

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 28 September 2006

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

AUSTRALIAN TOURISM EXCHANGE

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I move:

That this house congratulates Tourism Australia and the South Australian Tourism Commission on the staging of the Australian Tourism Exchange and urges the South Australian government to increase the funding for tourism in this state.

Tourism in South Australia is a booming \$4 billion industry employing 30 000 people, and there is only one way this industry can go, and that is get bigger and bigger—if it is given the acknowledgment and support it deserves. The Australian Tourism Commission and also the South Australian Tourism Commission were involved in the Australian Tourism Exchange held at the Convention Centre a few months ago. Representatives from just about every tourist organisation in Australia were there and, for those who missed the event, it was an absolutely fantastic display. Everyone concerned should be congratulated not only on the quality of each individual display but also on the way in which the whole exchange was organised. Literally thousands of overseas visitors—the buyers of tourism products, the agents, the agents' representatives and government representatives—came to South Australia to see the whole tourism exchange and view all the products available in Australia. However, we also had a bit of a captive audience while they were here, and we were able to show them, as well as allow them to experience, the delights of South Australia and to leave the state realising that South Australia really is a place that they should be recommending to their clients.

It was delightful to speak to the Indians and Americans, and I also spoke to some Jamaicans. Every one of the representatives I spoke to (and they came from all over the world) were so enthusiastic about getting clients to come not only to Australia but, more particularly, to South Australia. The Americans said that they send people to the big three—that is, the rock, the reef and the Opera House—but people may not know that No. 4 is Kangaroo Island. Unfortunately, while Kangaroo Island is very well known, the number of people visiting the island is not what it could possibly be, given the right development. I think the federal government should look at subsidising the passage across to Kangaroo Island as part of the highway system, and I know the member for Finniss has spoken about that previously.

The Americans told me that they send people to the big three but that, after coming to South Australia, there was no way they could ignore what this state has to offer. At Glenelg, where we have 3 million local and interstate visitors a year, we have Steve Waite's dolphin experience, which is the best dolphin experience in Australia—money back guaranteed. It is better than Monkey Mia and Port Douglas; it is the best in the world. I had a bit of a smile just recently when they were talking on television about the range of flora and fauna in South Australia being better than that on the Barrier Reef, and it certainly is. We have more navigable islands than the Whitsundays, and we have more hours of sunlight than the Gold Coast. South Australia really is a gem, and everything should be done to support tourism here.

The Tourism Exchange goes around from state to state and capital to capital, and we hope to have it here on a regular basis. The only problem we have is that the Convention Centre is not big enough, and I look forward to working with its new chief executive on expanding the centre, as the convention industry is a huge part of the tourism industry in South Australia, and we need to continue to develop what is a fantastic facility.

The problem is that South Australian tourism prospects are not looking really bright, and the government should be looking very closely at revisiting what is happening. I was able to get from the federal minister, Fran Bailey, some key points on what is happening in South Australia. She is a very enthusiastic supporter of tourism not only federally but also in South Australia. The 'Where the bloody hell are you' campaign has worked exceptionally well and, with campaigns like that which grab the attention, we can only look forward to more people coming to Australia.

Certainly, the minister acknowledged that international tourism to South Australia is increasing, but the bottom line is that there was a significant down trend in 2004-05 in both Adelaide and regional tourism. In fact, when you look at the actual dollar drop, it is quite a dramatic trend. It was a drop of \$260 million in 2004-05. That is over a quarter of a billion dollars in total visitor expenditure. I am looking forward to seeing the 2005-06 figures fairly shortly. The drop in regional spending in that time was \$175 million, and the drop in metro spending was \$84 million. So, the regions suffered twice as much as the city from that drop. Regional expenditure and marketing have to be looked at, and I know that the minister is cognisant of that. I just hope that this government puts its money where its mouth is.

In South Australia, in 2005 the total visitor expenditure decreased by 6.5 per cent to \$3.7 billion from a top of \$4 billion. It is a huge industry but, nevertheless, we were the second worst performing state after Tasmania. The percentage change in South Australia was worse compared with the rest of Australia in several categories, including day and overnight travel and international visitors, and for most expenditure categories, except day trip expenditure.

The need to foster the Tourism Exchange and tourism in South Australia cannot be overemphasised. I hope that the organisers of the Australian Tourism Exchange, the federal Australian Tourism Commission and the South Australian Tourism Commission (with Bill Spurr as its head, who does a fabulous job) continue to get support from the federal and state governments. Certainly, Queensland's display was absolutely remarkable. I understand that Tasmania has increased its spend on tourism to be equivalent to that of New Zealand. It was way at the bottom with visitor expenditure, but it has taken note and is putting big dollars into tourism marketing. I hope that this government takes notice of that.

