research—despite the fact that federal parliamentarians are about to debate this issue again—but it is also important for the state government and the opposition to have a view on it. We have the Victorian and Queensland governments taking a very supportive stand in terms of stem cell research, and the other governments either remaining quiet or possibly not being so supportive.

The first question to ask is: what do we mean by stem cell research—the heart of the stem cell debate? I will quote from an article reporting Senator Jeannie Ferris, and then I will also present an alternative view from Tony Abbott. Jeannie Ferris, in very simple language, has encapsulated many of the important aspects of this debate. In Senator Ferris's statement (I am not sure whether it was a speech) quoted in *The Advertiser* on 19 August this year, she says:

One word has been strangely absent from the debate on Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer—sperm.

There are no sperm involved in the process and there is no fertilisation of any egg. The nucleus of a skin cell, in fact, is fused with the outer case of an unfertilised egg which is then stimulated to create a blastocyst.

This scientific process cannot, will not and, legislatively, must not create a baby.

A line of stem cells is created which can be used in research and, perhaps, enable cures to some of the most debilitating diseases.

Australian law already allows the destruction of surplus fertilised IVF embryos to create stem cell lines for research. The proposed legislation allows only for the use of the outer case of an unfertilised embryo to create stem cells containing an individual patient's DNA.

Some of Australia's most eminent scientists agree with the recommendations of the Lockhart inquiry which found [that somatic cell transfer] SCNT should be allowed in Australia, under strict conditions. Ten countries already are undertaking this research.

It is imperative Australia has a national position.

She raises two important questions, as follows:

**ARE** we seriously looking to ban this research and tell the community they must travel overseas for therapies?

**ARE** we going to ban the research but buy in the therapies which may have been developed by Australian scientists overseas?

Jeannie Ferris, I think, in simple terminology, is indicating that we are not talking about an embryo in probably what many people would understand to be that notion, that is, something resulting from contact between a sperm and an egg, and she raises those important questions. She refers to the Lockhart inquiry, which was an inquiry required under the legislation. It was conducted by John Lockhart, who was a former judge; sadly, he has died since the publication of that report.

I will now quote Tony Abbott's view—and this is an edited excerpt from his speech at the National Press Club on 2 August this year, and it is entitled, 'Where will it all end?' I think it is fair to characterise his speech as part of what many people would call the slippery slope argument. He says:

There is much emotion around this because many people are hanging on cures and they think forms of research might offer it.

There is very little real evidence that embryonic stem cell research is the health nirvana some of its more enthusiastic advocates portray.

Some have been guilty of over-peddling hope to the vulnerable in this area.

So-called therapeutic cloning basically is translating 'Dolly the sheep'-type situations to humans. I think we should think hard before going down that path.

I am in favour of research and Australian scientists are a great credit to our country.

They have done wonders in the wider world and will continue to do so. Some things, however, scientists should not do. In my view, therapeutic cloning, so-called, is a bridge too far.

I know the Lockhart Review couched its recommendations in cautious terms but allowing therapeutic cloning and permitting the resultant product to develop for 14 days is their recommendation now.

I would be confident that were we to accept that, in a few years they would be saying, 'Let it go for 30 days and a few years beyond that.'

We would have scientists of high standing telling us we ought to let it go for three months and so on. It is better if we don't go down this path.

So there is an alternative view, but it is important once again to come back to the science of it.

In many ways the term 'therapeutic cloning' is the wrong term because cloning, because of science fiction and the media, suggests the creation of a person. As Jeannie Ferris pointed out in her statement, that is not the intention of stem cell research. What happens? Therapeutic cloning is a form of stem cell science. A group of cells, usually skin cells (and she referred to this), is taken from a patient. The nucleus or DNA of the patient's cell is removed and transplanted into a donor egg that has also had its nucleus removed. This process

is known as nuclear transfer. Using chemical or electrical stimuli, these cells are combined to create an embryo. The embryo is a clone of the patient's cells. It is not a clone of the person per se. Scientists can take stem cells from the embryo and use them as a human repair kit. Any kind of organ or tissue can be grown from these stem cells to treat diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. After scientists have finished extracting stem cells the embryo is destroyed, reiterating some of the arguments touched upon by Senator Ferris and Tony Abbott.

The case for stem cell research—and the term 'therapeutic cloning' is probably the wrong term—states that therapeutic cloning could save lives by preventing and curing degenerative diseases such as cystic fibrosis, leukaemia and arthritis—and I emphasise 'could'. This technique helps scientists unlock medical mysteries by understanding what causes diseases and how to treat them. The other point Senator Ferris made was that it would allow our biotech industry to remain competitive.

The argument against, alluded to by Tony Abbott, is that some people fear that therapeutic cloning could lead to human cloning, also known as reproductive cloning. Creating and destroying an embryo was seen by some as being morally questionable. Another concern was therapeutic cloning may require lots of donated human eggs, which could pave the way for women to be coerced to donate or to be financially exploited. When we talk about therapeutic cloning, we are talking about the potential to create or regenerate cells in a person—maybe a whole organ such a liver, heart or something like that. Reproductive cloning, which is outlawed in Australia, and should be, is the process whereby you seek to reproduce a human being. I urge members to read the Lockhart report because it talks about some of the other possibilities, which are also outlawed, for example, mixing human and animal reproductive functions. That is spelt out in the Lockhart report and I do not have time to go into that today.

As a community we need to weigh up the pros and cons of this. When I spoke on the Prohibition of Human Cloning bill in 2003, I pointed out that some of the surplus embryos that would be used for research were almost certainly some that came from the involvement of my wife, Lynette, and myself in the IVF program. That IVF program did not work for us, but we were happy for the surplus embryos in that case to be used for scientific research in the hope that it might help those suffering from particular diseases and other aspects of research. It is important in looking at this issue that we weigh up the moral aspects. I have come down on the side of supporting stem cell research with proper safeguards, which are spelt out clearly in the Lockhart report.

The Lockhart report does not give carte blanche to researchers to do what they will in the way of embryonic stem cell research. I also point out to members that recently claims have been made of a new technique which may not damage the embryo, and that would help overcome some of the concerns people have about the morality of this type of research. I urge members to look at some of that information; I cannot go into detail here, but work has been done on that in the United States. However, many researchers are sceptical about whether you could actually interfere with an embryo like that without damaging it or having some long term consequence.

With stem cell research and therapeutic cloning, we have the potential to create new organs within the body for people with problems such as faulty hearts, livers, and so on.

However, no-one—and certainly not myself—is advocating that it be a free-for-all or that researchers and scientists be able to do just what they like. The Lockhart report, published in December 2005, clearly sets out restrictions on what can and should occur. On balance, I believe that we should pursue this avenue, with safeguards and proper controls, to ensure that we do not deny life-saving medical benefits for people in our community who suffer from terrible diseases. At the same time, we need to have respect for those who have a moral objection and for those who have a different value system and see anything like this as problematic.

**Mrs GERAGHTY** secured the adjournment of the debate.

### KING STREET BRIDGE

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett):** I move:

That this house calls on the state government to fully fund the replacement of, or extensive repairs to, the King Street bridge over the Patawalonga Lake at Glenelg North.

I am not holding my breath on this one—particularly with today being B-Day, or Budget Day. This is a government that has blown the budget; we have had to wait months until today to find out the worst news that South Australia will ever get, apart from when it blew the State Bank.

This motion is about repairing, or preferably rebuilding, the King Street bridge over the Patawalonga at Glenelg North. As people know, the Patawalonga, thanks to the federal government and the former member for Morphett, was dredged many years ago. It has been turned from the second most polluted waterway in Australia to an absolutely pristine waterway now—and it was great to see the national water-skiing championships back there. We also have the Milk Carton Regatta back, and we have the fantastic marina there that is part of the Holdfast Shores Development.

However, spanning the Pat, just north of the Holdfast Shores Development, we have the King Street bridge. The bridge was built in the 1950s by the then Highways Department—I think it was in 1954, or something like that—and it was over a much narrower Pat then. It is a concrete bridge, and it serviced the area and the local traffic quite well. However, the southern suburbs have developed, the West Lakes development has proceeded, and you now have Footy Park down there as well. The King Street bridge is now mainly (I think it is well over 70 per cent) used by commuters. It is also used by emergency vehicles accessing the Glenelg North peninsula between the Patawalonga and the beach, and it is also used by public transport, with heavy buses going over it.

In 1960 the Patawalonga was widened and the bridge extended. Of course, that was done with all the latest technology, as it was in the 1950s when it was built. In the 1990s extensive repairs were carried out because the increased traffic and heavier trucks and buses going over it added to the wear and tear on the bridge. In 2005, the state of the bridge was so bad that load limits had to be applied. In 2006, I understand that those load limits are about to be reduced again, and the bridge will not be able to be used by a number of large trucks. According to my information, I do not think that, by the end of the year, buses will be able to use it. I just hope that emergency vehicles can still keep using it. At the moment, because of the concrete cancer in the bridge, it is not suitable for the current heavy traffic and public transport use for more than about another five years. Some

repairs have been undertaken by local government, but it is still an ongoing problem.

The estimated cost of repairs to increase the life of the bridge by 25 years is about \$2 million to \$3 million. The sum of \$6 million would build a new bridge that would last 100 years. I would be very disappointed if the state government asked the ratepayers of Holdfast Bay council to dip into their pockets and fund what is basically a state asset and primarily used by people from all over the state and visitors from outside the local government area. What will it do to the local government budget to ask a small council like the City of Holdfast Bay, which comprises 31 000 ratepayers, to fund yet another state asset and pay for it out of its rates?

Six million dollars for a new bridge is a very small price to pay for a bridge that carries mainly public transport, visitors, locals and commuters going from the southern suburbs to the north-western suburbs and Footy Park. Thousands of vehicles use the bridge every day, and it is suffering lots of wear and tear. The state government should take more responsibility for individual smaller assets around the place. If there was a decent transport plan, a decent asset management plan or a decent infrastructure plan, the King Street Bridge would not have to be paid for by ratepayers.

This is not the first time that the ratepayers of Holdfast Bay have been done in the eye by this government recently. What did the government offer for the new year's eve celebrations? A lousy \$25 000, when 75 000 people go to the bay. Ratepayers again have to pay for the security, the facilities and the entertainment for the rest of South Australia. Once again, the state government does not care about the City of Holdfast Bay, and the King Street Bridge will be yet another example of its ratepayers and the constituents of Morphett being done in the eye. I look forward to members opposite looking at the triple bottom line and having some heart for the battlers and having a bit more than just the 2010 election in their minds.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I hope that the cackling we hear on the other side is more than just empty rhetoric and abuse from them. It is about time that they took notice of what is really happening in the state. If they drove around the place, they would see what a fantastic state it could be if the government actually spent some money on assets that help not only locals and visitors but also the many industries and businesses who conduct the state in an efficient and economically prosperous way. Spending \$6 million on a new King Street Bridge would be a wise spend, unlike a lot of the waste we have seen and the money that has gone down the tube in so many ways in the state.

**Mr RAU (Enfield):** I must say that it is always a delight to follow the member for Morphett. I have to be very careful in what I say because I have noticed that he is likely to lift remarks made by members on this side and stick them in his pamphlets. I do not know whether I should take credit for the fact that, at the last election, the member for Morphett won by 3.5 per cent, or whatever it was, but I wound up being mentioned in dispatches by him. I was actually mentioned because I like to give credit where it is due and, at the risk of being mentioned again in four years—and I can see this in quotation marks already—I say this: 'There is no person in this place who puts his electorate ahead of all other things more than the member for Morphett'. How does that sound?

Do you think that will look all right on your material? That is really what we heard today.

I want to make a couple of points. The first is that the member for Morphett plugs his own constituency—and good luck to him; well done—and he never misses the opportunity to do that, and I do not want to be in his next pamphlet. What he is trying to do here is laudable from the perspective of his constituents, but not from the point of view of the community at large, because he is trying to do some cost-shifting where a cost of the local government authority is shifted over to the state government and the state government is expected to pick this up.

As the member for Morphett knows, I have an interest in local government and, in fact, I am conducting my own little inquiry at the present time into local government. It might surprise the member for Morphett to learn that, if all local government authorities acted with appropriate levels of propriety, efficiency and transparency, more than enough money would be available in the City of Holdfast Bay, for example, for them to be able to secure long-term funding at reasonable rates to perform the tasks that he so desperately wants them to perform.

Initially, the answer might lie with the City of Holdfast Bay looking into its own behaviour and its own conduct and saying, 'Goodness me! We have been wasting a lot of money on inefficient practices. Goodness me! We have been doing some naughty things that have not been transparent. We have been doing a whole range of things. If we stop doing this and behave the way we should, we will have this productivity dividend. What can we do with it? The King Street Bridge. The first thing we will drop our money into is the King Street Bridge because it is going to be our productivity bonus to the public. They will get an open, accountable local government and a new bridge'. I suggest that it should be renamed the McFetridge Bridge to commemorate the efforts the member for Morphett has been putting in on behalf of these people to get this bridge built.

Members should realise that, on this side of the house, those of us who sit at the pointy end of the plane—not me, but where you can hear the clink of the ice in the nice glasses—are adding up all these things. We do that every time the member for Morphett comes in here and says that he would like \$6 million for his bridge and every time the member for Stuart says that he would like \$40 million to seal every dirt road in his very large constituency. The 'member for every road in South Australia' is not here at the moment, but he used to routinely come in here and say that he wanted \$50 million for a flower show, \$20 million for a horse show and \$60 million for something else. He was like Father Christmas. I just sit here quietly reading books and listening, but some people up the front have a pencil and paper, and, inevitably, in the next few days, when the Leader of the Opposition gets up to make his contribution about finding some fault, no doubt, with the budget that is about to be delivered, what if somebody gets up to say, 'We have been keeping notes'? The member for Stuart wants \$20 million for roads in his area. The member for Morphett has just put a \$6 million price tag on the budget because he wants that for the King Street Bridge.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** He says, 'a paltry sum'.

**Mr RAU:** A paltry sum; yes, indeed. The member for Morphett also said in the end that we should be putting money into wise investments, not silly things. What is wise and what is silly not only depends on your point of view but also depends on when you actually ask the question. I can

remember years ago when the member for Morphett was more fixated than he presently is on trams. He loved trams; he could not get enough of them. He used to hop on trams in Adelaide and Paris and he did a lot of work on trams. He loved them. He actually said to us—if I am not totally mistaken—in one of his other very compelling speeches, urging the government to spend some money, that the tram should be extended. He said, ‘Why don’t you extend that tram from Victoria Square, right up here to the railway station?’ It was actually part of—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**Mr RAU:** North Adelaide, indeed! North Adelaide, fair enough. Why stop at the railway station? The other thing that I recall from that period was that, I think in two or three elections, the opposition had said to the public, ‘Look, that tram shouldn’t be stopping there in Victoria Square. There’s people that want to just keep going. They want to go up here to the railway station. They want to come to Parliament and see us talk to one another all day. They want to go up there to North Adelaide to look at the Le Cornu site. They want to do all these things, so let’s build that tram. Build it and they will come.’ That was your proposition, not ours—your proposition.

Now, because the government said, ‘Look, even the opposition occasionally gets an idea that’s worthy of consideration,’ and the opposition said, ‘We happen to agree with you,’ the government decided, ‘Yes, we are going to build this tramline. We are going to build it up King William Street. We are going to bring it up here.’ All of a sudden it is \$70 million wasted on trams. Every time something comes up it says, ‘Get rid of the trams and we can have all these extra things.’ As I said, memory is a dreadful thing. It is a dreadful thing which confronts you with irreconcilable inconveniences. Unfortunately, I am cursed with a memory.

To come back to the original point (again, I do not want this in your pamphlets), the member for Morphett is always plugging for the people of Glenelg and giving them value in this place, and he is always looking to reach that extra couple of centimetres into the public pocket and grab a few more shekels for the good burghers of Glenelg. Good luck to him! But I suggest, if he really wants to pursue good value for the people of Glenelg in the immediate term, and get the King Street Bridge renamed, as it should be, the Duncan McFetridge Memorial Bridge—

*Dr McFetridge interjecting:*

**Mr RAU:** Do you want an opening bridge as well, or are you happy with a closed bridge?

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr RAU:** The Members Bridge is not a bad idea, either. It would stand for everybody—no pun intended. The point I was getting to is that the honourable member should be ringing up the people in the council at Holdfast Bay and saying, ‘Listen, chaps, here is your opportunity to get a really big dividend for the punters. You blokes are going to look good; I am going to look good because my name is going to be there, and I’m going to be there cutting the ribbon. All you have to do is become open, transparent and accountable and get rid of all the nonsense that goes on here. There is going to be a triple bottom line’—I think that was the term you used, triple bottom line—‘there might even be a quadruple bottom line. There is going to be money coming out of your ears. We are going to be able to finance a reasonable debt program. We are going to be able to rebuild this bridge, and we are all going to be better off.’

I think that is the way forward, but I could be wrong. I do know that every time you or one of your colleagues gets up and says, ‘This is only \$6 million; it’s only \$10 million dollars’—I do not know how much the member for Stuart’s road program would cost (not the speed limit aspect of it, but the sealing aspect) but I imagine there are a few million dollars there—and if you add them all up, I think it is going to be a very interesting post-budget discussion. Anyway, well done for the sentiment, and I think your constituents are going to be very pleased that you are trying, but I think you are focusing on the wrong people.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** Mr Speaker, I have been forced to get to my feet, and it is one of the rare occasions that I address these particular issues. The first thing I want to say to the house is that the eloquent speech we just heard from the member for Enfield fails to appreciate the role of a member of parliament. The role of a member of parliament is to put to the government any matters in his or her electorate which they believe ought to be considered by government. It is the role of government to set the priorities. It is the role of a member of parliament to bring those matters to the attention of the government, as difficult as that may be. Some ministers have a great deal of difficulty in even comprehending that there is a problem. Nevertheless, that is the role.

The member for Enfield talked about the fact that they have a list of things that they are adding up in the Premier’s department. There is nothing new about that. I had a list once that contained the State Bank, Scrimber, the SGIC, and a range of other initiatives which were put to the people of South Australia. They spent \$70 million or \$80 million compressing timber and building a factory and I do not think they produced one stick of timber—not one stick. That was a pretty good effort. That fixes the honourable member’s bridge. But let us come closer to home.

**The Hon. K.A. Maywald:** What about the chip factory? What about Mitch’s chips?

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** It is all right for the Minister for the River Murray. We know the Minister for the River Murray has to defend the cause, and long may it be. But I want to say this to the member: she got rid of the Labor Party office in her electorate. I have had to put up with it. What I want to know—

**The Hon. K.A. Maywald:** I did not have one.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** She got rid of it.

**The Hon. K.A. Maywald:** No, I never had one.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** They shunted the fellow out of Murray Bridge because he was causing some trouble. He was gagged. He had the clappers put on him. I know in Port Augusta an office was established, but after the previous election Don Farrell cut off the money. Don Farrell funded the Labor candidate, gave him a position as an organiser in the shop assistants’ union and let him loose, and of course they bragged that they spent \$240 000. And they failed, so of course he cut off the money. So, the next thing they had to do was create an office, and they put in a couple of motor cars, they had a candidate, an off-sider, a receptionist and a trainee, and they had a compound at the back with a big fence so the cars could not get damaged. I want to know—and it is very simple and is all about saving money—just how much it costs each year to keep this office open.