Recently, I spoke about the need to recognise tourism as part of a bigger synergy of industries—what I call the 'experience' industry. We should be marketing South Australia as the place where you can have a fantastic experience, because there is no doubt about that. With the experience industry, we can build on the synergy between art, culture, sport and, of course, tourism, and there are so many other areas that could be involved. When you look at the thousands of small businesses involved in the industry, it is a huge part of South Australia. It is probably bigger than mining and motor vehicles put together. I know that mining is going to be big and that the revenue will be huge but, depending on commodity prices, the returns to the state will

vary. A number of jobs will be created—and I understand that we are talking about up to 23 000 at Roxby Downs by 2012.

Thousands are employed in the agricultural industry, the grower industry, but unfortunately that is open to the vagaries of the weather and commodity prices. However, the big growth area and the huge industry potential is in the experience industry—the tourism industry, sport, art and culture. That is the industry we need to be fostering in South Australia.

We saw a fantastic example of what can be done and what is possible by working nationally through the Australian Tourism Exchange. We saw what the states are doing. South Australia had a very professional display. The operators to whom I spoke were thoroughly enjoying themselves and they were very proud of their product. They work very hard, although some of them are doing it tough. One place about which I am concerned is Kangaroo Island. It is well known, and it is fourth as far as being a recognisable tourism destination in Australia. Unfortunately, it does not get the tourists it deserves. The tourist operators on the island are struggling and we need to ensure that we focus on maximising its exposure so that we get more tourists and more bang for our buck.

The Australian Tourism Exchange was able to focus on both individuals and states. I congratulate the federal minister Fran Bailey. Tim Fischer was there, and everyone who has ever had anything to do with Tim Fischer as a lobbyist for the tourism industry knows he is one of the most enthusiastic supporters of tourism in South Australia. Of course, Bill Spurr and the South Australian Tourism Commission should be congratulated for their organisation; and Pieter van der Hoeven (the now retired chief executive of the Adelaide Convention Centre) who has been replaced by Alec Gilbert (who is also very experienced). The federal government, the state government and the Adelaide Convention Centre did a brilliant job to present the tourism exchange. I do not want anyone to be in any doubt whatsoever: it was something of which everyone in this state should be proud. I hope that next time it comes to South Australia all parliamentarians will attend to see the potential for the tourist industry in Australia, in particular in South Australia.

This weekend I will be visiting the eco huts at Rawnsley Park. Tony and Julie Smith have developed these huts, which are world-standard five-star accommodation opened by Tim Fischer a few months ago. I understand that the minister has stayed in these eco huts, and I am sure she would be enthusiastic in promoting them as a typical example of what can be done in South Australia. We have the food, the wine, the aquaculture and the sites: South Australia is an experience that should never be missed. I congratulate everyone who was able to maximise the opportunity of the Australian Tourism Exchange for the fabulous job they did.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson): I move to amend the motion as follows:

Leave out all words after 'staging of the' and insert in lieu thereof '2006 Australian Tourism Exchange in South Australia'.

The state government funded the Australian Tourism Exchange by an extra \$2 million; and that money was provided by the South Australian Tourism Commission. Therefore, the motion incorporates two distinct issues: the successful staging of the 2006 Australian Tourism Exchange and the level of state government funding provided in support of the tourism industry. If we are lucky enough, we again

may host the Australian Tourism Exchange in South Australia—and I am sure we would receive bipartisan support for that.

It was a wonderful, fantastic event and people from all over the world enjoyed visiting places such as Willunga and McLaren Vale in my electorate. The reports I received were that it was fantastic. If we are fortunate enough—and this event comes around every five or six years—increased funding to the tune of the \$2 million we put in for this year's event could be repeated. Hosting the Australian Tourism Exchange was an important and successful event for the South Australian tourism industry. The motion to congratulate the South Australian Tourism Commission and Tourism Australia for their contribution to its success is supported.

The South Australian government has seen the importance of tourism and for the past 4½ years has continued to fund the strategic development of the tourism industry. It is about finding successful partners and delivering world-class events as we further cement our reputation as a great state for tourism.

Events like the University Games are on now. People getting around the streets, particularly after leaving here at about 11 o'clock at night, will have noticed that there are hundreds of young people on the streets for the Australian University Games. It is events like this which bring not only lots of tourists into South Australia who might not ordinarily come but also their dollars. They spend thousands of dollars in South Australia.

Dr McFetridge interjecting:

Mr BIGNELL: I am talking about individuals. I do not think the university students are as rich as you, Duncan. I think they are spending thousands, not millions.

Dr McFetridge interjecting:

Mr BIGNELL: Bulk up, you are right. If they work hard, that is right. If they go to vet school I am sure they will come out the other side like the member for Morphett, after a lot of hard work, hanging out with dogs and cats and other animals. You do a great job: all creatures great and small; a friend of the furry people. We have events like the Australian University Games, and next year we will be hosting the World Police & Fire Games. Extra money is going into that, not just from tourism but also from other government departments.

The South Australian government is supporting tourism in this state. It is a great state, and we do have a wonderful tourism industry. By getting people here such as the university students this week and by getting people from around the world through the Australian Tourism Exchange, we are showcasing not only our wonderful state but also the fine food and the fine wine which are in abundance in the seat of Mawson. We are really showing off our state. Other events, such as the very successful Tour Down Under, are growing each year. It is not just a sporting event; it is also an event that people can participate in as tourists or as bike riders. It is a fantastic industry and it is one where people are willing to spend a lot of money on good bikes and on travelling here and participating by riding the route that the world's top cyclists will ride. The Tour Down Under is an event that is growing each year. The government is putting money in to all these events. The suggestion has been made that we should put \$2 million into an event that we will not host for another few years and, when it is decided that we host it again, it will not be our decision. We will be out there hunting for it, but it is a national body that will decide when South Australia is lucky enough to host the event again.

A brilliant blend of great food and wine, spectacular events, well preserved heritage, warming winter sunshine and easy living impressed the who's who of the international tourism industry when they were here in June for the Australian Tourism Exchange 06. International travel wholesalers had a taste of our freshest seafood, quality confectionery, world famous pie floaters and garden fresh regional produce, while sipping on some of the world's best wines from our iconic wine producing regions. I have not mentioned for a day that McLaren Vale did win the Jimmy Watson again this year and the Hyatt/Advertiser award for the best wine in South Australia.

More than 400 Australian Tourism Exchange delegates ventured out of Adelaide to all corners of the state, enjoying the friendly hospitality, spectacular landscapes, native wildlife, unique heritage and great weather of South Australia's regional areas. Highlights included the Adelaide Hills, the world heritage listed Naracoorte Caves, houseboating on the Murray River, McLaren Vale cellar door tasting and other food and wine experiences. The member for Schubert actually had 'Barossa Valley' here, so I will mention that delegates went to the Barossa—and it does have good wines. It is coming second to McLaren Vale at the moment, but there are some good wines up there. We want to see the wine industry as a whole prosper in this state.

Delegates also experienced the rugged coastlines, unique wildlife and the tranquillity of Kangaroo Island—a place dear to the heart of the member for Finnis—the spectacular natural beauty of Baird Bay, participated in a penguin tour on Granite Island, and stayed at an underground hotel at Coober Pedy. The Great Australian Outback Cattle Drive also featured, with a mini-drive taking place along its new route, the Oodnadatta Track. International wholesalers and a film crew from the Discovery Channel had the opportunity to saddle up like drovers and move the cattle down the track. They also experienced the vivid blue skies, the stunning expanse of the outback and some true outback characters that cannot be invented; they are just out there and they are wonderful people to meet.

The Australian Tourism Exchange injected about \$10 million into the local economy, and resulted in about 13 000 visitor nights in Adelaide. The Australian Hotels Association (SA Branch) market report shows that the occupancy for June 2006 was 74 per cent. This is the highest occupancy recorded for the month of June since the Australian Hotels Association began compiling these statistics in 2003. In the long term, the Australian Tourism Exchange 2006 will be instrumental in increasing international visitor numbers to South Australia and, in turn, increasing visitor spend and employment across regional South Australia. That is a very important aspect. It is creating jobs in the regions out of tourism.

We have beautiful things to show off, fantastic things to eat and drink—great foods and wines—and, if we can attract people here, more jobs will be created. We have seen this happen in the McLaren Vale and Willunga areas, the Barossa, the Coonawarra and the West Coast. There is some considerable spending going on by the locals in Port Lincoln on some fantastic new facilities. A person can visit Port Lincoln and experience many things, whether it is fishing or looking at the aquaculture industry or driving to Whalers Way, with its rugged coastline. One would go a long way in the world to find places more spectacular than those found on Eyre Peninsula. We really have fantastic natural features in this

state and, the more people we can attract to come here and experience them, the better.

The good thing about these events is that people come here for that purpose and then say, 'Look at the great things you have here in South Australia.' They then go back (an example is university students here for the University Games) to Sydney or Melbourne and talk the state up and relate their experiences here. We will see the same thing with the World Police and Fire Games and other events, and AME (Australian Major Events) needs to be congratulated for its involvement and partnering with sporting groups or other organisations—

Dr McFetridge: The horse trials.