**Mr Goldsworthy:** And what does it do?

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Well, we know what it does. We know exactly what it does. It has two functions: to make the

Labor Party and endeavour to exclude me from public functions. But what we want to know, Mr Speaker, is how much it costs, what the function is, what the role is, and how long it will continue. They want to play these silly games, but if you step on a tiger's tail he will normally bite you, and this process will come back to bite them.

We live in a democracy where the role of government is to enhance the welfare of its citizens, and we have a separate system where we have political parties and pressure groups, which is quite proper. That is part of democracy. Democracy cannot work without well-organised political parties, and I do not have any problem with that. But, when people throw brick bats around the place, and particularly at me, I always like to respond. So, I want to know.

Of course, we could talk about projects and promises. There were a number of promises made during the last election campaign in my constituency, including the sealing of the road to Wilpena. It does not seem to have quite as high a priority as it did—they are going to do only 7.5 kilometres this year, so it will take a while to get to Blinman. What about all the money that was going to go into the town hall? That has taken a bit of a backward step. It took a backward step after the press chased the Premier across Gladstone Square with the television cameras when he fell out with the mayor about the stealing of the land. I want to know what has happened to that, because the government got quite a bit of money for that land. So there are a number of issues.

I point out to the honourable member, who so eloquently explained why he thought the member for Morphett was being a little extravagant in his proposal to have this bridge fixed up, that it is the proper role of a member of parliament to bring these matters to the house and to the government. If you are not going to do it, you should not be here. They have the effrontery and audacity to criticise opposition members for putting up things when they are wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars in my constituency, when it took us as a government two terms to pay off their Bankcard. We left it in a good position, aided and abetted by John Howard, who has lined their pockets with gold—not with silver—and given state governments more money than they have ever had in history since Federation with the money they are getting back from the GST.

So, of course, the citizens in rural South Australia are entitled to a fair cut of that cake. They do not ask for a lot; they normally get less, so they are entitled to it. They are entitled to see that their hospitals are well organised. They are entitled to have school buses, not have them taken away because some insensitive bureaucrat thinks that they are not important.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** I rise on a point of order. I do not mean to interrupt—

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** Well, I have lost my place.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:**—the member opposite, but I would just like clarification that we are talking about Notice of Motion No. 2. I seem to think the member is talking about some other motion that I cannot find on the *Notice Paper*.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I have been closely following the member for Stuart's speech, and he has, on occasion, strayed, I think, a little from the King Street Bridge over the Patawalonga at Glenelg North. Perhaps I might just draw him back to that particular piece of infrastructure. The member for Stuart.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I thank you for your wise counsel, Mr Speaker. The last thing that I would want to do is transgress the standing orders, because I spent a good bit

of my time studying them during my time here; and you are right: they are very flexible. The first standing order you should understand is that, if the Speaker does not know, there is no point of order. That is the first standing order that anyone here ought to understand, but the standing orders are flexible, particularly when they have been interpreted from the chair. Nevertheless—

**Mr Koutsantonis:** It is standing order 303.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** That is correct. In conclusion, I think that the member for Morphett has been absolutely correct in bringing this to the attention of the house. The house needs to debate these issues. The role of government is to set the priorities and to make sure that the funds which are available to government—probably some \$11 000 million this year—are fairly distributed across the state and are there for the benefit and enjoyment of all citizens.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert):** I support the member for Morphett, because he is, indeed, a very good local member, as the member for Enfield said a few moments ago. I also support the words of my long-time colleague, the member for Stuart. Most of my speeches in this place have been in favour of managing our assets, particularly our long-term physical assets. This particular motion, I believe, is all about maintaining a valuable asset that is down there at the Patawalonga. This is, as we know, budget day, and I am hoping that this afternoon we will see in this budget a big swing towards the provision of infrastructure, and also towards the maintenance of our vital assets in this state, that is, the assets of our roads, bridges, water delivery and sewerage systems, because we know that we are in serious trouble. We are running down our assets. For the past four years this government—

**Mr Bignell:** You sold them all!

**Mr VENNING:** The member for Mawson is interjecting; I cannot understand. If this bridge needs to be replaced or extensively repaired, it should be. This government continually gets its priorities wrong. It is good enough to spend \$400 million down on the Port River building a lifting bridge, which we do not require; we do not need it. It is more about a private row between the federal member for Port Adelaide and this government. We saw a little about that the other night with regard to Cheltenham, and I happen to support the minister on that matter. This government just gets its priorities wrong. I believe that, if this bridge is ignored and not dealt with, the member for Mawson can be assured that, in future, it will cost a lot more. I believe in preventative maintenance, that is, maintenance on time. Remember the old story of a stitch in time saves nine—

**Mrs Geraghty:** Can you sew?

**Mr VENNING:** I used to sew, yes, but I do not any more; I have not got the time. I believe that this government does not seem to be able to prioritise its expenditures in relation to what it needs to do to save money in the long term. It goes around and spends money on those—can I use the words—politically sexy things that will make the headlines. Most importantly (and after listening to the member for Enfield; and whether or not this is priority one, I do not know), at least we will get something for the money. What do we have to show for the last four years?

This really upsets me, because none of us in this place—members on both sides of the chamber—can hide from the fact that we were in this parliament when we ran down the state's assets. The government will look back at this, and if members doubt this they should travel to South America and look what happens to a country that does not spend money on

or look after its infrastructure. When one travels to these countries one understands that, 200 years ago, these countries were wealthy. Now look at them. Really, they have been corrupt governments; and, in this instance, some of the things that this government today does here in relation to its money could border on the corrupt.

In my retirement—and I am not retiring yet—I do not want to look back at this period and say, ‘Well, look what we did,’ because that gentleman up there, Sir Thomas Playford, left some fantastic assets for us to use.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr VENNING:** I am not pointing the figure at this government: I am pointing the finger at recent governments, and that would include my own. Just consider what has been done in the past 10 years in this state, and what will we leave for our kids? In retirement, what will we think back on that we did when we were here? What did we do? We got ourselves in this mould of spending money on ourselves in this place. Look at the cost of running this place, and it goes on and on. Look at the cost of maintaining the Premier’s department and the cost of the public relations outfit. I am told the figure is \$9 million. How many bridges will that fix up? I know that my government did it as well, but not to the extent of \$9 million. If that is true, it really does worry me. I say that spending that sort of money in a state of two million people must be bordering on the edge of being corrupt. That is ridiculous.

**Mr KOUTSANTONIS:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. We all enjoy the member for Schubert’s diatribe, but this motion is about the King Street Bridge, and he is talking about corruption in Brazil. We are all a little confused.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I think that the member for Schubert has strayed from the motion.

**Mr VENNING:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I accept the point of order. This is all about priorities and building this bridge. I am trying to build a bridge with the government. I understand, but the principle here is about priorities. Budget day—a very important day of the parliamentary year—is all about what the government is going to do. It really does worry me. I understand that everything goes in cycles. Even politics goes in cycles. I believe that we have been through four years of unequalled success in this state, no thanks to this government or this opposition, either.

As a result of the resources boom that we have been having (as well as money from GST payments, and everything else), all I have to say is that, in relation to this bridge and other projects similar to this bridge, what do we have to show for it? We are just soaking up this money running this place and the state with a huge burgeoning social—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** The member for West Torrens has not raised it yet, but he could raise the Bakewell Bridge, which is a project I support. The Bakewell Bridge is very similar. Certainly, I believe that, after the Bakewell Bridge is finished, if we need to attend to the Patawalonga bridge, that should be on the agenda, exactly the same, because it is a priority. If that bridge reaches the point of falling down, the cost involved will be great. As the member for West Torrens would know, I was a member of the Public Works Committee of this state from 2002 until March 2006, and we saw hardly any major projects go to that committee. We saw some, but hardly any of great consequence. That is proof enough that, really, the government—

**The Hon. R.G. Kerin:** Sturt Street.

**Mr VENNING:** We saw the Sturt Street Primary School. Was that not a joke—because the minister said that they were closing down small schools? Why did they then spend the money on that school, which the previous government had earmarked for closing and selling? Anyway, that is how I see it. I support the member for Morphett. As the member for Stuart said, as MPs, we have every right to come into this house and put our point of view, so that at least members of the government know (because I know that most of the ministers read *Hansard*) what the projects are.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without saying that I have a huge number of priorities in my electorate, of which this government has addressed very few. I note that the Minister for the River Murray put out a list a couple of weeks ago about what has been spent in the Barossa. That list was published, and I picked it up and read through it and I could not believe it. I thought: ‘Where has all this money gone?’ I will send the minister a copy of the press release I put out in relation to that, because I was amazed at the figures that were cobbled together. I just cannot see where it went. However, I certainly support the member for Morphett and his bill and, in particular, the principle involved here. First, as the local member, he has the right to bring this project to the parliament and, secondly, I want the government to get more value for its money.

**Mrs GERAGHTY** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## NATURAL BURIAL GROUNDS

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** I move:

That this house urges the state government, local councils, cemetery authorities and other relevant organisations to facilitate the creation of natural burial grounds.

This is an issue in which I have been interested for some time and have been seeking to have implemented as a practice in this state. Natural burial grounds are also sometimes known as woodland burial grounds, green burial grounds and forests of memories. In essence, they are an urban forest. It does not have to be trees but, whatever they are, they should be preferably native, and preferably indigenous to the particular area. People are buried—these are dead people, not live people—in cardboard or wicker coffins, and there can also be cremated remains. In the United Kingdom in 1996 there were 17 natural burial grounds and, according to the latest figures I have for 2004, there were in excess of 200. They can be consecrated or non-consecrated, so that people who have a particular religious belief can have the natural burial ground consecrated if they so desire.

The great thing about natural burial grounds is that they provide a positive contribution to the environment. They are easy to maintain. They are inexpensive to implement, because the person is buried in a cardboard or a wicker coffin, and a tree is planted above or alongside the cremated remains. There is a little plaque next to the tree or at the entrance of the natural burial ground, saying that a particular tree represents the place where a particular person was buried or their cremated remains have been placed.

As I say, there are enormous environmental benefits because it creates a forest. It can be shrubs or native grasses because, in the United Kingdom, some of the natural burial grounds are in the form of a meadow rather than a forest, but a forest is the more common approach. The cost is minimal because it can use land that is either degraded or not suitable for other purposes. In that category are quarry sites, and we

have a lot of those near Adelaide which have been degraded and material has been taken out and which have never been rehabilitated. We could bring in soil and create an urban forest, a natural burial ground, a forest of memories. Many other areas can be used as well, and the fact that the soil is polluted is of less significance than for other activities. We have areas, for example, the recreation parks at O'Halloran Hill, which can be used, and the government has already had a brief look at some of those options. We could use part of Glenthorne at O'Halloran Hill as well.

This is becoming more attractive to people in Adelaide because we are facing a shortage of burial space. Centennial Park is looking at about 20 years, and that includes reusing existing graves, which raises another point which is very sensitive in the community. Under our current law, people buried in our cemeteries, generally speaking, are not necessarily there permanently. If the licence fee or the lease fee is not paid, then those people can be dug up. It is euphemistically called 'lift and deepen'. They dig up the remains after 50 years, in some cases 99 years, and put other people in that grave site. Many people do not like that concept. They do not like the idea that grandma or grandpa will be dug up and someone else totally unrelated and unconnected buried above them. People do not like that. People want permanency when it comes to burial; they want tenure. They want to know that their loved ones will remain there undisturbed forever. That is something that does not happen at the moment, except in a few rare situations. The reason that there is some permanency in country areas is that local councils are reluctant to dig up existing grave sites for fear of an electoral backlash. Legally there is nothing to stop grave sites being dug up in country cemeteries either.

In fact, we have built on many cemeteries in Adelaide. In Unley and Coromandel Valley, we have built houses and shopping centres over them. Some people say, 'You cannot do that with Aboriginal remains.' We cannot do that with traditionally buried Aboriginal remains, but Aboriginal people buried in our cemeteries have no more protection than anyone else, so that is a furphy that is trotted out. The southern area—and this would be of interest to members who have electorates in the south—is facing a desperate shortage of burial space not just because of Centennial Park but the cemeteries in the south—Happy Valley, Coromandel Valley and all those little ones—are either full or close to being full. The City of Onkaparinga, in particular, has a challenge in trying to provide an area in which people can be buried.

The beauty, as I have said, of a natural burial ground is that it is inexpensive. There is no headstone or tombstone; and there is no concrete or other surround. Instead, a tree is planted as a living memorial, and if the tree dies, another one is planted. There is minimal maintenance because it is grown as an urban forest. To give an idea of the cost, at the moment, if people want their cremated remains placed under a rose bush at Centennial Park, it costs \$5 000. We could have a natural burial ground and a lovely native shrub or urban grasses for a fraction of that price. I am not picking on Centennial Park. That is a reflection of the amount people are likely to pay if they want cremated remains placed under a rose bush in a managed cemetery.

Some of the coffins that are used now—and members who were on the cemeteries select committee will remember that we were shown coffins—cost in excess of \$10 000, which to me seems a shocking waste of beautiful jarrah. With a natural burial ground, people want something that will decompose quickly, and that is why they use cardboard or wicker.

New Zealand has introduced natural burial grounds. I have contacted all the premiers around Australia and received a lot of support. Tasmania has not got a natural burial ground but it has a bushland cemetery. Western Australia already has Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park. It has a bushland cemetery but it is not quite the same concept. A bushland cemetery has lakes, and so on, whereas a natural burial ground is more like an urban forest. By way of letters I have received support from various premiers and the cities of Onkaparinga and Norwood Payneham and St Peters. I am delighted that the Environment, Resources and Development Committee has adopted as a term of reference for an inquiry an investigation into natural burial grounds. The advertisements have been lodged for that inquiry. Some of the issues to be considered by the committee include the availability of sites, legislative requirements (if any), possible restrictions and whether it is a public or private space. All those sorts of questions will be considered by the Environment, Resources and Development Committee under the guidance of its chair.

I will be speaking in a week or two about the TREENET conference, which was a conference of people interested in managing and growing trees in urban environments. One of the issues that was raised at the conference was the fact that under the Kyoto protocols currently no credit is given for urban forests, but credit is likely to be given in the future. Cities, such as Adelaide, that have extensive urban forest—scattered maybe—will count towards dealing with climate change and global warming. The point I make is that in relation to natural burial grounds this would be an additional positive contribution to the urban forest concept in regard to what is almost certain to be the next stage of the Kyoto protocols.

Natural burial grounds, which provide a very peaceful resting place, are environmentally friendly. A lot of people who have contacted me are very supportive of this concept. They want it not simply because it offers permanency and is a cheaper option with low maintenance but, rather, because they like the idea of something that in general terms is more natural than being a cemetery where there are many rows of headstones and tombstones. At lot of people want the option—and I am not saying it is for everyone—of something more in tune with nature and the natural environment. I must say that I believe the Attorney-General is supportive of this concept; and, shortly, he will have to respond to the select committee on cemeteries. I urge the government to get behind this concept because one of the emotive issues the government will have to deal with in responding to the select committee on cemeteries is how we deal with the issue of tenure or permanency, which is a big issue in the community. Natural burial grounds offer a satisfactory alternative. It does not solve all the issues relating to current cemeteries, but at least the government could say that it is an alternative which is permanent where loved ones will not be dug up.

The Minister for Health (the former minister for environment and conservation), the Hon. John Hill, has been very supportive. Many of his public servants have been looking at possible sites for natural burial grounds close to Adelaide—and there are plenty of them. Centennial Park, under the guidance of CEO Bryan Elliott, has been very interested in this issue; and I have contacted Eric Heapy, who is in charge of the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority, which would be a likely authority to be involved, if the government decides to support this concept. So, all in all, I think it is an innovative approach. I have a lot of material on this, and, as I said at the start, in the United Kingdom there is incredibly positive

support for the concept of natural burial grounds, and when I have raised it and discussed it with people here they are equally supportive.

So here is an opportunity for us, and that is why I am delighted that the Environment Resources and Development Committee has taken this on as a term of reference for inquiry. Here is an opportunity for us to be not only respectful but innovative and to provide an alternative which is affordable, and I think in keeping with the outlook of many people today. So I commend the motion to the house and would urge members, if they want more information, to contact me and I am more than happy to make available the detail. I have books from the UK, etc., on this topic to show members exactly, by way of photographs, what I have been talking about. I commend the motion to the house.

**Mr O'BRIEN (Napier):** I rise to indicate the government's support for this motion. I would like to start by acknowledging the member for Fisher's longstanding commitment to environmental issues, and also take this opportunity to commend his willingness to investigate alternative solutions to what are seemingly intractable problems. The member for Fisher in his address has highlighted that Adelaide is facing, in his terms, a desperate shortage of cemetery space both in the central area of the city but particularly in the south. Establishing new cemeteries is a particularly difficult and expensive task as there are competing needs for land; in particular, housing. The cost of land in urban areas is another major obstacle in establishing new cemeteries. Industry experience demonstrates that there is a fairly long lead time before any new cemetery returns sufficient income to cover its operating costs, let alone future maintenance liabilities. For example, Smithfield Memorial Park, in my electorate, was opened in 1986 and is just starting to reach a break-even position. Twenty years is regarded as the norm for this to occur.

Natural burial grounds, as proposed by the member for Fisher, could provide one avenue which may alleviate, to some small degree, the demand for new cemeteries. Natural burial sites involve the body being buried in an environmentally friendly manner with no embalming or casket. Instead, the body is enclosed in a shroud, cardboard coffin or other suitable container at a depth of about one metre. The site is then covered with compost soil mix and planted with eco-source natives, with generally no traditional monuments in the area. In fact, this would be counterproductive. The overall aim is to restore an area back to native bush and result in a green space that establishes a living memorial and forms a protected wildlife preserve, and I think this is an admirable objective.

The first natural cemetery was established in the United Kingdom in 1993. By 2003 there were over 100 sites in Britain, and currently they stand at around 200. Research indicates that they currently account for an estimated 10 per cent of all burials, and I think that is a fairly significant uptake and I would be surprised if on introduction in Adelaide we did not actually have a better uptake than in the UK. Canada has implemented a similar program, and momentum for the provision of natural burial grounds is also growing in the United States and in New Zealand. The Southern Regional Cemetery Trust in Tasmania has introduced a form of natural burial using existing cemetery land that is already populated with native vegetation, and a discussion with the member for Chaffey leads me to believe that this would be particularly attractive in rural areas,

reducing as it would the cost to local government in regenerating natural vegetation.

Options for natural burial have an advantage over traditional methods in that they provide a shorter decomposition period. They allow the recycling of nutrients, encourage the regeneration of bush, provide a carbon sink point (which was alluded to by the member for Fisher), and provide invaluable fauna habitat. They also release less toxins than traditional methods and allow use of steeper land than is the case for traditional burial methods.

Natural burial provides these environmental benefits, lessens the effect of traditional methods and increases burial options available to the public. It is an ecologically sustainable way to bury the dead. A person's interment is a deeply private and personal affair and the method of interment is a decision that must be made by the individual or, in the absence of a predetermined position, by the individual's family. The government is willing to investigate the possibility of natural burial methods as an alternative for South Australians. To this end, the Minister for Urban Development and Planning has requested the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority Board to undertake further investigation for consideration by cabinet.