Mr BIGNELL: The member for Morphett mentioned the horse trials. I am a former sports journalist and a friend of Wendy Schaeffer and Gill Rolton, and I was in Sydney during the Olympics when Australia again won. The horse trials are an important sporting event, but I do not know whether, when one looks at it as a tourism drawcard, it delivers the same results as many other events. I think the figures are about 700 tourists coming in for the horse trials. Maybe the horse trials event is not the right vehicle for tourism, but that is not to say that possibly the people involved should be making inquiries at other outlets to look for sponsorship or financial support. But perhaps tourism is not the right one in the case of the horse trials. The Tourism Commission and Australian Major Events want to get the most bang for their buck, and maybe the horse trials are not the right mix, but that is not to say that some other arm of government, or maybe the commercial sector, such as vets incorporated, or some organisation such as that, could get behind this event and sponsor it, because it is a great event. I have attended the Adelaide three day event many times since its inception in the Adelaide Parklands, and I also used to attend the one at Gawler. It is a great event.

Time expired.

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss): I am probably one of few, if any—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Doubled-breasted jackets should be done up; they should not be allowed to hang open.

Mr PENGILLY: Hello, Mick has arrived at work! I am probably one of the few, if any, members in this place who has worked in the Australian Tourism Exchange. I have worked on two occasions, and I can tell members that it is not an event; it is extremely hard work for the days when one is there. One has an early start in the morning, there are appointments that run for three or four minutes and then people move on and, by the end of it, one is extremely exhausted. Unfortunately, given the information that I have received from within the trade, I think it is unlikely that we will get this event back in Adelaide in the foreseeable future. The Queensland government, in particular, pours enormous amounts of money into keeping the Australian Tourism Exchange in Brisbane whenever it possibly can. It was held in Perth last year, and I think I am correct in saying that it is to be held in Melbourne next year. The Eastern States seem to have something of a mortgage on the ability to attract the Australian Tourism Exchange. About 1 200 buyers come in from overseas, and there is a host of—

Dr McFetridge: It was 2 000 this time.

Mr PENGILLY: I stand corrected; it was 2 000 this time. When I was there it was 1 200. There are businesses from all over Australia in their booths. I do not support the amendment because, quite frankly, it is a thinly veiled attempt to

disguise the fact that the government is cutting marketing money to tourism in South Australia—and that is something that we just cannot afford. The tourism industry is an incredible employer in this state and, as the member for Mawson correctly implied, it keeps many people employed in regional South Australia, and long may it do so.

I cannot see any point whatsoever in removing that part of the member for Morphet's motion, to simply congratulate Tourism Australia and the South Australian Tourism Commission on this year's ATE. We need to inject more funding into tourism. We just have to have it. At the presentation I attended this morning I heard the real details of where South Australia is heading economically from an independent economic analyst, and it frightened the life out of me. I cannot see that cutting funding to tourism will do any good at all. I do not support the member for Mawson's amendment, and I believe that the motion that the member for Morphet put forward and spoke to at length is most appropriate in the circumstances. I will be voting against the amendment.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphet): I cannot support the amended motion for one reason and one reason alone. As I said, the tourism industry generates \$4 billion in South Australia, and the 30 000 people employed in that industry operate hundreds of small to medium-sized enterprises. They pay stamp duty, they pay land tax, and they pay payroll tax, and they bring a large amount into the turnover of money in South Australia—as I said, the spend is put at about \$4 billion. To say that the government should not be spending more money on tourism is laughable.

Greg Smith, the Treasurer's financial analyst, came in and looked at cuts (he has only half the cuts he recommended), and I am of the clear understanding that his attitude is that the government should not be funding tourism. I find that absolutely laughable. The last part of the motion simply says that the government should increase funding—that is all it says. It says no more than that. I am not being super critical of the government because you can only do what you can do—although in my opinion (and the opinion of many others) this government is not doing as much as it could. Leave it as it is without the amendment, because that emphasises the fact that we do need to spend more and do need to attract the Australian Tourism Exchange back here. We need to build on the tourism industry in South Australia, and the only way to do that is by increasing tourism marketing funding and by supporting the South Australian Tourism Commission and its efforts in South Australia. I will not be supporting the amendment.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

MOSELEY SQUARE CAMERA SYSTEM

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphet): I move:

That this house congratulates the federal government on funding the new CCTV camera system in Moseley Square at Glenelg and calls on the state government to fund its full-time monitoring.

This follows on from my previous motion about tourism. Anyone who has not been down to Glenelg to see what is happening down there is really missing out. We get 3 million interstate and overseas visitors a year, and it is undoubtedly a fabulous place. I am quite happy to boast to people that I have 106 restaurants and cafes within walking distance of my office. I should remind the Treasurer, though, that I have eight weeks left on my office lease and I have yet to be told where my new office will be.