**Mr VENNING** secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### **RIDER SAFE MOTORCYCLE TRAINING**

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes the public's objection to the state government's 240 per cent fee increase charged for the Ridersafe training program, which is a compulsory part of the motorcycle licensing process;
- (b) expresses its concern that the effect of this fee increase may disadvantage young riders and may also lead to an increased incidence in unlicensed riding, injuries and fatalities;
- (c) notes that up to 1 000 motorcyclists attended a protest rally at Parliament House on 5 August 2006 to object to this fee increase; and
- (d) calls upon the government to reverse this fee increase in the forthcoming state budget.

Members will be aware of the rather silly decision by the government to increase Ridersafe training program fees by 240 per cent, and I call on the house to note the considerable public objection to it. I ask the house to express its concern that the effect of this fee increase may be to disadvantage young riders and may also lead to an increase in the incidence of unlicensed riding, injuries and fatalities. I particularly draw to the attention of the house that the increase in the last few weeks alone in the number of motorcyclists being killed and injured has been significant.

Members will also be aware that on 5 August nearly 1 000 motorcyclists rallied outside parliament house to make their point to the government. There was also a demonstration and a representation to the Premier and shadow cabinet in Clare. What the government needs to do—and it has an opportunity to do it between now and this afternoon—is announce a reversal of this decision because it is a silly decision. The training course fee for the basic motorbike training, preparatory to obtaining a motorbike learner's permit, is to increase from \$90 to \$290. The fee for advanced motorbike training preparatory to obtaining a motorbike licence will increase from \$79 to \$255. In fact, it has already been gazetted and is in effect. On top of this, an administration fee of \$15 is now being charged at each stage of the training, up from \$13.



I simply say to the government: who can afford \$575—it is virtually \$600—just to get a motorcycle licence? For not much more than that, some riders can buy a second-hand bike and get themselves on the road. It is almost as much to qualify to ride as it is, in some cases, to get yourself on the road. Why such a startling increase of 240 per cent? For some, it is more. University students and riders who use a motorcycle because it is more affordable than a car will be the victims of this silly decision—and, in fact, are the victims already.

The move is completely out of step with the South Australian government's own Motorcycle Road Safety Strategy 2005-10, which points out that 271 motorcyclists were killed in South Australia from 1990 to 2004 and that South Australia has one of the highest fatality rates in the nation, that is, 1.5 times the national average. Fatalities have halved since Ridersafe programs were introduced in 1987. This fee hike is a massive step backwards—back to where we were pre-1987. Unlicensed riders already account for eight per cent of all riders killed and six per cent of all riders seriously injured. This is a much higher figure than for car drivers, where 1 per cent of those killed or seriously injured are unlicensed. We already have a problem; this is going to make it worse.

The government needs to sit down and think about the rally outside Parliament House on 5 August. It is not easy to get 1 000 people out on the street protesting about something they feel passionately about. I understood that Labor listened. It seems that in its fifth year in office Labor has stopped listening. Many of the riders who are protesting about these fees are not wealthy people. Many of them live in Labor members' electorates, and I am sure that many members opposite have had letters or contacts from people about these fee hikes, but there is no signal and no indication that there is any intention to change. I ask members to support my motion and reverse this most stupid decision, which I am sure is being driven by the Treasurer. It is fine to say, 'Look, we run this lovely Ridersafe training; let's have full cost recovery.' Well, you can have the most wonderful Ridersafe training facilities in the world but, if no-one can afford to use them and they are just going out and riding unlicensed, it has been a massive waste of time.

I remind the house that this is a mandatory regime of training. Car drivers do not have to go to a Ridersafe training school and do a two-day period of compulsory training run by the government in order to get their licence. It is a mandatory regime; there is no escape from it—and, of course, now it is beyond the reach of many. The 15 June gazetting of these silly and needless measures, involving a 240 per cent increase to the charges, is a measure that needs reversing.

I have met with the motorcycle community, the Motorcycle Riders Association and a number of other associations, individuals, and groups involved in training and instruction, and their message is very clear: they want this decision reversed. Of course, the rider community, like all motorists, are equally outraged about increases to vehicle registration fees of up to 3.5 per cent and licence fees up 4.2 per cent, and a 10 per cent jump in traffic infringement charges which came with this decision and which were gazetted at the same time.

I should perhaps remind the house at this stage of the absolute extortion being foisted upon the public by this government in respect to the amount of money it is ripping off motorists. We have the \$400 million worth of charges on motorists ranging from licence fees to registration fees. On

top of that we have \$100 million worth of fines and traffic infringement notices, amounting to \$500 million. As well there is an extraordinary amount of money coming in from GST. The Treasurer himself has acknowledged that for every cent of GST on fuel he is getting \$26 million—another \$300 million to \$400 million. It is approaching \$1 billion. I noted that the RAA's budget submission to the government uses a figure of \$832 million, which would be about right. It is getting towards \$1 billion from motorists in taxes and charges. What is being spent on motorists? It is three-fifths of nothing! The government is taking \$840 million off motorists and giving back about \$100 million. There is no need for this additional hike and charge on motorcyclists. The government is getting enough money from motorists and motorcyclists as it is without having to persist with this measure. It is simply not good enough.

The Motorcycle Riders Association publishes a quarterly magazine for its members. This matter is getting high priority and top profiling. It runs a web site, along with other associations and organisations who are spreading the word. These costs are nowhere near, for example, the cost of second stage training in New South Wales, which I understand is around \$104. It is above what is being paid elsewhere. We are certainly setting the standard in South Australia, but it is not one we ought to be proud of. I have talked about the protest rally and I draw members' attention to the coverage of that in *The Advertiser* on 6 August. It contains some quotes from ordinary people on the street, who expressed their views. Members who saw the coverage of it on television and radio would have had an opportunity to hear straight from constituents how they feel about this.

The comment from road safety minister, Carmel Zollo—and I do not know why it has been flicked to her from minister Conlon, the senior minister, but apparently it has—was simply that she was unable to attend the rally and would not speak to people. She said the fee increase was consistent with licensing treatment given to all other licence holders. I find that a bit mysterious. I do not recall motor car drivers being required to do rider safe training for two days in a compulsory regime at a cost of \$600. Minister Zollo in the other place said that the government continued to be concerned about motorcycle safety with the number of motorcyclists killed on Australia's roads up by 39 per cent since 1999. Concern is one thing, but this is an odd way to show it. She said that the government had built a new rider training facility at St Agnes and upgraded training facilities at Oaklands Park, Millicent and Port Pirie. She noted in the same breath that so far this year 12 motorcyclists had died on South Australian roads compared with 10 at the same time last year. It is up considerably more since she made those comments.

There is no point having these grand facilities if nobody can afford to use them and that is pretty much the situation we are in. It is simply not good enough. I ask members to peruse transcripts from radio programs between 2 and 8 August, in particular an interview with Harold Lindeman, the Treasurer of the Motorcycle Riders Association. There has been quite a lot of other radio, print and television coverage of the issue, which members should peruse. There was further coverage on 16 June on the subject, which members should peruse when they consider their position on this matter. I also urge members to read the motorcycle road safety strategy 2005-10, which I mentioned earlier.

It is fine to have a motorcycle road safety strategy, and I commend the government for having one; but if it is not backed up with funding or with resources, if it is not support-

ed with dollars and cents, it is hardly worth the paper it is written on. During budget estimates I will be asking the minister exactly what level of expenditure she has put into many of the challenges set out in the strategy, which talks about trends in motorcycle crashes, who is involved in motorcycle crashes, and measures that should be implemented to improve that safety record and reduce fatalities and injuries. Of course, the strategy itself recognises that skills training and licensing of motorcyclists are pivotal to the success of the strategy. So what do we do? We hike up by 240 per cent the fees for attaining those very skills, that very training, and those very licences that we hope will save lives! The strategy also notes that attitude and behaviour of motorcyclists is crucial. Well, what message are we sending them with this stupid budgetary measure? It has been made with a view to the budget and not with a view to saving lives or making our roads safer.

In the government's motorcycle strategy it has identified the need to do many things: apply the Ausroads 'Guide to Traffic Engineering Practice for Motorcycle Safety'; ensure that plans for new and existing infrastructure are audited for motorcycle safety aspects; and expand the use of high skid-resistant water-based pavement markings. It goes on: upgrade the investigation and reporting of sites of motorcycle fatalities and serious injury crashes; establish and recognise motorcycle users as a unique road user group with special needs; monitor international and national research; upgrade roadside rest areas to make them more amenable for motorcyclists; work with key safety partners to raise awareness of motorcycle safety; ensure that the motorcycle community is informed; and improve opportunities for meaningful involvement of the South Australian motorcycle community in decision-making processes relating to motorcycle safety. Well, there was not much involvement from the community or the motorcycle associations in this decision to hike up motorcycle Ridersafe training fees.

I put to the house that it is a silly decision, and the Treasurer and the government have an opportunity, in the budget today, to reverse it. If they do not reverse it today, they have an opportunity to do so in the weeks ahead. There seems to be no device to assess whether these fee hikes deliver positive or negative outcomes. I suggest that they will cost lives, they will increase injuries, and they will increase the rate of unlicensed riding. They are bad for road safety and they should be reversed. I call on members, particularly government backbenchers, to consider the facts, instead of sitting over there being bossed around in caucus by the Treasurer and senior members of the front bench.

**Mr Piccolo:** We don't get bossed around.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I know what it is like to be a government backbencher; you are not allowed to have a brain. Have one on this occasion and see that this decision is reversed.

Time expired.

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey):** It is terrible when we are badgered in such a fashion. This government is committed to road safety and to reducing road deaths and injuries. The minister in another place, the Hon. Carmel Zollo, and her department should be acknowledged and their work commended for what they are doing to try to make roads in South Australia safer. People in my constituency—particularly parents worried for their young sons and, occasionally, daughters—tell me that this initiative is long overdue.

The Ridersafe fees were increased for two very simple reasons—costs and road recovery. As well as resulting in improvements to the facilities which provide the training in road safety, the new fees move the program to a cost recovery basis and provide funding to increase the capacity of the program to cater for increased community demand for motorcycle licences. Motorcycle safety is a national concern and cabinet has approved the expansion of the program to accommodate the high level of demand from the community for licences. It is felt that it is no coincidence, as this increased demand has had a strong correlation with the sharp rise in petrol prices. Statistics show that motorcyclists are involved in a dangerous mode of transport. I have to confess to the member that I have been a pillion passenger only once and went far too fast to really enjoy it. I had a more sedate trip around Uluru, and it was a terrific way of seeing the dead centre of Australia. Unfortunately, in the Hills, that is not the sort of speed our riders are doing.

In order to help meet the state's target of a 40 per cent reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by the end of 2010, the government needed to ensure a quality and timely Ridersafe program. At the same time, the government put in place a consistent approach for all motor vehicle licence applicants. The Ridersafe program has been heavily subsidised since its inception in 1987. However, the government does not subsidise the cost of training or licence assessing for any other class of vehicle. Applicants for truck, car and bus licences are required to pay the full cost of their training and licence testing, and so it was considered only fair that everyone pay the real cost of training and licence testing, irrespective of the type of vehicle they plan to operate.

I am pleased to inform the house that waiting times for entry into the course have reduced from 14 weeks prior to Christmas in 2005 to five weeks for weekday courses and nine weeks for weekend courses. Waiting times will improve even further in the future, as the government has committed to recruiting up to 12 permanent instructors to increase the program's capacity. While the fees concerned some of the motorbike riding population of South Australia, it was felt that the fees still represent value for applicants when compared with other states and territories. For example, in South Australia, Ridersafe has a student-instructor ratio of no more than 5:1, unlike some other states which operate with a ratio of up to 6:1.

Ridersafe training facilities at Oaklands Park, Millicent and Port Pirie have been significantly upgraded, and a new purpose-built facility has been opened at St Agnes, which is adjacent to the Florey electorate. This happened in July this year, and it is widely acknowledged throughout the riding community that the St Agnes facility is one of the best in Australia. Government motorcycles are also provided free of charge for all courses, unlike providers in other states, where a hire charge for the courses is applied.

In the event that the person struggles to achieve the required competency, Ridersafe provides two repeat attempts at both the basic and advanced courses free of charge. I think it is really important to note this, as we are very conscious of the cost element. In New South Wales, a person who fails to complete the training component of the advanced course will need to pay the full training and assessment cost again. Even if they pass the training component but fail the assessment, they have to be reassessed at a further cost of \$42 for each additional attempt. So, I think that we have looked at that and put in place something to address it.

There is no evidence that the higher fees will necessarily encourage people to ride unlicensed. Prior to the introduction of Ridersafe in 1987, when the price of obtaining a motorcycle licence was much less and had no training component at all, more than 30 per cent of rider fatalities and 27 per cent of all riders involved in crashes were not appropriately licensed at the time of the crash. That has now reduced to approximately 8 per cent and 6 per cent (while we know that anything is too much, it has shown a reduction), despite the requirement to pay the new fees and spend time training. New South Wales continues to subsidise its motorcycle training and licensing program and, despite this, in 2005 some 23 per cent of rider fatalities in that state involved unlicensed riders. This demonstrates that the incidence of unlicensed riding is not solely attributable to fees. There are many other factors that lead people to ride unlicensed.

It is alarming that since 1999 the non-motorcyclist fatality rate dropped by 17 per cent, while the number of motorcyclists killed on Australian roads increased by 39 per cent. That is why this government will continue to implement, as appropriate, the recently released motorcycle road safety strategy prepared by the motorcycle task force, which reports to the Road Safety Advisory Council and decides what steps will be taken to improve the safety of motorcyclists. We have every confidence in both the Road Safety Advisory Council's work and the fact that the Ridersafe motorcycle training course will save lives and injuries by reducing accidents.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** In closing the debate, I thank the government for its courtesy in responding to the motion and, through my friend, I thank the minister. I think that it is important, for private members' motions, that the community get to hear the government's view, so I thank the government for that.

Having said that, I do not agree with the government's arguments in support of its decision to hike Ridersafe fees. My friend has raised the issue that the government does not subsidise charges and costs to other licence holders, so why should they subsidise charges for Ridersafe training? Motor car drivers do not have to do anything like a compulsory Ridersafe training course of two days' duration at a Department of Transport-operated venue. It simply does not work that way. Cheaper options are available for motor car drivers. They can get their parents to teach them or explore many other ways of obtaining a licence without having to go through an expensive and time-prolonged training course which is mandated upon motorcyclists. I think that argument, if not fraudulent, is certainly a little tricky.

The fact is the government ought to be subsidising this particular training if it saves lives. If the object here is to save lives, we ought to make sure that as many motorcyclists as possible have received the training. It just goes with the territory. The government makes it sound as though it is doing motorcyclists a favour: 'By the way, we've been subsidising you, and why should we do that? We want to take that subsidy away.' It is a wonderful arrangement being in government. You can say, 'You have to do this, otherwise you will go to gaol but, by the way, we don't want to help you do it.'

It has been mandated that they have to do the Ridersafe training, but the government does not want to assist in ensuring that the costs are affordable for riders who are aged 16, 17 or 18, of whom about half are uni students. A lot of them cannot afford a car; that is why they ride a bike, and you want them to pay \$600 for Ridersafe training. I think that

whole argument is a little loose and floppy. I can assure members that the majority of the 1 000 people who rallied out the front of Parliament House were not 16, 17 or 18 year olds. Most of them were older riders who already have their licences. This bill will not really affect them. They do not have to do the Ridersafe training again. They were rallying for the 16, 17 and 18 year olds who are going to follow them. They have been out on the roads. They have picked up some of the bodies. They know what goes on out there and how dangerous riding is. They were rallying for the kids who will follow, who are getting buried in increasing numbers in our cemeteries when they ride their bikes off the road, into a tree or into some other obstacle, resulting in death or serious injury. They have been around on the road long enough to know how important this training is and why it should be affordable and within reach for people. I think the government is being bloody-minded in its arguments.

The government—through my friend, in response to my motion—did not address the fundamental issue that it is already raking in between \$800 million and \$1 billion from motorists now through the various things I mentioned—through licence fees, rego fees, GST on fuel, and penalties—and they are not returning it to support initiatives like the Motorcycle Road Safety Strategy. They are keeping that money in their coffers. I am very disappointed. I will not force a vote on this, as the government has the numbers. Clearly, the government will oppose the motion by using its numbers to defeat my proposition. It seems a very simple message to send to all motorcyclists that, at the next election, they have a choice. I assure members that I will be considering this matter most carefully, as we prepare our policies going forward.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Make a commitment now.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** We will come out with a policy that is better.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Coward.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** So, you have a clear choice: if you want a Labor government, you will get a 240 per cent increase in Ridersafe fees.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** You're lying to them.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** If you want a safety regime and support, then—

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Be honest with them.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** —we will ensure that our policies extend that to you, and I am happy to be held to account to that in the three years to follow and—

**Mr Koutsantonis:** No problem.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** —I'm sure I will be, and we will be taking that to an election.

Time expired; motion negatived.

## SCHOOL BUSES, SEATBELTS

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I move:

That this house commends the Masonic Foundation for being proactive in fundraising for the provision of seatbelts in South Australian school buses.

For many years very little was publicly known about the Freemasons. It was seen as a secret society for men that had rituals and symbols based in a past age which appeared to have very little relevance to the lives of ordinary people. Over the years I became aware that there was a lot more to this society, and that it was well known for its good works. However, it was not until the Masonic Foundation was established in 1989, in order to create a more formal structure

for the benevolent activities of freemasonry in South Australia and the Northern Territory, that I, and the ordinary public, really began to appreciate its work. The Masonic Foundation has been clearly established as the charitable arm of freemasonry and, likewise, the major fundraising arm of freemasonry.

*Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**Mrs PENFOLD:** I certainly do support freemasonry.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for West Torrens will desist.

**Mrs PENFOLD:** The success story of the foundation is the impact it has had in caring in so many areas of need and in providing assistance, in conjunction with the Freemason lodges, to local communities, clearly putting into practice one of the principal purposes of freemasonry's existence—that being charity.

A registered charitable organisation, the foundation administers two major funds: the general fund and the special projects fund. The foundation provides charitable grants to persons or organisations in need, on an annual basis. Applications for assistance can be directed through any Freemasons lodge, or direct to the Masonic Foundation Incorporated, which is located on Grange Road, Flinders Park.

The 2005 report of the board of management of the Masonic Foundation lists numerous donations, scholarships of many kinds, and a number of benevolent appeals. One of these is the Freemasons Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Relief Appeal. I take this opportunity to thank them in particular for this one, and to put on record the great appreciation of the people in my electorate of Flinders, covering southern Eyre Peninsula, who were the recipients of this appeal. This terrifying bushfire ravaged Eyre Peninsula on Black Tuesday, 11 January 2005, laying waste to all in its path and, tragically, taking a number of lives. Houses were destroyed, along with much loved personal and irreplaceable possessions, livestock and livelihoods. Many survivors were left with only the clothes they were wearing.

On 13 January, chairman Geoffrey Benny and executive director Robert Clyne drove to the area, where they met with Malcolm Schluter and many other local Freemasons. After talking to people on the ground and assessing the situation, they reported back to the Grand Master, and the Freemasons Eyre Peninsula Bushfire Relief Appeal was launched. Having only just launched its Tsunami Relief Appeal, it is a real credit to the public spirit of charity that the response was immediate and heartfelt. Upon learning about the tragedy through the media, interstate lodges also made generous donations to the appeal through the Masonic Foundation. By the time the appeal closed, more than \$87 000 had been donated.

What makes the work of the Masonic Foundation particularly valuable is that donated funds are often accompanied with a vision for the best way to distribute them. Representatives of the two Eyre Peninsula lodges affected by the bushfire (Port Lincoln Lodge and Lodge Sirius) were consulted and asked to determine how they thought the money raised could be best used, with lasting benefits, for their communities.

A major problem in fighting the bushfire was the agonising delays experienced when fire appliances had to leave the scene of the fire to replenish their water supplies. To address this problem, they recommended that ten 20 000 gallon water tanks be purchased and erected in strategic locations in bushfire-prone areas determined in partnership with the Country Fire Service. The recommendation received

enthusiastic endorsement by the foundation's board of management, and the program was commenced.

As the member for Flinders, I am very well aware of how the region's water shortage presents one of the largest obstacles to development, safety and lasting prosperity. This innovative project, accompanied by suitable signage and acknowledgment, will leave a lasting legacy of goodwill which will greatly benefit the community for years to come.

This month the Masonic Foundation has been specifically focusing on another issue that I believe has been inadequately addressed, that is, the provision of seatbelts on all school buses. In an ambitious move, the state Freemasons foundation has offered to raise the funds to ensure that every South Australian school bus is equipped with seatbelts for every child who travels on them. Foundation spokesman, Richard Flashman AM, said the following in a statement:

Freemasons are parents, grandparents and uncles and cousins of school-age children and we are simply not willing to sit on our hands, helplessly waiting for government to act to safeguard those children. We also believe that every parent views the safety of their children as being of paramount importance and not to be compromised by the need for what in reality is a small expenditure per child—especially given the length of service of the buses and the numbers of children to use them during the bus's lifetime. There can be nothing worse than to be told that your child has been injured, or worse, in a bus crash when a simple restraint installed in the vehicle could have prevented it, or at least reduced the level of injury. The Freemasons foundation has therefore committed to raise sufficient funds to ensure that every school bus is fitted with correctly engineered aircraft-style lap seatbelts.

I commend the Freemasons foundation for establishing the Belts on Buses foundation, donating seed funding of \$50 000 to launch this public appeal. The target is, of course, to see 100 per cent of school buses fitted with the basic safety requirement that is obligatory in a family car. However, the Freemasons undertake to ensure that every dollar raised is applied to the installation of seatbelts for as many buses as the money can cover.

The Freemasons are confident that every parent, as well as many other members of the public, will want to contribute towards this goal, and so has established a bank account with Bank SA to which contributions can be made directly. I am aware that the Port Lincoln Rotary Club, being so recently affected by the school bus crash on the Eyre Peninsula, will assist. In addition, it is hoped that many companies and commercial operations will wish to provide assistance in reaching the Belts on Buses target in the shortest possible time. Mr Flashman has also stated that if the state government finds that there are funds available to provide further assistance, those funds will be gratefully received and applied to the project.

I commend the Masonic Foundation for being proactive in fundraising for the provision of seatbelts in South Australian school buses, and I urge the state Labor government to support the Belts on Buses foundation to ensure the safety of all South Australian children, particularly those who spend many hours on buses, often on rough dirt roads in country areas.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** I rise to support the motion, and I am very sensitive in doing so to the fact that there is a bill before the house on the subject of seatbelts for school buses, so I will be careful not to go into matters in that bill. I will contain myself, which is very difficult at times, particularly when the Minister for Transport has entered the chamber, to the motion before us which has to do with the Masonic Foundation's being proactive in fundraising.

I say to the minister and to the government that it is a shame that the Masonic Foundation has had to step in to do a job that, really, the government should be doing; that is, fitting seatbelts on school buses. The Masonic Foundation and its excellent charitable works, had this not been a requirement foisted upon it, might have been able to focus its efforts into an area of equal need elsewhere that is unfunded. In effect, what has happened is that the government's inaction and failure to fit seatbelts on school buses has caused the Masonic Foundation to feel a need to step in and fill the breach. I think that is most unfortunate, because the government is being derelict in its responsibility to protect school kids by fitting seatbelts itself.

I think it was a tremendous gesture for the Masonic Foundation to be proactive in fundraising for the seatbelts. I hope that the government recognises that it should take responsibility and do the job that the Masonic Foundation has offered to do. If the government does accept that responsibility and act accordingly, perhaps the Masonic Foundation could be in a position to reconsider the need for it to fit seatbelts to these particular buses. I commend the motion, and I hope that it is supported by the house.

**Mrs GERAGHTY** secured the adjournment of the debate.

### SCHOOL BUSES

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders):** I move:

That this house condemns the Labor government for spending \$31 million of taxpayers' money on the 1.8 kilometre tram extension in Adelaide to replace modern free buses, while young people are travelling on dirt roads in 600 country buses, some of which are up to 25 years old, many without seatbelts or airconditioning, sometimes three to a seat, and in 40 degree heat for over an hour.

Much has already been said about the issue of seatbelts in school buses. It is an issue that highlights the poor choices that the government makes in the spending of taxpayers' money. In fact, a large proportion of current spending is wasted on irrelevances and matters that do not have a lasting impact on improving the quality of life for South Australians and, more importantly, on matters that do not improve the infrastructure in the state that will provide ongoing jobs and prosperity.

Seatbelts in school buses has been a topic that has been extensively discussed and researched for some years now. It is an issue that needs to be addressed, but it cannot be addressed effectively unless the whole issue of school buses is looked at. The attitudes that existed more than 50 years ago, when school buses were first introduced extensively in the country with the amalgamation of small, one-teacher schools into area schools, are no longer acceptable today. Try to imagine communication without emails, mobile phones and the internet. Our attitudes and expectations of transport have advanced similarly.

An important corollary to the seatbelt saga is the age of school buses. The government needs a program of replacement. Payments to private contractors must be sufficient to allow the operator to replace the bus within a reasonable time frame. The replacement of departmental buses with modern vehicles that are fitted with seatbelts should also be accelerated. Probably all the buses could be replaced for the same amount as is being spent on the tramline extension.

Airconditioning should also be mandatory in new school buses. Children travel in the buses in the afternoon in the hottest part of the day in daylight saving. The west of the state has been written off in derogatory terms by people

whose children and grandchildren do not have to put up with this health hazard. The tramline extension project should be considered in association with infrastructure needs across the state. It is quickly apparent that the tramline is a wasteful extravagance with plenty of negatives—\$31 million would seal a lot of roads.

It costs about \$110 000 per kilometre to seal one of our country roads, so we could look at—what is that, Martin? It would be about 310 kilometres of road. School buses travel over mainly unsealed roads, therefore children and drivers have to cope with dust, pot holes, water, corrugations and uneven surfaces. Drivers unused to corrugations can easily result in overturning a vehicle on road surfaces that become a safety issue. For example, the Executive Officer of the Eyre Peninsula Local Government Association, Vance Thomas, has calculated that the nine district councils in the region of Flinders maintain 12 918 kilometres of roads—17.5 per cent of the state's total, and 97 per cent of these are unsealed. This does not take into account the out of district regions that are not covered by councils.

The tramline extension will raise safety problems with respect to the flow of traffic and for patrons getting on and off the trams. Why make problems? Why not solve some, or is that too difficult a task? Taxpayer funds would be more productively spent in sealing rural and regional roads in South Australia. Metropolitan people do travel out into the regions, so it is a matter of safety for all South Australians. The Liberal program of sealing rural arterial roads, then sealing roads of economic significance, was dropped by this government. Safety appears not to be a concern for this government. I hope that the budget will make them reflect on that; and perhaps the government will put some funding into these regional roads, particularly the one from the main highway to the ferry that will travel to Lucky Bay.

A matter that must be addressed in association with seatbelts is liability. Who will be liable if the children do not wear the belts or if they take them off during travel? What will the liability of the driver (many of whom are teachers) or the owner be if these seatbelts are not worn? Issues are involved in ensuring not only that these seatbelts are put in but that they are installed in such a way as to ensure that liability issues are covered. The government has stated that it will legislate for seatbelts to be standard in all new buses. What is proposed by the government to replace existing arrangements for seating? For instance, some small children starting school are seated three to a seat, particularly in regional areas such as mine. This will be impossible with seatbelts, and it may mean that larger buses are required, which will be another issue and another expense, and I acknowledge that. It may be that there will have to be some charge for our children in country regions to travel on school buses as there is in the city.

I think that most families in country regions would feel that was an expense they would be happy to cover. Certainly, those who are not adequately covered by school bus services currently must take their children sometimes over 100 kilometres in a day to reach the local school and at very little compensation per kilometre. I commend the motion to the house, and I hope there will be support from both sides.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** As the shadow minister for transport and infrastructure, I support the motion of my friend, the member for Flinders, which, I think, is a motion about priorities. It raises the question: why is the government spending \$31 million of taxpayer money on a

wonderful tramline extension down King William Street and North Terrace while there are so many other, more important things to do? That is essentially the thrust of what she is saying, and I think she is spot on, because the government has no long-term infrastructure plan for the state. It is as simple as that; there just isn't one. The government is just taking each year as it comes—optimistically, perhaps. It is taking each parliamentary term as it comes; indeed, I am not sure that its forward-thinking extends much beyond each week as it comes.

If one made up a list of all the infrastructure priorities in the state, including all the road infrastructure priorities, and went around and talked to councils and stakeholder groups and discussed things with them at community meetings; if one talked to businesses and business leaders and came up with a list of things to do; if one talked about roads in regional South Australia—not only, for instance, in the South-East, the major generator of enterprise in our state, but also roads going north to the new mining precincts opening up at Roxby Downs and Oxiana, over to the West Coast to the grain fields—and asked which highways needed to be duplicated and which roads needed to be better maintained and where overtaking lanes were required; if one discussed with those who operate our rail system the need for enhancement of grain rail on the West Coast or reactivation of the South-East railway or upgrading of the antique diesel rail fleet in metropolitan Adelaide with an electrified fleet, as every other state has done; if one talked to the stakeholders involved in stormwater management about the need for \$160 million worth of flood mitigation works, additional works on the River Murray and on our reservoirs and guaranteeing and securing our water supplies; if one moved to our energy infrastructure priorities and looked at issues about the future growth and sustainability of our energy supplies and oil storage; if one looked at all those issues and perhaps moved onto our marine precincts and the need for the aquaculture industry in my friend's electorate and at Outer Harbor—

*Mr Pengilly interjecting:*

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** And, of course, the electorate of Finniss, that wonderful precinct on Kangaroo Island, and its tourism infrastructure. If one added up all those things and sat down with stakeholders and attempted to prioritise them and asked, 'Which are the most important and which are the least important?', I wonder whether one would decide that \$31 million worth of trams down King William Street and along North Terrace was one's number one priority. I do not think that anyone but Billy the Goose would decide that a \$31 million tram down King William Street and along North Terrace was the top priority, given all those things that need doing. However, that is what the government has done.

What was its first big announcement after returning to office? It said that it would increase the tram project from a \$21 million project to a \$31 million project and push it down North Terrace to the University of South Australia, which, I think, is already serviced by a free bus. The logic of all this is just bewildering. It is lost on me and it is lost on my friend. It is lost on everyone in the house, it seems, except government members, who must understand that, underlying and underpinning all this is some brilliant, secret plan, yet to be revealed, which will one day stun us all into the astonishing realisation that \$31 million on a tram was a brilliant step forward for the state and an act of genius which will be remembered, along with the Eiffel Tower, the building of St Paul's and the canals of Venice. It will be a monument to the

stupidity of man—perhaps not the stupidity of man: a monument to the stupidity of one particular man, perhaps two men; we could stretch it out from the Minister for Transport to embrace the Premier. Or perhaps three—perhaps an icon to the stupidity of three men, if we also bring in the Treasurer: that little troika of genius who have come up with this scheme as their number one priority.

My friend makes a very good point. I have worked with her on the problems she is experiencing with school buses in Port Lincoln. We tried to get the marina run reinstated. Her office and mine were on the phone trying to find solutions when the government was stacking 10 kids into a sardine can and cancelling bus routes in her electorate so that parents could not get the kids to school. These are the little priorities. They are not important to the Labor government, but they are important to families and ordinary South Australians living in regional South Australia who are increasingly the forgotten people of this government. Of course, do not ever forget that, apart from perhaps the member for Giles, virtually no-one over there is a stakeholder in regional South Australia. I think she is the only one in this house. There might be one or two in the other house who once travelled on a short holiday to the country.

There is no-one over there who really cares about regional South Australia. When I look around amongst my colleagues on this side of the house, we have the member for Hammond representing the Murray Bridge area and the Mallee, the member for Flinders who represents an area twice the size of Victoria, the member for Finniss who represents an area twice as important as Victoria—Kangaroo Island—my friend the member for Kavel, the Adelaide Hills, the member for Heysen and the grandfather of the house, the member for Stuart, who probably represents an electorate the size of New South Wales if you add it all up. Of course, all the people who care about regional South Australia are on this side—there is hardly anyone over there. That is the tragic reality.

When the government goes into caucus and you look around the table at the number of people who can speak for large numbers of constituents living in regional and remote South Australia, there are not too many on the government side. There is a plethora on the opposition benches. That is why we have these really silly priorities. That is why, when the government produces what it calls an infrastructure plan (which is just a little discussion paper to list all the things we might like to do one day), it does not attempt to prioritise them in any meaningful way. It does not give a single set of dates for any of the tasks listed in the plan or when any of the jobs will start or finish; and it does not mention a single dollar figure alongside any of those tasks in the so-called state infrastructure plan. We have a so-called infrastructure plan which lists all the things we would like to do one day, but it does not tell us what will be done, in what order it will be done, when it will be done, or how much money will be allocated to do it.

I do not call that a plan: I call that a glossy lot of waffle paper. It is not a plan. It gets back to the issue that, if the government sat down, put its thinking cap on, started talking to people and came up with a real infrastructure plan, then some of the priorities my friend addresses in her motion might fall out of the sky at them. If I ask the member for Light what the top priority is for infrastructure in his electorate, I wonder whether he would tell me that it was trams. I do not think so; I do not think he would, strangely enough. I could rattle through members opposite but I doubt whether trams would emerge. Of course, it is probably good

for the member for Adelaide in that you can probably move from one cappuccino shop to the next on the tram—you know, a cappuccino here, a cappuccino there.

This is a government that has not thought through its priorities, and that is why my friend's motion is right on the money. If this house had any sense at all, it would support the motion, support my friend and acknowledge that the government has the wrong priorities for South Australia.

Motion negatived.

### GILBERT, R. & E.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** I move:

That this house congratulates the Mayor of the City of Onkaparinga Ray Gilbert OAM and Mayoress Edith Gilbert for their outstanding combined community service to the people of the south. I deliberately chose the word 'combined' because, as the mayor himself is willing to acknowledge, his achievements are also the achievements of his wife Edith who has been mayoress for many years. Members would acknowledge that people do not achieve much in the community unless they have the support of their spouse or partner. I will briefly outline some of the community service record of both Ray and Edith Gilbert.

Ray Gilbert was a member of the district and then the city council of Noarlunga from 1970, serving as a councillor from 1970 and 1972—he had a gap year in 1973; I do not think that means 'gap' as in the UK where you spend time between school and university but I think he had a year off—and from 1974 and 1976. He was an alderman from 1976 to 1984, during which time he was Deputy Mayor. From 1985 to June 1997 he served as Mayor and in June 1997 he was elected as the first Mayor of the City of Onkaparinga. Almost continuously since 1970 Ray Gilbert has been a member of the City of Onkaparinga and its antecedent organisations—so it is an incredible period of time. In terms of service it adds up to something like 34 years in local government. I have not done the calculation in terms of being mayor, but it must add up to a significant number of years.

**An honourable member:** It's 21½.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** My learned friend says it is 21½ years as mayor. Some of the achievements of the Mayor are as follows:

- Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for service to local government through the Noarlunga and Onkaparinga city councils and to the community through a broad range of welfare, health and supporting organisations.
- Life member of the CFS, with 48 years service, including service as a local government representative on the CFS board. He was also awarded the National Medal and Clasp for service to the CFS.
- Meritorious Service Badge Award awarded by the Royal District Nursing Society for 17 years active service with the Noarlunga branch, including 15 years as chairman.
- Past chairman of the Southern Districts War Memorial Hospital Board, having given 17 years service to that board.
- Foundation chairman of the Noarlunga Health Service and still an active member of the board, with a total of 18 years service.
- Past chairman of the Southern Urgency Relief Fund, with 25 years service.
- Past chairman of the Noarlunga Centre (Subcommittee of the South Australian Planning Commission) and invited to sit on the Advisory Committee of Planning.

- Past serving member of the Local Government Association State Executive for 10 years.
- Past vice president of the Local Government Association for two years.
- Former member of the state CFS board, with three years service.
- Former chairman of the Southern Region of Councils, with 20 years service, including five terms as chairman.
- Chairman of the Noarlunga Library Management Committee.
- Former chairman of the Noarlunga Aquatic Centre Review Board.
- Former chairman and past member of St Vincent Recreation Centre Management Advisory Committee.
- Board member of the Noarlunga Leisure Centre.
- Member of the Ministerial Southern Recreation Facility Working Party, and subsequently appointed to the Southern Sports Complex Advisory Committee/Task Force.
- Justice of the peace.
- Justice of the quorum.
- Melvin Jones Fellow (the highest award from Lions International).
- Life member of the Royal Engineers Association.
- Member of the City of Onkaparinga Commercial Enterprises Advisory Committee.
- Chairman of the Onkaparinga Environmental Advisory Committee.
- Member of the City of Onkaparinga Development Assessment Panel.

In addition, he is patron and life member of numerous clubs and organisations, so members have an idea of his community service.

Edith has been involved with many community groups, and has been patroness or chair of a number of organisations, including the Southern Area Blind Group and Southern Urgency Relief Fund, and she has assisted many families with the Mayoress's Charity Christmas Tree Appeal (which has been very successful). One rarely sees Ray at a public function without Edith being there in a supportive role; and that was the case this week when I attended a citizenship ceremony at Noarlunga—the last to be presided over by Ray Gilbert. Edith was there in her usual supportive role, not just because she wants to support Ray and the community, but because she clearly enjoys helping people and being part of the community.

I think it is important that we acknowledge people such as Ray and Edith Gilbert because of their community service. It is important also to acknowledge all other people in the community who put in a lot of time and effort through local government. As I pointed out at the naturalisation ceremony the other night, councillors and mayors do not get paid; they are volunteers and they get an allowance. Just digressing for a moment, I think this allowance should be tax free, but that is not the case at the moment.