There has been some history of antisocial behaviour at Glenelg. It has improved with the increased patrolling by the police, who do a fantastic job. The City of Holdfast Bay has put millions of dollars literally into employing private security firms—about \$250 000 a year. The police to whom I talk regularly are getting to know the local business operators. It is really good leather work policing. They talk to people; they are visible. That is great but, unfortunately, the police station is a shopfront police station and it shuts at 10. I have no problem with that. I do not expect the police station to be at Moseley Square, which is some of the most expensive real estate in Australia now, but I do expect that, when the police are not physically patrolling the area, it is monitored by CCTV.

We have heard the Premier, after attending COAG, say in this place how important CCTV is. They are spending \$4.5 million on CCTV at AAMI Stadium. This is a good thing, but it is empty for a huge part of the year. So, the CCTV cameras are watching the sparrows, the magpies, the seagulls and occasionally the Crows. CCTV is being installed at the Bay, but it will not be monitored on a full-time basis. It will be monitored by the Glenelg Police Station when the police officers are there and they are not walking the beat. It will be recorded, great, but after the fact. I do not know exactly how much it would cost, but it would not be a huge amount—we are not talking millions of dollars or even hundreds of thousands of dollars—to install some extra switching which is all that would be required to link the CCTV cameras at Moseley Square through to SAFECOM which monitors Rundle Mall, Hindley Street and other places 24 hours a day.

This would enable them to monitor the different screens and, if an incident is reported, they can flick across to the appropriate screen 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year—not just shopfront hours. I cannot remember the name of the project, but the government's project in relation to Moseley Square is a good thing. It has put in about \$1.5 million to enable the tram stop to be moved. The redevelopment of Moseley Square is fantastic. The Beach-house employs 160 young people. It is not Magic Mountain: it is much better than that. Peter Rimington and Rebecca, his wife, have put in many hours developing this \$15 million—

Mr Bignell interjecting:

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have not been on the water slides yet. On the weekend I said to Peter that I could not wait to go on the water slides. I said that the Premier can come on the two for one slide with me. Peter and Rebecca have done a fantastic job. Anyone who has not visited the area should do so. It is world leading stuff. We have the best dodgem cars in the southern hemisphere. Perhaps the member for Mawson can come down and we can have a go on that. I emphasise the fact that families are visiting the area and businesses are operating in the area. They are operating late and, unfortunately, you do get some antisocial behaviour. We have a transport hub now. As I said, last weekend 23 000 people participated in the City to Bay. It was packed all day, absolutely packed. You could not get on a tram in the evening because there were so many people.

We do need to have an extra eye in the sky, so to speak, with CCTV, particularly late at night, so that people can feel secure and know that anyone who behaves antisocially will be caught by the CCTV cameras, and the fine police officers of South Australia, particularly those working at the Bay, will be able to do their job more easily and catch these idiots who do disrupt the lives of others. We all recognise that CCTV is

a part of our lives now. I think in England there are approximately 4.5 million CCTV cameras. That is about one for every 80 people; they are everywhere. I have no problem having my face on CCTV, because I believe that I conduct myself in a manner that is an example to most people around the place, but these people who behave antisocially deserve to be pinged. Hopefully, they will be deterred from committing antisocial acts in the first place but, if they do, they will be caught by South Australia's finest.

It would take only a little extra money—probably just tens of thousands of dollars. Hindley Street and Rundle Mall are already being monitored, as I say, so you would not be looking at extra staffing. It is just a matter of installing a couple more switches so that they can flick to the appropriate screens to see what is happening at Moseley Square in the middle of the night. That is not going to cost the government a lot, and I just wish it would do something about it. The Premier recognises the importance of CCTV, we recognise it down at the bay, the business owners and the police recognise it; and we just hope that the government does something about it.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I just cannot let the member for Morphett blow his electorate's bag without getting up and following him, because he does it every Thursday.

Mrs Geraghty: What about tourism at Enfield?

Mr RAU: Well, look, I would like to. At the risk of being ruled out of order, I could talk about the parks, I could talk about the Bradken foundry, and I could talk about places that people do want to go to.

The Hon. R.B. Such: What about the local member's tourism sites?

Mr RAU: Tourism sites at Enfield. I do not think that that is relevant to this motion, unfortunately, because I could spend a long time on Enfield.

Mr Bignell: Have you been on those slippery dips at the park?

Mr RAU: They are very good. Last week, the member for Morphett came here and gave another one of these sort of gung ho, enthusiastic speeches about Morphett. I know that I am risking being quoted in another one of his pamphlets by saying this, but he does it every week. When he is actually congratulating the federal government for putting in a couple of tiny little cameras, and then the week before he is hooking into the state government for not spending for \$6 million on a local government bridge in the middle of his electorate, I reckon he might have his priorities a bit wrong.

He is still loving his electorate, and his electorate is loving him for it; I can tell. But, the bottom line is that I think that he should reverse it. My suggestion to the member for Morphett would be that, next time we meet, have another motion in, by all means, about the 165 cafes and the boulevard from which you cannot see the beach any more because somebody built a great big edifice on it, and talk about all that stuff, by all means. But why does he not say to the state government, 'Give us a camera in Mosley Square, and we will chase the federal government for the \$6 million bridge that the local government authorities should be building'?

I have some shocking news. If you reckon the state government is flush with money, you ain't seen nothing yet. Mr Costello has money coming out of his ears. A colleague of the member for Morphett from South Australia, Senator Minchin, I believe, has a very strong influence on these matters. He is reported in the newspaper as being very close to the Prime Minister. I understand that he is Minister for

Finance. He is a person who is able to fix all things by just snapping his fingers. I am sure that (and I am inclined to move this myself, but I would rather give the member the privilege of doing it), in about two weeks time if we called upon Senator Minchin to cough up the dough so that we can get that bridge fixed in the member for Morphett's electorate to help the local government people then, if he wants any more TV cameras—if he wants one down Jetty Road or something like that—by all means, bring it here; let the state government have a crack at it.

The Hon. R.B. Such: What about one facing the ocean because you can't see it?

Mr RAU: Why not? Let us have a big plasma screen so that we can see the ocean at the end of Jetty Road with a camera on top of that great big edifice that means that people cannot look at things. Again, obviously, I congratulate the member on his great work on behalf of his constituents but, with respect, I think he has it completely wrong. He should be asking the federal government to do the big projects. By all means, consult with the various ministers here about cameras in different spots, and I am sure that he will get a very good hearing.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

COUNCIL FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): I move:

That this house applauds the initiative of the state and territory governments in establishing the Council of the Federation and expresses its concern at the frequent incursions of the federal government into areas of the state constitutional responsibility and the use by the federal government of threatening financial penalties to force state government compliance.

The role and viability of the states are now under constant attack from the federal government almost on a daily basis, announcing yet another incursion into areas of state responsibility.

As recently as Tuesday, the Prime Minister announced the elevation of Malcolm Turnbull to head a new office of water resources. It is generally accepted that the federal government will now attempt to take over not only the management of the Murray-Darling but also all metropolitan and regional water supplies, which are all areas of state responsibility. It is within this context that I applaud the formation of the Council of the Federation. The council provides a mechanism by which the steady shift of power towards the federal government can be arrested and, in time, hopefully brought back to the balance that the authors of the constitution intended.

The council will meet two to three times a year and will become a clearing house for ideas and policy formulation. Presently, discussions and ideas sharing between the states is undertaken on an ad hoc, informal basis. The council is designed to give these important interactions a formal structure under a small secretariat based in Canberra. In brief, the functions of the council, as they have been spelt out, are:

1. to find the best common position amongst states and territories on COAG-based agreements with the commonwealth;
2. to reach joint agreements on cross-jurisdictional issues where a commonwealth imprimatur is unnecessary or has not been forthcoming;
3. to develop better procedures for the states and territories to share and exchange information and identify best practice policies and programs; and

4. to anticipate future developments within the federal system, including decisions by the commonwealth government that might have a significant impact on the states and territories.

In essence, the council will take control of the national agenda and areas that fall clearly within the constitutional orbit of the states but require cross-border solutions. I congratulate the Premier on being unanimously appointed the inaugural chair of this historic new council. His appointment recognises the key role he played in bringing the states and territories together under the umbrella of this new council.

Federation is worth defending, and worth defending strongly, because it offers many advantages to the Australian political landscape and the people of South Australia, and I do not believe the community appreciates the splendid constitutional legacy bequeathed us by our founding fathers or the fact that it is being slowly whittled away by the actions of the current and previous federal governments. Federation provides Australian citizens with the advantage of small states while enveloping them in the protection offered by a larger state. Small states are inherently more democratic and lead to more accountable and accessible government than larger states because every voice is heard louder when there are fewer voices. These observations are as true today as when they were first made by Plato and Aristotle over 2 000 years ago. State governments proffer these benefits while the federal government provides the size necessary to protect Australia from most of the vagaries of global economic and financial forces.

Federation also guarantees a division of political power. A division of power is fundamental to all good political systems because it provides a refuge for citizens from the excesses and blunders of any one set of policy makers. According to the United States founding fathers, federation provides, and I quote from the 51st Federalist Paper:

... a double security to the rights of people, because the different governments control each other and at the same time will be controlled by itself.

The authors of the Australian Constitution shared this view and, to this end, ensured that neither the commonwealth nor the state governments were given the power to abolish or destroy the other. In the Australian context, the division of political power guaranteed by federation is probably even more essential than in the US because there is no formal division between the executive and legislative branches of the federal government since the executive is drawn from the legislature.

Broadly speaking, the Australian Constitution gives responsibility to the federal government for defence, foreign affairs and trade, post and telecommunications, and social security. State governments are responsible for health, education, law and order, transport and housing. This is not a comprehensive list, but the point to be drawn is that much of the duplication that currently exists results from federal incursions into state jurisdictions.