We should continue to acknowledge those people who put in a lot of time and effort to attend functions and to contribute to the community. I am sure, as members of parliament, there have been many times when we have thought, 'Oh, we have to go out tonight' or 'We have to attend a function'. I do not think the community appreciates the effort required by many people, such as Ray and Edith, to get dressed up again at night and go out, especially during winter. It is not just during the more comfortable summer period; it is also during the

cold nights in winter that they attend functions, fetes, fairs, and so on.

One of the points that should be made about Ray (and he would not be claiming credit for this), is that when he joined Noarlunga council back in 1970, it had a population of 28 000. The population of the City of Onkaparinga is now 155 000. The rates income in 1970 for Noarlunga was \$558 831. This year, including grants and so on, the income being dealt with by the City of Onkaparinga will be of the order of \$100 million. So, that is the extent of the change in the space of 30-plus years.

Another important aspect about Ray and Edith is that they demonstrate quite clearly the contribution that people make when they come to live in Australia. Ray and Edith came here in 1952. Whilst we often focus on people who have come here in recent times from non-English speaking backgrounds (and that is important), we should not overlook the fact that there are a lot of people from the UK who have made a tremendous contribution as well. It is not a question that one is better than the other. What we have in Australia is the culmination of a lot of effort going back over a long time from recent migrants, from people born here, obviously, from people who have migrated from English speaking backgrounds and from non-English speaking backgrounds, and including, of course, the contribution of the indigenous people, which increasingly is being recognised. However, there is still a long way to go in terms of acknowledging a fantastic traditional culture which should be valued.

When Ray and Edith came here they moved to Aldgate. I am not sure why they left Aldgate—probably all those exotic trees up there. They were involved in the Aldgate Memorial Hall Building Committee. As often happens, one thing leads to another, and, as Ray acknowledged in an interview in August of this year, he said from that point on there was no turning back. He moved to Port Noarlunga and joined the Progress Association and the EFS (as it was then, now the CFS), of which he is still an auxiliary member. I realise that Ray would have to be close to 80 (he does not give his birth date here; maybe he wants to protect that, like many women do not want their birth date revealed), but he is still an auxiliary member of the CFS. I am not quite sure what he could do in the event of a major fire, but I am sure his wise counsel would be important.

He became secretary of the Noarlunga Ambulance Service, chair of the Port Noarlunga Primary School Council, and he was on the first council of the Christies Beach High School. So, there is quite a lifetime of involvement. Many of us, I guess, have come through the ranks of various community associations. My first community group, really, was Rural Youth, at Blackwood, which is not very rural now. So, his is a life contribution worth celebrating. I do not want it to sound like an obituary, because Ray and Edith are still very much with us, but I would like to pay tribute to them and wish them well. I do not know whether people like them really retire. They have children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. On behalf of certainly the people of my electorate, which is totally within the City of Onkaparinga, I wish them all the very best in their retirement, if we can call it that, and trust that they have good health and that we will always acknowledge their great contribution to the community and their great role, I guess, as mentors and people who set an example for others to follow. If there were more people community minded like Ray and Edith, we would be an even better society than we are. I commend this motion to the house.

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell):** I rise to support this motion and to thank the member for Fisher for placing it on the *Notice Paper*. The business of this place would be clogged if we congratulated every retiring mayor, but I think it is entirely appropriate that we spend some time congratulating Ray and Edith Gilbert for the service they have given to our community.

The City of Onkaparinga is the largest local government area in the state, and, indeed, represents 10 per cent of the population of the state. The City of Onkaparinga covers many electorates. The electorates of Kaurna, Mawson and Reynell are entirely encompassed within the City of Onkaparinga. The member for Fisher has a large part of his electorate within Onkaparinga, the member for Heysen has some of hers, and the member for Bright has a substantial part of her electorate within the City of Onkaparinga. Ray and Edith Gilbert have shown a remarkable ability to work with all the local members of parliament in a very cooperative manner. Certainly, from reports I have had from some of my colleagues, this has not always been the case.

The member for Fisher referred to the last citizenship ceremony to be conducted by Mayor Gilbert having been held on Monday night. I am very sorry I was not able to attend that ceremony. In fact, very few of the local members, who normally turn out for these ceremonies in great numbers, were able to attend that ceremony (it is not normally on a Monday night), and it is sad that we were not able to mark that special event. One of the strengths of Mayor Gilbert is to bring something very positive to citizenship ceremonies. He and Edith welcome our new citizens very ably and very heartily. It has often been my observation that, as all the dignitaries on the stage are introduced, the loudest applause by far goes to Mayoress Edith Gilbert for the work she does in the community. She is well loved and well respected. The member for Fisher has detailed the formal contributions Mayor Gilbert and Mayoress Gilbert have made to our community.

I will speak briefly about some of the informal contributions that will be missed. Certainly citizenship ceremonies will not be quite the same, and the new mayor in Onkaparinga will have a lot to live up to. One of the regular sights in the City of Onkaparinga is the Christies Beach Christmas pageant. For many years that has been led by the Gilberts, with Edith sheltering beneath a particularly fetching parasol. The children respond very warmly to the site of Edith beneath her parasol.

There are so many community events they have patronised and participated in. Certainly the Anzac Youth Vigil, with which I have been strongly associated, has been supported wholeheartedly by Mayor Gilbert. In the interview to which the member for Fisher referred, he indicated his pleasure at the redevelopment of the City of Onkaparinga Memorial Gardens. The opening of the memorial gardens was held in conjunction with the Anzac Youth Vigil last year and it was an important event within our community. Several councillors, particularly Councillors Parslow and Irwin, have supported the Anzac Youth vigil. Councillor Parslow in particular has supported the redevelopment of the memorial gardens. Their advocacy has been supported with enthusiasm by Mayor Gilbert for various measures that take our community forward.

Mayor Gilbert also mentioned his pride in the community centres that have been established throughout the City of Onkaparinga. I also support those community centres and see them as one of the strengths of our city. It was certainly



notable, when the old city of Noarlunga combined with the cities of Happy Valley and Willunga, that one of the first things that happened was that the residents of the former cities became aware of the value of the existing community centres in the old Noarlunga area and wanted them. I was not best pleased with this because I had my eye on funding for the much needed extensions of the Hackham West Community Centre and the Reynella Community Centre. It was a diversion of funds away from centres that I was particularly interested in that resulted from that amalgamation. It all goes to show the wisdom of the previous Noarlunga council, led my Mayor Gilbert, in establishing those community centres.

In a new and developing community there are not the existing organisations that there are in some of the older communities. The way the council, under the leadership of Mayor Gilbert, went about establishing those centres has indeed been a strength of the new, developing and exciting City of Onkaparinga. While I could easily make more remarks, I note that if I cease now we will be able to vote on this motion today. I hope the mayor will accept my congratulations on his service and accept the fact that I have not been able to detail them as fully as I would have liked.

Motion carried.

*[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]*

#### APPROPRIATION BILL

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, recommended to the house the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

#### STATUTES AMENDMENT (REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY REFORM) BILL

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, recommended to the house the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

#### FUEL POLICY

A petition signed by 161 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to urge the government to publish a position paper on the opportunities and threats to the state concerning the likely world oil shortage, ensure adequate stocks of transport fuel are held in South Australia and introduce legislation to encourage a sustainable, low energy transport infrastructure, was presented by Dr McFetridge.

Petition received.

#### PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for the Arts (Hon. M.D. Rann)—

Art Gallery of South Australia—for the year 1 July 2005—30 June 2006

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

Listening and Surveillance Devices Act 1972—Report 2006

Summary Offences Act 1953, Return pursuant to Section 74B—Road Block Establishment Authorisations—1 April to 30 June 2006.

## QUESTION TIME

### SCHOOLS, REPORTING OF RESULTS

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What action is the minister going to take to ensure that the Australian Education Union follows the state government's directive to provide parents with comparative information on request? The Australian Education Union has told its members to refuse to compile students' grades and therefore provide parents, at their request, with overall achievement levels of other children in their child's or children's class for comparison.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. It is quite clear that conditions of payments have been laid down from the federal government, and I think that any teacher who endangers the balance of funds going into schools will receive a considerable number of complaints from the parents in that community. I point out that it really is not in the best interests of children in our schools. Having said that, it is a very punitive act by the federal government to have conditions of constant compliance. Teachers spend so much time filling out forms with all sorts of audits, compliance and benchmarking activities. It would be better if the federal government focused on putting more money into public education instead of torturing the lives of every teacher in our schools.

### HEALTH, RURAL

**Mr PICCOLO (Light):** My question is to the Minister for Health. How are communities being consulted about the proposed reforms to the administration of country health services?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health):** I thank the member for Light for his question. I know how involved and interested he is in country health reform issues. Last month, as members would know, I released a country health governance consultation paper, which is a blueprint for improving our health system in country South Australia—in my opinion, something that is long overdue. The paper sets out a new role for the local health boards, and it is proposed that new community health councils be established to be the voice of local communities without having the burden of complex management decisions, particularly in relation to issues of safety and quality, recruitment and financial management.

Services and work force planning, quality and safety standards and budgets will be dealt with on a statewide basis. The paper has been sent to hundreds of interested people around the state, and people have until the end of this month to provide input into the plan. We want everyone in rural and country South Australia to have a chance to have their say. Twelve consultation meetings have been held around the state, and I have visited many of the country regions to talk to the boards, their members and other individuals about the propositions.

The early feedback we are getting from local board members is a desire to focus on improving the communities' health care, and I certainly support that. The deputy leader has been trying to whip up controversy about the reforms and she attacked the integrity of the independent chair on one occasion, which was very unfortunate. Not everybody on the

opposition side is opposed to what we are doing. In fact, I was delighted that the Opposition Whip, the member for Schubert, was quoted in *The Bunyip*, supporting the government's reforms, and I thank him for what he said:

I welcome the single regional country health authority—the old multiple regional setup tended to use up too many resources and introduced another level of bureaucracy.

I agree with him 100 per cent. I look forward to more constructive and bipartisan support from members on the other side. I must acknowledge that the member for Stuart is also on the record in support of this reform.

### SCHOOLS, REPORTING OF RESULTS

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What penalty do teachers face if they fail to implement the state government's directive to provide parents with the comparative information on request? Is it the minister's intention to enforce the penalty? An education department spokeswoman has claimed that a clear directive has been given to staff to implement the new requirements. It has been reported that the minister has warned teachers about their action but, as yet, we have heard nothing about any potential repercussions that will apply if the unions continue to override government policy.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** It is good to hear from the member for Morphett. I was beginning to worry he may have been unable to get a question up today, as he was unable to get one up yesterday. The question that he asked, just to clarify for members in case they had not understood the intent, is about the delivery of results in a way that compares a child against other children within the class. This was originally put forward as a potential to list quartiles. For those of you who do not understand the background to this, the quartile was a way of dividing up a class—

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** I rise on a point of order: relevance?

**The SPEAKER:** No. I think the minister is answering the question.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** I am attempting to clarify the matter, because the federal government wanted us to list quartiles. The member for Morphett may not understand the background to this, but every educational body within South Australia—public, private, independent or Catholic—has said that there is no merit in giving out quartiles. Just to explain, imagine a small independent Catholic school in a regional area, which might only have 12 or 18 children in a grade. They would want us to put children in quartiles according to their achievement. So the top three children would be classified as in the top quartile and the bottom three in the bottom quartile. The reality is that all educational leaders say this is meaningless because, in a small cohort, a child with an over-benchmark high achievement can be in the bottom quartile, and in another class a child with a cohort of less well-performing children can have a grade A but be achieving below a grade D. So, essentially, the results are meaningless. Also, it breaches confidentiality, because then the children in the small—

*Members interjecting:*

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

### ABORIGINAL YOUTH

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher):** My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. Has the minister some good news about our Aboriginal youth?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation):** I thank the honourable member for his question, and I acknowledge his keen interest in the interests of Aboriginal people in our state and, in particular, young Aboriginal people. He has expressed to me on numerous occasions his distress that there is very little coverage of the positive things that are happening for Aboriginal people in this state. There are many stories about the negative things and it is always good to share with the house and the community, if those who report these matters would care to do so, some of the positive things.

One of the things I want to tell the house is a recent success story that concerns an organisation called Boys Town and an initiative that is occurring in The Parks. Boys Town is an organisation which has its roots in Queensland, has come to South Australia and already run a successful operation in Port Pirie, and now has moved to The Parks area of the state. I know the member for Enfield is very interested in its activities and is supportive of it. Indeed, the person who really made it happen is my colleague, the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, who has provided the funding to ensure that young people are able to get a start.

The young people in question are mainly Aboriginal people from The Parks area. They are engaged in a project to refurbish former Housing Trust houses as part of the Westwood urban renewal project. I am delighted to say that I took part in the celebration of the completion of the first renovation. Eleven people have developed valuable building and construction skills through a program called Workers' Therapy. What is extra special about the approach that has been taken in this program is that it gives young people in the community an opportunity to learn life and employment skills when they might have come from backgrounds where those sorts of things were not developed—they might have either a history of early offending, early school leaving, unemployment or disengagement from the community.

Just talking to the young people at the ceremony showed how far they have come in a short time. One man could not speak in front of other people when he began this program and, by the end of the program, was the spokesperson for the group. It was wonderful to see that he had gained the confidence to engage in public speaking. He found it very difficult, but he did it all the same, and it was a wonderful tribute to him. Another young lad dropped out of school at a young age with severe dyslexia and is one of the top performers in the program and already has secured an ongoing apprenticeship with Boys Town. I am incredibly proud of the young people's achievements, and I know their families are equally proud of where they have gone.

The program is almost a pre-training program. It tries to give life skills to enable people to go to that step of training which is ultimately aimed at getting people into secure employment. It is a fantastic initiative, and shows that a number of young Aboriginal people in The Parks area can see a future for themselves and are investing their time and effort in building their skills with the ambition of being good contributors to the community and seeing a valuable and viable future for themselves.

## SCHOOLS, CURRICULUM

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett):** My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What different curriculum will be offered at the Enfield-Gepps Cross super school and the five new birth to year seven schools that is not already available at existing R-12 state schools?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I thank the member for Morphett because, like me, he must be delighted by the massive investment we are making in public education. Clearly, he would like more details of what we intend to do in this extraordinarily large building program that will reshape our education delivery by embracing the idea of an integrated and collocated service that will allow a birth to year 7 or year 12 school. Clearly, one of the great challenges in education is the ages of transition—when children go from child care to kindy, from kindy to primary and from primary to secondary schools.

One of the great opportunities is to have integrated curriculum across the stages of education. In fact, we want to have good development services in our small children so that those attending child care or kindergarten have an opportunity to embrace developmental support and to have early intervention where there are challenges either because of their physical or intellectual ability. We believe that the best time to intervene in a child's development is early, because if you can catch a learning difficulty or a speech impediment in a child at the age of three or four, clearly, you have a better chance and an easier opportunity to remediate.

Having these schools collocate—and I am sure that the member for Morphett would understand the advantage of this massive investment in education by building these new facilities—will allow us to get the integration across those school services and years. The other opportunity, of course, is that we know that, by putting these services on one site, there is an opportunity, for instance, to have integration of language classes across the years, to have specialist—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is a point of order.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I rise on a point or order, Mr Speaker. The point of order is about the relevance of the answer. The question was clearly about the nature of the curriculum which would be different, and nothing the minister has said to date has any bearing on the curriculum.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The minister has the call. Has the minister completed her answer?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** Thank you, sir. I do realise that when the member opposite interjects she knows nothing about education if she does not understand that we have not just a curriculum framework in the early years but we have the best. We are the leaders of development, pre-school and early years strategies, because we know that the early years matter. We know that members opposite downgraded the early years strategy. We know they were not interested in children's services—

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

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** Well, they did not have one; you are right. They were not interested, but we know that curriculum matters, and quality education and development—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** Well, it is a pity, isn't it? I am happy to talk about the curriculum. Curriculum choices, whether it is in specialty areas, literacy or mathemat-

ics, means that not only do we have opportunities but we are also investing.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** There seems to be a difficulty opposite. Clearly, they support our investment. Clearly, they know that new schools—an investment in public education—is a good thing. Clearly, they know that they are embarrassed by having no vision, no idea and no investment. They constantly attack education—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister is now debating. The member for Napier.

## SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr O'BRIEN (Napier):** My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What is the government doing to assist the manufacturing industry in meeting its skills need in the metal fabrication sector?

**The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education):** I thank the member for Napier for his question and his keen commitment to skills acquisition in South Australia. The manufacturing industry continues to face many challenges, as well as take up opportunities due to the rapid evolution of global competition in that sector. A recent report released by the Australian Industry Group entitled 'World Class Skills for World Class Industries' highlighted that Australia has critical skills need now and over the next five years as many of the existing work force during that period of time will be retiring.

A 2004 report produced by NCVER identified that the engineering trades represent the second largest trade group in the work force. The report also highlighted continuing skills shortages in the metal trades, with the number of contracts of training in the metal trades falling by 10 per cent since the late 1990s. It is highly unlikely that skilled migration will be the sole answer in meeting these challenges, indeed, it is unlikely. That is due to the global demand for skills in the engineering field. We will be competing globally as much as locally for the skills acquisition.

*Mr Hanna interjecting:*

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** No, that will not happen, Kris. The challenge of finding enough skilled workers in these fields is greater in South Australia because we have been successful in attracting major projects that will require many additional skilled tradespeople. The state government is responding to this demand by taking significant steps to address the skills shortage in the metal fabrication sector of the manufacturing industry, with the commencement of a new \$325 000 initiative. The South Australian Work Force Development fund is providing \$160 000 towards the metal fabrication industries skills project, with a further contribution of \$165 000 from industry. That is a vital ingredient, and I hope that other industries will follow the example of the manufacturing industry in this regard. The 18-month project commenced in July 2006. Specifically, the outcomes of the project will include:

- marketing tools and resources that will identify clear career pathways and assist in promoting the sector to South Australians as an attractive career opportunity;
- processes for existing workers to participate in the recognition of prior learning, recognition of current competencies and the establishment of a model that can be implemented across the broader manufacturing sector;

- identifying the age and skill profile of the current work force, which includes the development of strategies to address future work force requirements; and
- evaluating the project to identify successes, improvements and impediments to future work force requirements.

I welcome the strong sense of collaboration between government, industry and the unions, and the commitment to ensure the success of this project which will make a significant contribution to our state's sustained economic wellbeing.

### EDUCATION, SUPER SCHOOLS

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett):** Will the Minister for Education and Children's Services give examples of new equipment or technology that will be available at the new super school or the new birth to year 12 schools that is currently not offered at existing R-12 schools?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** Sir, can I just ask a question? Did the member for Morphett say 'birth to 12' or 'R-12'?

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** The new super school and birth to seven.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** Could the honourable member repeat the question?

**The SPEAKER:** Perhaps the honourable member could repeat his question.

**Dr McFETRIDGE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the minister give examples of new equipment or technology that will be available at the new super school or the new birth to year 7 schools that is not currently offered in existing R-12 schools?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** Thank you, sir. I thank the member for Morphett for—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The house will settle down.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** I am really delighted to have the opportunity to extend my comments again about the advantage of our new strategy for building the infrastructure that our schools operate within. It is quite clear that many schools, in fact 70 per cent of them, are more than 25 years old. They were built in another era. They were also built when there were smaller children—and that might sound counter-intuitive, but children were smaller in the old days than they are now. They take up more room physically. They also have more equipment. One of the challenges of more equipment and more computers particularly is that you need more footprint and ground area in order to look after those children. In addition, the burden of the IT activity puts an extraordinary pressure on our airconditioning systems, so the physical nature of the building must change completely.