The Australian Federation was based on the American model of defining the powers of the central body and leaving the rest to the states. Under section 51 of the Australian Constitution, the powers actually allocated to the central government are surprisingly limited. The federal government in both these constitutions was envisaged as having a minor role compared to the states. Indeed, Thomas Jefferson observed that the United States federal government was nothing more than the American department of foreign affairs.

Here in Australia there was no federal health minister or department until 1921, and no dedicated education minister until Gorton assumed the portfolio in the Holt ministry in 1966. In the current political landscape this may seem astonishing, but the constitution affords no direct responsibility to the commonwealth for health or education. These federal ministers are constitutionally supernumerary, yet today their departments have become monoliths. Tony Harris, a former New South Wales auditor-general, observed in the *Financial Review* earlier this year that the federal government has the largest health and the largest education departments in the country, despite not caring for a single hospital patient nor teaching a single student.

The greatest factor in the steady progression towards centralisation has been the vertical fiscal imbalance of the Australian Federation, which is the greatest of any political system in the world. In simpler language, vertical fiscal imbalance means that the federal government has a far greater ability to raise money than state governments, yet has less constitutionally assigned spending responsibilities than the states; greater taxation powers but less constitutionally defined areas of spending responsibility.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

Mr O'BRIEN: This vertical fiscal imbalance increased dramatically with the introduction of the national income tax in 1942, and you're right, it was the Curtin government—it was a war-time measure—at which time the states were stripped of their power to raise income tax. In the words of Sir Robert Menzies:

The practical effect of all of this has been in the revenue field where the commonwealth has established an overlordship.

This was never the intention of the drafters of the constitution. Clearly, if the states have greater spending responsibility but fewer fundraising abilities than the commonwealth, the states must rely on a transfer of funds from the commonwealth. Federal governments have long underfunded the states, and increasingly funds have been provided as specific-purpose payments more commonly known as tied grants, which are dependent upon certain qualifications being met. Tied grants are provided under section 96 of the constitution, but the wording of section 96 clearly indicates that this was only ever intended to provide a means to transfer funds in extreme circumstances where teething problems might arise in the first few years of Federation. Under the Howard government the conditions under which funds through section 96 are provided have become far more rigid and have often included the insistence that any funding is matched by state governments.

In effect, this ties up even more state government money in the implementation of commonwealth policy in areas where the commonwealth has no constitutional mandate. Let me provide an example: when he was federal education minister, Brendan Nelson threatened to withdraw federal education funding unless South Australia adopted the common reporting policy. Part of this policy was the insistence that students are graded according to their class quartile. This idea was widely condemned. Professor Patrick Griffen, an expert on student assessment from Melbourne University, claimed the plan dated from 'at least the 1950s'. Professor Griffen considered that Nelson's idea merited an F.

The idea of class quartile grading could only come from a minister who presides over a department that has no experience or consequently any expertise in actually running

schools. On a purely practical level, most classes in South Australia are too small for a quartile grade to have any real meaning, as anyone with experience of statistics is aware of the dangers of statistical analysis based on small sample groups.

If the group is too small, the conclusions that are drawn are totally misleading. Here we have a federal minister using federal funding as a blunt club to implement a totally ill-conceived, ill-considered and impractical policy directive in an area in which he has no constitutional responsibility. Under Howard, the federal government has used tied grants to jointly fund programs for three to four years before withdrawing funding altogether and leaving state governments carrying the can.

Some examples of this are the Dental Services Program and the Community for Children Program. By no means are these bad programs, but they are examples of the commonwealth's using vertical fiscal imbalance to force state governments to implement commonwealth policy in areas of state responsibility. Last year former National Party senator John Stone observed:

Few things have been more dismaying since the last federal election than the swelling tide of ignorant centralism rushing out of Canberra, whether it be in the fields of health, education, infrastructure, rorts for rural roads, or whatever. Even the Prime Minister has not been immune from this disease, while the immature mouthings of the ministers for health and education (Messrs Abbott and Nelson) have been nothing short of appalling.

Under the direction taken by the Howard government, state governments run the risk of becoming simply governments of implementation—mere branch offices of the federal government. In fact, as recently as last month, the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, indicated that he very much saw the future role of the states as little more than deliverers of federal policy—large service delivery agents for the commonwealth government. Were this to happen it would defeat the main purpose of having a federation that is guaranteeing a division of power and the democratic benefits of smaller political entities which I outlined earlier.

John Howard has often claimed that the GST was the most important federalist breakthrough since 1942. While the GST has provided increased finances for the states, it replaced a raft of state taxes and has consequently increased the vertical fiscal imbalance of our Federation. Furthermore, the proportion of tied grants to total grants offered to the states by the commonwealth has increased since the introduction of the GST. A solution to vertical fiscal imbalance and the damage it is causing to our Federation needs to be found.