It is quite clear that, if a school which was built in 1965 for 1 000 children is now occupied by 150 children, their options and their choices will be limited by the structures that were there at the time, together with the relatively little investment that those opposite put in during the intervening periods. Now it is quite clear that the opportunity, thanks to our massive education works of \$265 million capital—

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister was asked to give an example of new equipment and technology, not an opportunity to revamp her strategies, which is what she is doing.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! No, there is no point of order. The minister is answering the question.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** I know members opposite cannot bear the thought of our investing in public education; it genuinely offends their sensibilities. But the

reality is that this massive investment will allow choices. I will just explain one simple statistic. I know members opposite have trouble because they are probably offering us the lowest quartile in their questions. The simple statistic is that if a child attends a secondary school with 250 children in it, they have 18 subject choices. If there are 700 children, they have 44 subject choices. This may be a shock: the minister does not choose which curriculum choices are available in each school—the community does.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I have a point of order, sir. This question has nothing to do with curriculum. The minister was asked to give just one example.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister has occasionally strayed into debate on a couple of occasions—and I have let it pass—but she is answering the substance of the question. The minister has the call.

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH:** We believe in local control in our schools. We believe that the community should decide, based on the available opportunities in the local environment. For instance, if we know that the air warfare destroyer project will produce \$6 billion worth of investment and 1 000 jobs in one sector, it stands to reason that that school will get the opportunity to invest in those skills.

### ARTSsmart

**The Hon. L. STEVENS (Little Para):** My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. How is the ARTSsmart initiative progressing in our schools?

**The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services):** I know the honourable member has a keen interest in the arts curriculum—another choice of subject in our schools—and the ARTSsmart initiative is one which supports student engagement and achievement in the arts. ARTSsmart is a first in that it brings about a collaboration between education and the arts. The main purpose of the strategy is to build strong and effective partnerships between schools and the arts industry and art practitioners, including performers, visual artists and administrators.

I am very pleased to advise the house that in Melbourne on Tuesday 5 September Kaurna Plains School—an Aboriginal reception to year 12 school and an ARTSsmart centre—was announced the overall Australian regional winner in the annual Kid Witness News 'New Vision' Awards video contest. Kaurna Plains School also won an award for best South Australian school entry and one of five national spotlight awards, before finally being awarded the overall Australian regional winner. The Kid Witness News is a hands-on video education program that gives students the opportunity to research, write, act, produce, direct and edit a variety of videos which bring to life their school subjects and their everyday experiences. Schools then make a five minute video for the annual Kid Witness News 'New Vision' Awards video contest.

Some of the South Australian schools that entered the program included Parafield Gardens Primary School—another ARTSsmart school—Noarlunga Downs Primary School, Pooraka Primary School, Christies Beach High School and Warriappendi School. Each school taking part in the project is given around \$3 000 worth of film equipment, including a video camera, microphone monitor, video editing software and DVD resources to help them make their films. The program is supported by Panasonic, and the awards were

hosted and presented by Antonia Kidman and Nickelodeon's *Sarvo* boys Dave and James. Each award comes with a glass engraved trophy, along with cash and equipment prizes for the school.

Kaurna Plains School is now invited to attend the Asian awards to be held in Malaysia in December. Panasonic will fund two students and a teacher from Kaurna Plains School to attend those awards. The students, as you can imagine, are absolutely thrilled by their experience, and are not only receiving a national recognition for their work in the presence of students from around Australia, but also by the opportunity at this stage to have flown to Melbourne.

Kaurna Plains School's win is just one example of the potential for success through the ARTSsmart strategy and this government's commitment to making arts an integral component of the education curriculum, because we know that this is also part of our state strategic plans initiative and we are, after all, an arts state.

### PRISONS, MURRAY BRIDGE

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond):** My question is to the Attorney-General. Why did the government fail to advise the mayor and the Rural City of Murray Bridge council that the new prison would be located at Murray Bridge before the announcement was made? At a meeting with council in June 2006, attended by correctional services CEO Peter Severin, and the Director of Prison Infrastructure John Case, Mr Severin informed council that there were no plans for any site in South Australia at that time. At the same meeting, Mr Severin said he would engage council if, and when, Murray Bridge became an option for the new location. He further advised that thorough community consultation and engagement would occur prior to any decision.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** All will be revealed in the budget.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** But it is true, there has been speculation. Indeed, just the day before yesterday the opposition spokesman on prisons, Michelle Lensink, issued a news release saying—

**Ms Chapman:** The honourable.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** The honourable Michelle Lensink—thank you, member for Bragg—issued a news release saying, 'Prisons will again be overlooked.' In this news release—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** In this news release—this woman is clairvoyant—she says:

Prison infrastructure . . . likely to be the big losers in Thursday's State Budget, Shadow Correctional Services Minister Michelle Lensink said today.

Ms Lensink said she expected history to be repeated in this year's Budget with spending on prisons . . . to be overlooked again in favour of projects such as funding big screens at AAMI stadium.

And she goes on:

'It has been over two years of promises of upgrades to the women's prison and major restructure of the state's prison system and still the community has yet to see any confirmation of capital works projects except for the completion of Mobilong.'

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** In the immortal words of Maxwell Smart, 'Missed by this much!'

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Yes. As the Minister for Transport says, in the words of Maxwell Smart, 'She missed

by just a little bit. She missed by this much.' She goes on, 'The continued neglect of our prisons not only places prisoners'—

**Mr PEDERICK:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hammond.

**Mr PEDERICK:** The Attorney-General is going off on a diatribe. It has nothing to do with the question.

**The SPEAKER:** I hope the quote is going somewhere.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Yes, it is going somewhere, sir. She says:

The continued neglect of our prisons . . . places prisoners at risk.

She goes on to mention overcrowding, and overcrowding again, and hanging points in cells needing to be removed. Well, I cannot think of a better way of removing them than building a whole new prison.

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Oh dear! I am so wounded. The member for MacKillop has accused me of door-knocking. I can teach him how to do it. For the first time, do a bit.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** After the Hon. Angus Redford, the previous spokesman for the Liberal Party—

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** An adviser to the Queensland Liberals.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I think he was advising Mr Flegg, was he not, in the Queensland election?

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** He was the brains behind Flegg.

*Members interjecting:*

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I take the point of order. The Attorney will get to the question.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Mr Speaker, the District Council, I think of Yorke Peninsula was it, or Northern Yorke Peninsula, was lobbying the government as hard as it could to get a prison. I think any district council in this state, any rural city, would love a prison.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Look, sir, I don't know what is in the budget but I await it with interest.

### VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

**Mr RAU (Enfield):** My question is also to the Attorney, in his capacity as the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister explain to the house the aims and objectives of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial? What involvement has the state government had in this project?

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Minister for Multicultural Affairs):** The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a long-overdue project and it will have benefits for every South Australian, but particularly those veterans of the state who, at the call of the federal government, sprang to arms to serve our nation in our most controversial conflict. The memorial is an endeavour of the Returned and Services League, the Vietnamese Veterans Association, the Vietnam Veterans Association and the Vietnam Veterans Federation. It will see the largest war memorial constructed in this state since the Second World War. It will be erected on the grass verge on the northern side of Torrens Parade Ground adjacent Victoria Drive. This will be the only memorial of significance in this state that exclusively remembers the South Australian veterans of the Vietnam War, especially those who lost their lives.

Mr Speaker, I have just returned from a parliamentary tour of Vietnam, and I visited Saigon; Hanoi; Ha Long Bay; Quang Tri; Hue and Da Nang (in the Central Highlands); Hoi An; Tay Ninh (to visit the Cao Dai Temple); Vung Tau; and Nui Dat (where the Australians were based); and then we went to the Mekong Delta to Can Tho and then up the Mekong River to the Cambodian border to Chau Doc.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I travelled with the members for Norwood and Morialta. I don't know whether that picks up the interjection of the member for West Torrens, and I also took time to visit battle sites and other sites of interest to every veteran, and I now feel I am in a better position than most to speak about the impact of this conflict and the importance of this memorial.

I can clearly understand what drove the South Vietnamese, as they were then, to pursue a rule-of-law, pluralistic state with such vigour and courage, and I understand the terrible price they paid. I also came to understand the pressures that were placed upon our Australian servicemen—the unrelenting criticism of parts of our community levelled against men and women who were only doing the job their government demanded of them and the difficulties of, in many cases, fighting an unseen enemy. I know our soldiers did a magnificent job and acquitted themselves in the same way as their ANZAC forebears. They are highly regarded by those they sought to defend and especially highly regarded by those they fought against.

This splendid memorial will have another dimension. In another way it recognises the contribution made by the Vietnamese community to this state. Many of them suffered lengthy periods of brutal incarceration in re-education camps when the war was lost. They then risked their lives, and in many cases those of their young families, to travel to Australia in leaky boats. We think of people such as the Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, Mr Hieu Van Le; we think of Councillor Tung Ngo of the Port Adelaide Enfield council, who was only 11 years old when he left on a boat.

Some of these refugees fought in the army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) alongside our soldiers. Those ARVN veterans who remained in Vietnam I can tell you are discriminated against by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Their children are denied entry to university, they are excluded from nearly all occupations and work the bicycle-propelled cyclos in which tourists are transported around the cities of Vietnam.

Many Vietnamese have made this state their home, and it is good to have them in our midst. The memorial remembers those South Australians who gave their lives and those who served, and it acknowledges the bonds of warmth and friendship that still exist between Australian and Vietnamese servicemen.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Mr Speaker, I am a little surprised at being accused of avoiding service in the Vietnam War since I was only 12 years old when Australian troops were withdrawn.

I am pleased to say that in complete contrast to the federal Liberal government, the Rann government has been proactive in supporting the project. We were approached by the organising committee soon after it was formed and immediately gave our moral and financial support. I know that the

Adelaide City Council did likewise—in fact, the organising committee tells me that the positive response made by the people of this state was gratifying.

Sadly, I am advised that the response received from the federal government was quite different. The first approach for funding was made before the last federal election and the initial oral response was negative. The organising committee was told that no support would be forthcoming because to support such a cause would offend the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Well, make no mistake about that government—it is, in its essentials, a monarchy with an aristocracy. It has a communist party of about 2 million people out of a country of 80 million, and those 2 million people monopolise civic life to the exclusion of the other 78 million—they monopolise the wealth, the education, and the AusAID scholarships.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I rise on a point of order. I think that some generations ago the question was about the memorial at the Torrens Parade Ground. It seems to have strayed somewhat from—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order; the minister is answering the question.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** I wonder what the next of kin of those who lost their lives feel about the federal government's treatment of this memorial. The federal government has finally come to the party, and I understand that they have belatedly agreed to provide funding for the project—such a pity that veterans were left feeling that getting the funding was something like pulling teeth. The true measure of any contribution like this must be its spontaneity; donors should not have to be dragged kicking and screaming to some form of compromise.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be dedicated on 15 October 2006. It still needs further funding, and the Rann government will provide it—no questions asked. You simply cannot put a price on what our young soldiers did, and what they continue to do. I am told that if the flag of the former Republic of Vietnam is flown at the dedication ceremony (and I am advised that it will be) then the executive of the federal Liberal government will boycott the event; they will not attend. Apparently it is something about flag protocol, or maybe there is more money to be made by appeasing a communist dictatorship. What sort of message does that send to all our veterans?

The federal Liberal government is yet again running scared and bowing to the dictates of a foreign dictatorship. In the case of Vietnam veterans, many say that they were betrayed by the federal government then, and they are being betrayed again. The issues of discrimination that they fought so hard to overcome have, thanks to the federal government, simply arisen again.

## PRISONS, MURRAY BRIDGE

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond):** My question is again to the Attorney-General. What input and contribution to this prison facility expansion will be required of the Rural City of Murray Bridge, and has the council been advised of any requirements in any discussions?

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** I am afraid you will just have to wait for the budget.

### PASSPORT TO SAFETY

**Mr BIGNELL (Mawson):** Can the Minister for Industrial Relations update the house on the progress of the Passport to Safety pilot project?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Industrial Relations):** I thank the member for Mawson for his question. Passport to Safety is an interactive web-based learning and assessment program which is being implemented in secondary schools to increase workplace health and safety—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** Yes, I am, as a matter of fact.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** Well, take a point of order. The program aims to increase workplace health and safety awareness amongst students in years 10 to 12. On successful completion, students receive a certificate of achievement that they are encouraged to include with their resume when applying for jobs. Passport to Safety is an important initiative because research shows that, when compared with the average worker, young people are almost 1½ times more likely to be injured at work. Figures have also shown that more than 70 per cent of work injuries to young people happen in the first year of their employment.

As of July this year, I have been advised that Passport to Safety has reached 4 300 students within 40 schools. Students work through six modules which cover such topics as employee and employer rights and responsibilities, identifying and controlling hazards, workplace injuries, personal protective equipment, and emergency procedures. Students are also required to complete a three to four-hour workplace orientation session, covering occupational health, safety and welfare, equal opportunity and harassment issues, before starting work experience or a work placement. This initiative builds on our work already undertaken to protect young South Australians as they enter the work force.

### PRISONS, MURRAY BRIDGE

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond):** Will the Attorney-General advise the house what plans the government has made to upgrade existing infrastructure and services at Murray Bridge to cater for the significant increase in activity resulting from the projected tripling of the current prison capacity? The Chief Executive Officer of the Murraylands Regional Development Board has raised concerns regarding the adequacy of current services, including housing, transport, education, health, mental health and counselling services.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** Most councils in non-metropolitan South Australia would jump at the chance to have a new prison in their area. The former Liberal spokesman on prisons of blessed memory—that was the Hon. Angus Redford—used to criticise the government because the imprisonment rate had not gone up enough. What was the swing against him in Bright?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** On a point of order: the imprisonment rate has nothing to do with the regional service requirements referred to in the question asked.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I am listening to where the Attorney's answer is going. It needs to go to the substance of the question.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Its trajectory will become apparent, sir. The Liberal opposition used to criticise us for not imprisoning enough people. I notice that the day before yesterday the new spokesperson, the Hon. Michelle Lensink, criticised us for increasing the prison population by 14 per cent. Obviously, a bit of reconciliation needs to be done in the opposition party room.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Yes; this government has brought in the biggest overhaul of criminal law and procedure in the history of the state—that is what I do between door-knocking—and, as a result, the crime rate is going down but, because of the increased number of police, police crime is going up because there is more enforcement.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The issue of crime rate has nothing to do with the question of regional infrastructure required for this proposed development.

**The SPEAKER:** I am hoping the Attorney is about to demonstrate what it has to do with regional infrastructure.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** Mr Speaker, the Liberal opposition has argued that we need more prisons in South Australia. It has been crying out for a new women's prison. If the member for Hammond is right about what is in the budget, it looks like Labor is doing it. Don't complain.

### COUNTRY HEALTH BOARD

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond):** Will the Minister for Health inform the house why the newly formed Country Health SA board, replacing seven regional health boards, is only an interim board? What governance arrangements for country hospitals will replace that board in nine months' time?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health):** The interim country health board is an interim country health board because we are going through a process of discussion and consultation with the regions about the model that will be produced in the future, and I think that is a perfectly reasonable thing to do.

### EMPLOYEE OMBUDSMAN

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Is it true that, prior to the appointment of the current Employee Ombudsman, the position was not advertised and, if that is so, why was only one candidate considered?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Industrial Relations):** I thank the member for his question. I would need to check in regard to the advertising. I do not think that is the normal procedure, but let me check in regard to that. The procedure that I am familiar with is in regard to the consultation. As the member would be aware, that is a requirement in the legislation. I consulted with the committee, made up of a member from this house (the shadow minister), a member from the Legislative Council (Hon. Bernard Finnigan), the Commissioner for Public Employment, Business SA and also SA Unions. I think I have all the people covered. The government went forward with a short list of one person because that was all—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** We clearly had made up our mind as to whom we thought the best person for that position was.

**Mr HANNA:** I have a supplementary question. In relation to the consultation, did the minister discuss the proposed appointment of Stephen Brennan as Employee Ombudsman with Don Farrell of the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Union?

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** No, I do not believe so, and I do not believe I discussed—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT:** —the appointment of the Employee Ombudsman with anyone except in cabinet. Obviously, I spoke to my cabinet colleagues before I triggered the requirements under the legislation with regard to that committee. That is a requirement of the legislation. As I say, to the best of my memory, I did not discuss Mr Brennan—or anyone else, for that matter—except with cabinet.

### BAKEWELL BRIDGE

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell):** Will the Minister for Transport listen to the requests of the Thebarton Residents Association and ensure that the Bakewell Bridge carriageway is extended to allow pedestrian traffic on the northern side?

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport):** We have been listening to people about the Bakewell Bridge project for some considerable time and have made some changes as a result of that. In fact, we made changes that increased the cost of the project. We made changes—

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** She cannot help herself, can she? You know what we will do? We will run a pool for a charity whereby we collect money when she does not talk all through question time. And if she can keep quiet—

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is a point of order. No, the deputy leader does not have a point of order.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Sorry, sir. I think she was saying that I was off the subject, but perhaps if the deputy leader did not interject for a moment I would not get off the subject. It is only her incessant banal interjecting that drags me off the subject.

**The Hon. J.D. Hill:** Inane!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Yes, inane—banal inanities; inane banalities! We have made a number of changes to that project to address some of the concerns. We have not addressed all of them, and I can tell the member for Mitchell that we will not be addressing all of them. We have made changes over the period of time of consideration of the project. Those changes cost extra money. I must say that was a criticism made by the member for Waite, that the project had, in his terms, “blown out” because we had listened to people and changed it.

Then, you know, hypocrisy being the absolute key note of this opposition, he was down there last week saying that he would support the changes that people want—not last week, a few weeks ago. He was telling the public meeting that he would support the changes that people wanted, and that he would not complain about the cost increase if it had to increase; and, if they believe that, well, he should sell them the bridge. We have made a number of changes for the

community. We have incorporated a lot of interests, but we cannot incorporate them all. However, I can say that the process is not assisted by the hypocrisy of the member for Waite.

### MAJOR EVENTS

**Ms SIMMONS (Morialta):** Will the Minister for Consumer Affairs inform the house what has been the response to date from those involved in organising major sporting events and entertainment functions to ensure that all ordinary South Australians get fair access?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Minister for Consumer Affairs):** This issue has received some attention in the media recently, particularly in relation to the forthcoming Ashes series and some of the high-profile concerts that are scheduled for the coming months. My concern in relation to this issue is about ensuring that ordinary South Australians gain access in a fair and equitable way to the purchase of tickets to these major events. Too often, it would seem, when one of these really popular events is being held people are often unable to purchase tickets from authorised sellers. No sooner are they available for sale but they are all gone.

That is when the scalpers take advantage of the situation and on-sell them at sometimes quite huge profits. In Victoria, attempts have been made to tackle this through the Sports Event Ticketing (Fair Access) Act. I am informed that, since its introduction, this legislation has resulted in only two investigations and no successful prosecutions in four years. I have been advised that councils in South Australia have the power to make by-laws to prohibit unauthorised people selling tickets around particular venues. I understand that this is the situation that applies around Football Park.

The problem, however, just simply moves the boundary of the banned area. The problem, as I see it, is that these attempts are tackling the problem at the wrong end of the process. The whole point of any action in regard to this issue must be about ensuring that ordinary people are not excluded from these popular events because some profiteer has scooped up all the tickets. Last Monday I met with senior representatives of the South Australian Cricket Association and the South Australian National Football League to discuss this matter. I am pleased to be able to say that both organisations were keen to pursue a workable solution to this problem.

Both organisations are aware of the fact that scalpers are on-selling their tickets to the detriment of ordinary people who wish to attend their games. I have also scheduled meetings with other promoters and with representatives of the various ticketing agencies, and I am keen to work with them to develop workable solutions. If legislation is the solution, I am happy to look at it, but I will not be bringing legislation into this house simply as a feel-good exercise that achieves nothing but a headline. What I want is a solution that will have a real impact, and I am delighted with the positive response I have received to date from organisers and promoters.

In the meantime, my message to football fans, cricket fans and concert goers is to be very wary. Many organisations are stating publicly that they will not honour tickets which they have been able to identify as being bought from scalpers. You might have your ticket, but you just might not get in the door. The biggest deterrent to these scalpers is to leave them with a fist full of tickets and empty pockets.



### PRISONS, YATALA

**Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Attorney-General. Did the government consult with the Public Service Association in relation to the change of work force arising out of the closure of Yatala and, if so, when?

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General):** All will be revealed in the budget.

### ADOPTIONS, OVERSEAS

**Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Minister for Families and Communities. Is the minister aware that the South Australian government's agent for overseas adoption in India has been under scrutiny for alleged child trafficking for nearly 12 months and has finally been shut down in June this year; and why did his department continue to promote this agency on the government's web site? In April 2005, the government took over responsibility for overseas adoptions from the private sector. Preet Mandir, the Indian adoption agency with which the SA government has an agreement, has been under public scrutiny for stealing and selling babies since October 2005, and is black-listed by several adoption agencies in Sweden and the United States. Subsequently, an undercover CNN television crew posing as prospective parents seeking an overseas child exposed the agency for alleged child trafficking. The Indian government has now shutdown the agency after they ran the story 'The Baby Snatchers' on 22 June 2006.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Families and Communities):** I must say that I am very pleased to be able to inform the house that one of the motivating factors for our insourcing the adoption arrangements was our grave concern about the relationships that the non-government organisation which formerly was running this organisation was building with organisations, in particular in India. In fact, the first thing that those who were opposing the insourcing said was that it would jeopardise the relationship with organisations such as Preet Mandir. By taking these actions and insisting on quality, we did not build relationships with organisations that had questionable practices. There were lively concerns about the role that some of these organisations were playing in procuring children in these countries for adoption in overseas arrangements. That was the motivating factor for our insourcing these arrangements, and for the opposition to trot out the inevitable calamity that has occurred to these organisations and point the finger at us is the height of hypocrisy.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

### COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart):** I direct my question to the Premier.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** Why can't we have another prison?

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I have two prisons; it is the biggest employer in my electorate. You want to get up a bit earlier now, Mike. However, on another important issue—

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Strangling corellas.

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** I have the right mixture; I have a new one. Will the Premier give an assurance that Country Fire Service personnel and volunteers will be protected from

the provisions of the Native Vegetation Act when they clear native vegetation as a part of their activities in extinguishing bushfires? I do not think that the Premier needs a briefing from the minister because I point out to the minister that at the time of the—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** You are really putting me off and I am shy.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** You are really spoiling my day.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** Gunnie, give us the answer.

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

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN:** At the time of the bushfire at Wilmington it was necessary for council personnel to use graders and bulldozers to remove native vegetation, and the person in charge was most concerned that he would be in trouble with officers from the Native Vegetation Council. Therefore, I seek the assurance of the Premier.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier):** I am happy to get a more detailed report on this matter, but, of course, this is an issue in which I have a deep personal interest as a member of the Salisbury Country Fire Service, along with the member for Wright. I have been there on the front line; and we know how important it is. When it comes to protecting lives and people's property, then that is paramount. In fact, the honourable member should be well aware of the nature and extent of the deliberations at the bushfire summit in 2003, which examined this very question. I know the Minister for Infrastructure will be aware of the decisions made in the follow-up to the fires on the West Coast. Of course, it is imperative that safety of people and property is placed first; always is and always should be. In order to satisfy my friend the honourable member I will get a much more detailed report. As someone on the front line, I want to ensure I have the clarification, as well.

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### BUDGET PAPERS

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** I lay on the table the following budget papers:

Budget Overview (Delivering results for South Australia) 2006-07—Budget Paper 1

Budget Speech 2006-07—Budget Paper 2

Budget Statement 2006-07—Budget Paper 3

Portfolio Statements 2006-07, Volumes 1, 2 and 3—Budget Paper 4

Capital Investment Statement 2006-07—Budget Paper 5;

Regional Statement 2006-07—Budget Paper 6.

I move:

That the Portfolio Statements, Capital Investment Statement and Budget Statement be published.

Motion carried.

### APPROPRIATION BILL

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer)** obtained leave and introduced a bill for the appropriation of money

from the Consolidated Account for the financial year ended 30 June 2007, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, today's Budget lays the foundation for South Australia's future.

The Budget builds on the economic stability and social wealth enjoyed in our State, and it provides capacity for future growth.

This Budget will keep South Australia moving forward.

It is a Budget that strengthens the Rann Labor Government's:

- commitment to strong financial management;
- commitment to strengthening law and order;
- commitment to building better schools;
- commitment to providing a better public health system; and
- commitment to addressing the shortage and retention of skills in South Australia.

These commitments provide the basis for better communities, a more vibrant state and a strong economy.

And Mr Speaker, this Budget delivers on the biggest commitment of all—every single election promise made by the Rann Labor Government during the 2006 election campaign has been delivered.

The Budget—the fifth for the Rann Labor Government—is again based on good economic and financial management.

Continued sound practices have maintained the State's internationally enviable Triple-A credit rating.

Again, we are delivering a Budget that is in surplus.

The Rann Labor Government has delivered four Budgets in its first term in surplus.

This Budget outlines surpluses across the forward estimates.

The Budget will deliver a net operating surplus of:

- \$91 million in 2006-07;
- \$162 million in 2007-08;
- \$188 million in 2008-09; and
- \$208 million in 2009-10.

The Budget also has modest net lending deficits, reflecting the Government's ongoing commitment to capital investment.

However, in line with good financial management, the ratio of net financial liabilities to revenue will continue to decline.

This demonstrates the basis for maintaining our Triple-A credit rating.

This demonstrates good economic management and has enabled us to deliver every single election promise.

In addition, it delivers some \$640 million to the health sector.

The Rann Labor Government will also deliver six new schools, in partnership with the private sector, as part of a bold \$216 million, school infrastructure plan for education.

This will include developing a new South Australian Certificate of Education to better prepare our students for the changing workforce of the future.

Mr Speaker, this Budget will also deliver the State's largest-ever infrastructure investment.

Coupled with the Budget this year—is bold reform of the way government conducts business.

This reform will deliver efficiencies and increased output across each Government agency.

It will see a shift in support to our frontline services that are of greatest need to the community—health, education and law and order.

The South Australian economy remains strong.

This is evidenced by continued strong growth in housing construction and business investment.

KPMG's 2006 survey of 95 overseas and four Australian cities rated Adelaide in the top three most cost-competitive cities in the world in which to conduct business.

Adelaide outperformed Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

Business investment in new assets grew by 4 per cent in real terms in 2005-06.

Growth in the mining industry continues to move from strength to strength.

Access Economics reported in its June quarter Investment Monitor that the value of projects "committed" or "under construction" in South Australia increased by 9.3 per cent in the June quarter of 2006.

The outlook for South Australia is also good over the medium term with the \$6 billion Air Warfare Destroyer contract; in excess of \$5 billion for the proposed BHP Billiton Olympic Dam expansion; and the \$775 million investment in the Prominent Hill mine.

Employment growth has again been a significant achievement, growing at 1.7 per cent in 2005-06.

South Australia's unemployment rate averaged 5 per cent in 2005-06; down from 5.5 per cent in 2004-05. In August this year it was 4.8 per cent.

South Australia's unemployment rate in 2005-06 was below the national average. This has not been achieved for more than three decades.

The South Australian Strategic Plan target of having the unemployment rate equal to or better than the Australian average has been achieved.

Mr Speaker, South Australia's population grew by almost 10 000 people in 2005. That is the highest level of population growth since the early 1990s.

Adelaide is increasingly a place for migrants to call home. Net overseas migration grew by 57 per cent in 2005, adding 7755 South Australians.

Last year we announced unprecedented tax cuts for families and business.

The Government is delivering on its previous commitments to reduce personal and business taxes.

Over the next five years a further \$296 million of taxes will be cut taking the total amount of tax relief since coming into office to over \$1.57 billion by 2010-11.

Continued improvement of South Australia's health system remains a priority for this Government.

Health system funding will exceed \$3 billion in 2006-07.

This Budget provides a substantial increase in health funding.

\$640 million will be injected into the State's hospitals and health services over the next four years.

\$400 million will be provided for extra health services—enough for more than 100 000 additional patient admissions over four years.

Increased capacity for the health system will improve access to services in local communities.

This broader focus not only reduces pressure on the hospital system, but it will help all South Australians get faster access to the services they need.

We will be establishing four GP Plus health centres in outer metropolitan areas.

These will be in Elizabeth, Marion, Aldinga and Woodville.

These centres will provide longer operating hours and more access to services where they are needed.

We are also increasing the capacity of GP clinics throughout the State by providing 50 primary health care nurses.

Hospital resources will also be increased. This will see:

- the recruitment of 49 additional medical specialists and trainees, including 17 full-time positions in emergency departments;
- funding for 30 medical school places and eight health and medical scholarships;
- \$38 million over four years for reduced elective surgery waiting times—that translates to 16 000 elective operations;
- \$12.9 million over four years for reduced adult dental care waiting times—that translates to 7000 dental patients each year;
- redevelopment of the Port Augusta Renal Dialysis Unit;
- \$20.8 million over four years in additional hospital equipment; and
- \$6 million over four years to expand the Family Home Visiting Program.

Today's Budget marks a significant milestone for public health in the north-eastern suburbs, with some \$17.5 million provided for the transfer of the Modbury Hospital back to public management.

Mental health is also a focus of this Budget, with the recruitment of 30 additional mental health workers to work with GPs across the State, and \$10.2 million over the next four years for the Healthy Young Minds Program—a program that provides additional child and adolescent mental health services.

These initiatives clearly demonstrate the Government's commitment to improving the State's health and mental health systems for our youth and the community.

It is also important that we expand opportunities for those who are disadvantaged in society.

That is why this Budget will provide \$20.7 million over four years for additional in home support services and community-based accommodation for people with disabilities.

We are also providing \$4.2 million over the next four years for increased assistance to people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families.

Additional assistance will be provided to people who qualify under the South Australian Transport Subsidy Scheme, with funding for an additional 40 vouchers a year and an increase in the maximum fare subsidised from \$30 to \$40.

South Australia's health system will continue to strengthen under a Rann Labor Government.

In the past four years, the Labor Government has spent more than \$7 billion on our public education system.

We have introduced significant reform in our schools—from more teachers and smaller class sizes in the first years of school, to school retention programs for high school students.

A \$450 million investment has helped improve the look and standard of school buildings and included our \$25 million School Pride program—the biggest single cash injection into school maintenance in a decade.

We invested in more counsellors for primary schools, mentors, a \$35 million literacy improvement strategy and

thousands of new books for school libraries as part of the Premier's Reading Challenge.

We reviewed childhood education and childcare and we set up 'one-stop' Children's Centres that bring together childcare, education, health, family and parenting services.

Today we are building on this strong foundation by injecting additional funds into education under the Education Works Strategy.

This will include \$134 million towards building six new schools in partnership with the private sector.

The ambitious Education Works Strategy will reshape our public schooling system for the future.

The State's public education system has long been in need of significant reform and realignment of services.

Over time the distribution of families in communities across South Australia has changed.

This Government has taken a bold step to commence the realignment of the State's public schools in order for our schools to be located in the areas of highest need.

Our Education Works strategy will deliver better education services for young South Australians and will include:

- construction of six new schools in Adelaide's metropolitan area; and
- investment in schools that choose to amalgamate and bring together childcare, preschool and school services into a single 'one-stop' location for families—an investment of about \$82 million.

For South Australia's education system to make progressive steps forward, bold reform is needed.

Under our plan, some schools will decide to close, some schools will decide to combine, and others will be reshaped.

Ultimately, the changes will directly benefit these children, their families and communities, and we will work with them to ensure the best outcome.

That is why we are making a commitment to start discussions immediately with the 17 schools and preschools that will be impacted by the construction of new schools.

The changes to our school system will be driven by community need. We will work with the community to make decisions and move forward for our children.

We can no longer afford to do the same as consecutive Governments have done for the past three decades and patch up outdated and, in some cases, surplus school buildings.

The initial program will start with the overhaul of the State's ageing school buildings.

The program will deliver to children in Government schools wide curriculum choices, modern buildings and high-quality equipment.

Mr Speaker, today we are also injecting a further \$76 million in new spending to deliver our election commitments and education initiatives.

Today's Budget has committed to spend record levels per student.

To deliver these education commitments, we need better quality facilities and we need to rethink the way we offer education in this State—particularly in senior years.

Mr Speaker, today's Budget makes a commitment to deliver a comprehensive education system that offers young people choice and excellence.

Today's Budget will also include the following funds over the next four years:

- \$54.5 million to implement a new South Australian Certificate of Education;
- \$32.1 million to employ 100 more teachers and reduce Year 3 class sizes. This builds

on previous teacher additions that saw reduced class sizes from Reception to Year 2;

- \$24.8 million to establish ten high-tech Trade Schools to meet the skills needs of the State;
- \$23.3 million towards the construction and operation of ten more Children's Centres, bringing the total to 20;
- \$16 million for increased resources to support the needs of students in non-government schools;
- \$2.5 million to extend the school retention action plan to the end of 2007;
- \$1.55 million to mandate healthy food in school canteens;
- \$1.7 million for a new Premier's Be Active Physical Education Challenge, encouraging children to be more active; and
- \$1 million to purchase more books for schools.

Mr Speaker, trades and apprenticeships have also been given a boost in the Budget.

In addition to the ten new trade schools, this Budget will deliver:

- 2600 additional apprenticeships;
- \$16.8 million over four years for additional resourcing of the Vocational Education and Training system;
- ongoing support for Education Adelaide;
- \$8.3 million over the next four years as support to establish and operate a Mineral Resources and Heavy Engineering Skills Centre; and
- \$3 million over three years to establish a Software Engineering Institute as part of Carnegie Mellon University, which was brought to South Australia by the Premier, Mike Rann and foreign minister Alexander Downer, strongly supported by Prime Minister John Howard, and criticised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, the Government's commitment to law and order is paying dividends.

Offences are down, convictions are up, sentences are longer.

Today's Budget will deliver more.

We will be putting an additional 400 police officers into the community over the next four years at a cost of \$109.5 million.

This Labor Government built South Australia's police force to record numbers in our first term.

We have also committed to undertake a significant recruiting drive to give us an even larger police force in four years—of 4401 officers. Remember back to 1997, the mid point of the Liberal government, when numbers were approximately 3 400. There will be 1 000 more police under Labor.

This is an increase of 640 police officers, or 17 per cent since 30 June 2002.

South Australia will continue to have a strong hold on its title as the State with the greatest number of police per capita.

Local services will also be enhanced through the provision of three additional police shopfronts—at Hallett Cove, Campbelltown and Munno Para.

With an increased saturation of police officers and the crime rate dropping, today we are building capacity to lock away more offenders.

That's why this Budget has committed to the largest-ever expansion and reform of the State's prison system—more than \$500 million worth of new facilities.

A new prison precinct will be established near Murray Bridge.

The precinct, adjacent to the existing Mobilong Prison, is expected to be fully operational by 2011-12.

The precinct will include:

- a new 760 bed—men's prison—increasing capacity from the over crowded Yatala prison by 419 beds; and
- a new 150 bed—women's prison—increasing capacity by 58 beds.

In addition, new detention facilities will also be provided for:

- a new 90 bed juvenile detention centre at Cavan as a single modern facility and;
- a new 80 bed pre-release centre, also at Cavan.

This model will provide the capacity to serve our prison needs well into the future—at a more efficient cost.

As a result, the Yatala Labour Prison and the Adelaide Women's Prison will be closed. Also removed from the Northfield site will be the pre-release centre and that land will be available for further development, which I will touch on shortly.

The new facilities will be built under a Public Private Partnership arrangement.

This will see the private sector own, finance, design, build and maintain the infrastructure that will be operated by the State Government, through the Department for Correctional Services, over a 25-year period.

Importantly, Mr Speaker, custodial services will be retained and delivered by the State.

The new prisons will free up the Northfield site for significant housing development. The heritage values of the site will be retained in future development.

The Magill Youth Detention centre will also be closed and the site vacated and made available for future developments.

Law and order will also be boosted by the delivery of \$2.7 million over the next four years for four more prosecutors for South Australia's Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

In addition, the State's Courts Administration Authority will receive an extra \$5.8 million over four years to meet increased costs in the South Australian court system.

This Budget delivers a significant range of other commitments in the justice area, including:

- \$4.6 million over four years for enhanced DNA testing services;
- ongoing funding for the Paedophile Task Force;
- the establishment of the new position of Commissioner for Victims' Rights;
- on going funding for the sexual and violent offender treatment program in jails—more than \$1.7 million a year from 2007-08;
- \$1 million over four years for an offender graffiti-removal and community work program;
- provision of an additional ten beds at the Women's Prison; and
- \$9.1 million over four years to address the increased workload in community corrections, and for staff attraction and retention of correctional officers.

The Budget provides more than \$3.7 billion over the next four years in investment expenditure.

That is a 49 per cent increase on the level of investing expenditure provided for in the 2001-02 Budget.

In addition, the Government will initiate Public Private Partnerships for a further \$134 million for schools, and \$517 million for new prisons and the new youth detention centre.

This investment, per capita, is higher than the projected capital expenditure in Victoria.

Whilst increasing our borrowing, debt will remain at manageable levels.

The investing budget already includes a range of projects being undertaken by this Government, including:

- South Road upgrade project;
- establishing the Port River Expressway;
- upgrading and extending the tramline; and
- major health infrastructure upgrades.

Mr Speaker, today I am announcing a significant number of additional projects:

- \$216 million under the Education Works strategy for upgrading schools;
- \$145 million for the redevelopment of Flinders Medical Centre;
- \$50 million over two years, from 2008-09, to continue the public transport bus fleet replacement program;
- \$35 million for GP Plus health centres;
- \$24.8 million for ten Trade Schools;
- \$22.8 million for the redevelopment of the Police Academy; and
- \$13 million to construct an additional ten Children's Centres.

As already detailed, provisions have been made for Public Private Partnership arrangements to deliver \$517 million in new detention facilities for the State.

This Budget also provides significant funding for the Port Adelaide Maritime Corporation, the charter of which is not only to deliver the Air Warfare Destroyer Project, but to expand the maritime and defence industries in this State.

- \$243 million for the construction of the Common User Facility and the harbour dredging associated with the project;
- \$67.7 million to acquire land that is key to its current and future operations;
- \$8.1 million for the construction of the Maritime Skills Centre; and
- \$6 million to support the operation of the Air Warfare Destroyers Systems Centre which will underpin at least some 400 to 500 of the most highly skilled technicians and engineers here in Adelaide, South Australia.

Mr Speaker, further supporting the economic development of South Australia, this Budget will provide:

- \$9.6 million to extend the Regional Development Infrastructure Fund to establish strategic infrastructure in regional areas;
- \$2.1 million over four years to expand the operations of the Defence Unit in the Department of Trade and Economic Development, chaired by a great Australian, the former head of our armed forces, General Peter Cosgrove;
- \$2 million over four years for the Centre for Innovation;
- \$2 million over four years for projects in rural towns;
- \$1.5 million over three years for an Olympic Dam Taskforce to deliver the expansion of Roxby Downs (and the committee to oversee that project is also chaired by another successful and prominent South Australian, Mr Bruce Carter);
- \$1.2 million in support of science and innovation activities through the Bragg Initiative; and
- \$500 000 over two years for a pilot program to encourage and welcome new migrants in South Australia, a program that is proposed, sponsored and will be provided by Business SA—further collaboration of this government working hand in hand with business to better the economy of this state.

Today's Budget includes an ongoing commitment to significant funding for the State's transport system.

In response to growing passenger demand, we will provide an extra \$10.1 million in capacity funding over the next four years for public transport services.

This Budget provides an extra \$8 million on public transport in 2006-07.

The State is poised for record investment in road and transport infrastructure.

In 2006-07, \$85.5 million will be spent on Stages 2 and 3 of the Port River Expressway, while \$59.4 million will be spent on South Road projects.

The Rann Government is committed to delivering the South Road-Anzac Highway underpass. Pre-construction work and land acquisition will continue on the underpasses under Port and Grange Roads, widening between Port and Torrens Roads and planning work for the Sturt Road underpass.

Other road and transport investment spending in 2006-07 includes:

- \$14.2 million for the start of the Northern Expressway project;
- \$27.6 million for the replacement of the Bakewell Bridge;
- \$24.2 million for the extension of the tramline to the City West Campus of UniSA;
- \$21.2 million for the replacement of public transport buses; and
- \$3.1 million toward a new two-lane roundabout at the intersection of Waterloo Corner and Heaslip Roads.

Additional funding of \$7.6 million has also been allocated for key rural road projects in coming years, providing for:

- road sealing between Wilpena and Blinman;
- widening of the Stone Hut Bridge between Stone Hut and Wirrabara;
- re-surfacing the unsealed road from Oodnadatta to Hamilton; and
- re-surfacing and sealing sections of the Oodnadatta Track between Lyndhurst and Maree.

A strong commitment of \$10.8 million over four years has been made to increase to 50 per cent the number of South Australian Government fleet cars using alternative fuels. This will see 3900 environmentally friendly vehicles by 2010.

South Australia is renowned for its strong commitment to the arts and the thriving tourism sector.

The Budget supports a range of arts infrastructure, cultural and tourism events, and other events, including:

- \$8 million for the upgrade of the world famous, highly regarded and respected Adelaide Festival Centre;
- \$1.8 million for the upgrade of the Lion Arts Centre; and
- \$2 million over four years to stage the Adelaide Fringe annually.

Mr Speaker, a particular joy for me, I can also say that the budget also provides a significant financial boost for major events and, importantly, the Adelaide Festival of Arts.

The Budget provides:

- \$5.8 million to support major events in South Australia, including new events such as the Rugby Sevens, the Oldways Food Symposium and the Adelaide Food and Wine Summit and the Adelaide Guitar Festival.

Mr Speaker, as I move to some extremely important policy points, can I say that protecting our natural environment remains a key plank in the Government's policy platform.

South Australia continues to lead the way on sustainability at the national level.

To strengthen our environmental presence in the community, today's Budget will include \$7.2 million to place

an additional 20 park rangers across the State over the next four years.

This will include rangers being placed at some of the State's most popular Conservation Parks, including Morialta and Black Hill.

Importantly, as a commitment of this government to all that is important in our environment, this Budget also provides \$5.7 million for the creation of a new River Murray Forest.

This is a unique conservation initiative in the River Murray, one strongly supported by the local member for Chaffey. It will provide native habitat for threatened species, and I can say, sir, no greater threatened species in this habitat than the Regent Parrot. This will go a long way to preserving the Regent Parrot, which is important for this state. It will help combat climate change by offsetting carbon emissions.

Mr Speaker a significant increase in expenditure and investment in vital frontline Government services, in health, education and law and order, requires a review of the way we spend our money.

That is why the Rann Government has commissioned a review of Government expenditure.

The South Australian Government must take a significant step forward and adopt a 21st Century way of doing business and bring about significant increases in efficiency across all agencies.

As a result, we are developing a 'shared services' delivery model to support all Government agencies.

It will streamline and simplify internal administrative services.

Together with savings on Information and Communications Technology, procurement and management reforms, savings of \$60 million each year will be returned back to the community.

The initiative will provide back-office support services such as ICT, human resources, records management, finance, procurement and payroll to agencies through a consolidated entity rather than being duplicated across every Government department.

It will result in a smarter, simpler, more effective and robust way of doing business.

The practice is used in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and other parts of Australia.

Mr Speaker, all Government agencies have been asked to review spending and deliver savings.

Savings of \$695.1 million over four years will be made and redirected into priority areas of Government.

Savings include:

- an across-Government efficiency dividend of 0.25 per cent each year compounding—that's \$128.1 million over four years;
- individual agency savings measures of \$396.5 million over four years; and
- structural Government reform—saving \$170.5 million over four years.

Mr Speaker, structural reform of government includes the shared services reform already mentioned.

It also includes the proposed abolition of the Department for Administrative and Information Services (commonly known as DAIS) and the Office of Public Employment.

The core business functions will simply be transferred to a range of other Government departments and agencies.

The Office of Public Employment, and DAIS workforce-related functions and business units, will be transferred to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Staff and unions will be consulted over proposed transfers.

Again, this initiative will translate in to real benefits for South Australians each year—with additional funds being available to deliver essential services in health, education and community safety.

Mr Speaker, today I am presenting a Budget that addresses the State's needs now and in to the future.

I would like to place again on the public record (this is my fifth budget) my thanks and my appreciation of the outstanding work of my Ministerial colleagues, their Chief Executives and their staff. In particular I would like to thank my chief of staff Ben Tufnell, who has been with me for five years, and my personal staff for their outstanding efforts. I would also like to place on the record that also with me for the fifth budget is the Under Treasurer Mr Jim Wright, who has served this government with distinction, as he did the last.

I would also like to thank the officers of the Department of Treasury and Finance; my ministerial colleagues for their assistance, support and encouragement; the back bench for their support and appreciation; my partner Emma, for her support; and for everybody else who has supported me.

For the fifth consecutive year, this Government has demonstrated prudent and responsible financial management.

We have delivered a Budget in surplus every year since coming to office.

That approach has delivered and retained, for our State, a Triple-A credit rating.

With this Budget the tradition continues—a Budget in surplus for each and every year, of the second term Rann Labor Government.

Mr Speaker, this is a Government that has honoured every election promise.

And as a Labor Government we are proud to be meeting the challenge of delivering more money and better services in health, in education and in keeping our community safe.

Mr Speaker,

- We are a Government with the vision to lead our State.
- We are a Government prepared to reform.
- We are a Government prepared to be bold.
- We are a Government that delivers.

Mr Speaker, I commend this Budget to the House. I seek leave to have the explanation of the clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### *Clause 1: Short title*

This clause is formal.

##### *Clause 2: Commencement*

This clause provides for the Bill to operate retrospectively to 1 July 2006. Until the Bill is passed, expenditure is financed from appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act*.

##### *Clause 3: Interpretation*

This clause provides relevant definitions.

##### *Clause 4: Issue and application of money*

This clause provides for the issue and application of the sums shown in the schedule to the Bill. Subsection (2) makes it clear that the appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act* is superseded by this Bill.

##### *Clause 5: Application of money if functions or duties of agency are transferred*

This clause is designed to ensure that where Parliament has appropriated funds to an agency to enable it to carry out particular functions or duties and those functions or duties become the responsibility of another agency, the funds may be used by the responsible agency in accordance with Parliament's original intentions without further appropriation.

##### *Clause 6: Expenditure from Hospitals Fund*

This clause provides authority for the Treasurer to issue and apply money from the Hospitals Fund for the provision of facilities in public hospitals.

*Clause 7: Additional appropriation under other Acts*

This clause makes it clear that appropriation authority provided by this Bill is additional to authority provided in other Acts of Parliament, except, of course, in the *Supply Act*.

*Clause 8: Overdraft limit*

This sets a limit of \$50 million on the amount which the Government may borrow by way of overdraft.

**Ms CHAPMAN** secured the adjournment of the debate.

## STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer):** I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to introduce a bill forthwith.

Motion carried.

## STAMP DUTIES (LAND RICH ENTITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer)** obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Stamp Duties Act 1923. Read a first time.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

This Bill seeks to amend Part 4 of the *Stamp Duties Act 1923* ("the Act") in order to restore the integrity of the land rich provisions to ensure the equitable tax treatment of transactions, which in substance relate to the transfer of interests in land.

Part 4 of the Act was enacted in 1990 to counter avoidance schemes whereby revenue was being lost as a result of the practice of artificially placing land in highly leveraged private companies or private unit trusts and then transferring the shares (or units) rather than the land itself to prospective purchasers, thereby taking advantage of financial product rates of duty, rather than higher *ad valorem* conveyance duty rates. These provisions are known colloquially as the land rich provisions.

Without the land rich provisions, it was possible to exploit the rate differential that exists between the conveyance duty charged on conveyances of land (a progressive scale up to 5.50 %) and financial product duty charged on the transfer of shares in unlisted companies (0.60 %) notwithstanding that the underlying control of the real property had changed.

The proposals contained in this Bill have been developed taking into account similar duty regimes applying in other jurisdictions to the acquisition of indirect interests in land and to respond to issues identified by industry in relation to the operation of the current provisions.

Property investment practices have changed significantly since the introduction of the land rich provisions. Sophisticated property investors are increasingly investing in land using indirect means rather than taking a direct holding of land. A number of investment strategies involve the exploitation of the existing land rich provision threshold tests, in order to take advantage of the lower financial product rates of duty.

This Bill seeks to strengthen these anti-avoidance provisions and is happening in conjunction with additional resources being allocated towards identifying avoidance of stamp duty in this area. Should additional legislative measures be identified by RevenueSA through this work, the Government will bring further amendments to this place to ensure equitable tax treatment occurs.

The first measure relates to what is known as the majority interest test.

Currently, a private entity is deemed to be a land rich entity if it owns \$1 million or more of land in South Australia and the value of its entire land holding is eighty percent or more ("the 80% test") of the value of all assets owned by the entity. *Ad valorem* conveyance duty rates are then imposed on a transaction by which a person or a

group of persons acquires an interest of greater than 50% in a land rich entity.

As a means of avoiding triggering the land rich provisions, major investors are no longer taking a majority interest in an indirect land holder but are regularly acquiring 50% of the entity which is a sufficient holding to influence the ownership of the entity in a manner consistent with outright control. It is therefore proposed to amend the majority interest threshold to include interests of 50% as well as interests of greater than 50%.

The second measure relates to the 80% test.

An entity owning \$1 million or more of South Australian land is currently considered to be a land rich entity if the total value of its land holdings is 80% or more of the total value of its assets. This threshold has been manipulated, for example by entities that artificially increase the value of intangible assets.

In order to reduce the scope for such manipulation it is proposed to reduce the percentage of assets required to be land assets to 60% of the total value of the entity's underlying assets.

It is recognised that this may impact adversely on the farm sector which is heavily focussed on land as its major asset. The 80% asset threshold will therefore be retained for primary production entities.

The third measure brings to duty, on an aggregated basis, the acquisition of an interest of 50% or more in a land rich entity that results from a single contract of sale, from a series of such transactions or by persons acting in concert, in order to defeat the threshold tests.

The fourth measure amends the Act to confirm that the land of a private entity will be taken to include anything fixed to the land, including anything that is or purports to be separately owned from the land, unless the Commissioner is satisfied that the separate ownership is not part of an arrangement to avoid the imposition of conveyance rates of duty.

The fifth measure has been introduced in response to industry concern about the inflexible operation of the provisions in determining an entity's land assets for the purposes of the asset threshold. The Commissioner of State Taxation will therefore be given discretion to include contractual rights or interests arising in the normal course of business of an entity for the purposes of the 60% test. This amendment operates to the benefit of taxpayers.

The sixth and final measure provides an offset for duty paid on the acquisition of units in a private unit trust scheme against any land rich duty assessment. This amendment brings the Act into line with equivalent provisions in other jurisdictions and also operates to the benefit of taxpayers.

These changes are broadly consistent with similar provisions already operating in several other interstate jurisdictions.

It is estimated that the measures contained in this Bill will result in the estimated revenue collection in a full year from the land rich provisions increasing by about \$4 million.

I commend this Bill to Honourable Members.

### EXPLANATION OF CLAUSES

#### Part 1—Preliminary

##### 1—Short title

This clause is formal.

##### 2—Commencement

This clause provides that the measure will be taken to have come into operation on 22 September 2006.

##### 3—Amendment provisions

This clause is formal.

#### Part 2—Amendment of *Stamp Duties Act 1923*

##### 4—Amendment of section 91—Interpretation

Section 91 of the *Stamp Duties Act 1923* provides definitions for the purposes of Part 4. This clause substitutes new definitions of the terms *land asset* and *local land asset*. Those terms are to be defined by reference to new section 91A (inserted by clause 5).

The definition of *majority interest*, which defines the term to mean an interest in an entity of more than 50 per cent, is removed. In its place, a definition of *significant interest* is inserted. A significant interest in a private entity is a proportionate interest in the entity of 50 per cent or more. A private entity (that is, a private company or a private unit trust scheme) is a *primary production entity* if the unencumbered value of the entity's underlying local primary production land assets exceeds 50 per cent of the unencumbered value of its total underlying local land assets. A *local primary production land asset* is a local land asset consisting of an interest in land that is used for the business of primary production. (*Business of primary production* is defined in section 2 of the Act.)

**5—Insertion of section 91A**

Under the definition of *land asset* included in new section 91A, a land asset is an interest in land, other than a mortgage, lien or charge or an interest under a warrant or writ. This definition is consistent with the existing definition. However, under the new section, a private entity's interest in land will be taken to include an interest in anything fixed to the land, including anything separately owned from the land unless the Commissioner of State Taxation (the *Commissioner*) is satisfied that the separate ownership is not part of an arrangement to avoid duty. In these circumstances, the Commissioner may determine that a private entity's interest in land did not include an interest in the separately owned property.

The new section defines *local land asset* to mean a land asset consisting of an interest in land in South Australia. This is consistent with the current definition.

**6—Amendment of section 93—Notional interest in assets of related entity**

The amendments made by this clause are consequential on the insertion into Part 4 of the term "significant interest" in lieu of "majority interest".

**7—Amendment of section 94—Land rich entity**

This clause amends the definition of *land rich entity* so that a private entity owning South Australian land valued at \$1m or more is a land rich entity if the total value of its landholdings is 60 per cent or more of the total value the entity's assets. The current threshold of 80 per cent is retained for primary production entities.

Under section 94(2), contractual rights or interests, other than certain specified rights or interests, are not to be taken into account in determining the value of a private entity's assets. As a consequence of the second amendment made by this clause, a contractual right or interest is to be taken into account if the Commissioner is satisfied that it was acquired in the course of the normal business of the entity and not as part of an arrangement to avoid duty payable under Part 4.

**8—Amendment of section 95—General principle of liability to duty**

The amendment made by this clause is consequential on the insertion into Part 4 of the term "significant interest" in lieu of "majority interest".

**9—Insertion of sections 95A and 95B**

New section 95A provides for the aggregation of interests in a land rich entity acquired through associated transactions (see below) that occur on the same day or within 3 years of each other.

An *associated transaction*, in relation to an acquisition of an interest in a land rich entity by a person or group, is an acquisition of an interest in the entity by any person in circumstances in which the persons are acting in concert or in which the acquisitions form, evidence, give effect to or arise from substantially one arrangement, transaction or series of transactions.

Under new section 95B, a *relevant primary production entity* is a primary production entity that would be a land rich entity under section 94(1) but for the fact that the value of its landholdings is less than 80 per cent of the total value of its assets. Section 95B applies to a transaction whereby a person or group acquires or increases a significant interest in a relevant primary production entity if the entity ceases within the period of three years following the transaction to be a

primary production entity. Duty is payable under Part 4 in respect of the transaction as if the entity had not been a primary production entity at the time at which the person or group acquired or increased the interest in the entity.

**10—Amendment of section 96—Value of notional interest acquired as a result of dutiable transaction**

The amendment made by this clause is consequential on the insertion of the term "significant interest" in lieu of "majority interest".

**11—Amendment of section 97—Calculation of duty**

The first amendment made by this clause is consequential on the insertion of the term "significant interest" in lieu of "majority interest".

This clause also amends section 97(5), which provides a duty offset where a person or group acquires or increases a significant interest in a land rich entity through the acquisition of financial products and pays duty on those products. As a consequence of this amendment, a duty offset will also be provided if a significant interest in a land rich entity is acquired or increased through the acquisition of units in a private unit trust scheme and duty has been paid in respect of the acquisition.

**12—Amendment of section 98—Acquisition statement**

This amendment is connected to the insertion of new section 95B (clause 9). Under new section 98(1a), a person or group that acquires or increases an interest in an entity by virtue of a transaction to which section 95B applies is required to lodge a return with the Commissioner. This means that the return is to be lodged where a person or group acquires an interest in a primary production entity that is not a land rich entity at the time of the acquisition, only because the value of its landholdings falls below 80 per cent of the total value of its assets, if the entity ceases within three years of the acquisition to be a primary production entity.

The person or group must lodge the return within two months following the date on which entity ceases to be a primary production entity and must also pay the relevant amount of duty within that period.

**13—Amendment of section 102—Multiple incidences of duty**

The amendment made by this clause is consequential on the insertion into Part 4 of the term "significant interest" in lieu of "majority interest".

**Schedule 1—Transitional provision****1—Transitional provision**

This provision makes it clear that the amendments made by the Act apply only in relation to transactions entered into following the commencement of the provision.

Section 98(1), which requires lodgement of a statement within two months of the date of a dutiable transaction, applies to transactions entered into after the commencement of the provision but before the day on which this Act is assented to by the Governor (the *day of assent*) as if the period of two months referred to in section 98(1) ends two months after the day of assent.

Ms CHAPMAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 3.48 p.m. the house adjourned until Tuesday 26 September at 2 p.m.