This could be achieved by passing over to the states revenue-raising functions currently performed by the commonwealth government as occurred with payroll tax, or finding arrangements whereby unconditional funding arrangements are guaranteed to the states by the commonwealth. I hope that the new Council of the Federation places the issue of vertical fiscal imbalance very much to the fore of its initial deliberations. The ability of the states to raise revenue must match our constitutional spending responsibilities, as is the case with most other healthy well-functioning federations.

I know that the New South Wales government is of this view. In a major study titled 'Australia's Inter-Governmental Fiscal Arrangements', the New South Wales' report highlights the international trend to decentralisation (the devolution of power from Westminster to Wales and Scotland being the most obvious examples), and calls for the federal fiscal

system to be open to comprehensive review and capable of structural change. The fate of the states depends on it.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I congratulate the honourable member on bringing this motion forward, because he is speaking a language which is like music to my ears. I have been saying things along this line for nearly five years now—it seems longer, but for a long time. It never ceases to amaze me, as no doubt it does the member for Napier, that some members of the opposition—who, individually, are fine human beings—are unable to see what is obvious. The party of which they are members used to stand up for the rights of regional Australia and for the states.

I distinctly remember a referendum proposal several years ago when Lionel Bowen was still attorney-general. He put up a raft of provisions suggesting, I think, retirement ages for judges and recognition of local government (God help us; just as well that did not get up), and one or two others. I distinctly remember Peter Reith running the campaign to destroy that referendum which, except for the local government one, perhaps, contained questions that were inane and harmless. He destroyed it on the basis of the Canberra octopus—the octopus coming out from Canberra with these outrageous referendum proposals, such as that judges should retire at 70, it would destroy the fabric of our society, and the Canberra octopus must be stopped. Well, goodness me; what do we have happening now? If there was a consistent bone in his body Peter Reith would be hysterical, but I doubt whether there is and probably he is not. He is enjoying his new job, wherever it is. Isn't he trade commissioner to somewhere, or on the EU, or something? He has some very well-paid stipend anyway—good luck to him.

The point is that this federal government—this so-called Liberal National Party federal government—is the most centralist, bombastic and overbearing government Australia has ever had. The member for Napier is absolutely right when he explains that when federation was originally conceived and put together nobody had the slightest notion or the inclination to have a commonwealth government dealing with the states the way this government now does. That was never contemplated. The commonwealth was supposed to be there to help deal with things that could be better dealt with as a nation, such as weights and measures, defence, foreign relations, beacons, buoys, etc.

Mrs Redmond: And marriage.

Mr RAU: Marriage—all the big ones.

Mr Venning: The only money I can get in my electorate is from the federal government. You ignore us.

Mr RAU: The member for Schubert says that the only money he can get in his electorate is from the federal government. When I went to school that would have elicited a response from the teacher: 'QED', which I think means something in Latin—quod erat demonstrandum. In other words, it proves the point. They are the only ones with any money. The member for Napier spent 15 minutes telling us that they are the only ones with any money. That is why they are the only ones with the chequebook.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: We don't waste it on stupid tramlines. What about the Barossa hospital?

Mr RAU: The member for Frome says they do not waste it on tramlines. My goodness! I will tell you this: they would waste it on tramlines if they were in a National Party seat anywhere along the east coast, even if there was not a tram to go on them. They build dams where there is no water. They build bridges where there are no roads. So, do not,

please, have a chop about a tramline down King William Street.

Talking about people wasting money, the federal Nationals were building things up and down the east coast with the slush fund they had. It keeps bringing me back to that horrible film starring Kevin Costner, *Field of Dreams*—‘Build it and they will come.’ Build a bridge somewhere and the roads will come to meet it; build a dam somewhere and the rain will come to fill it. My goodness! I will go back to the very important point made by the member for Schubert. Why do they have all the money? The answer is clear if you read very carefully what the member for Napier had to say. In 1942 the taxing powers were taken from the states. Later in that decade there was an argument about whether the states could get them back. They were told they could have them back. But the political problem was that they would have to be imposed on top of the commonwealth tax take, which was already at the maximum level anyone could tolerate.

We still have a tax power here to impose income tax. Wouldn't that look good in the budget: the only state in Australia to impose an income tax on top of all the other charges we have? Wouldn't that look marvellous on our CV when we are trying to attract people here to work? This is a very serious issue. It is a serious issue about money. It is also a serious issue about policy, and I cannot let this debate go without coming back to my old favourite: national competition policy. Isn't this fabulous? We have a couple of egg-heads sitting in an office in Canberra who reckon they know more about barley than the honourable member for Schubert does. They reckon it is good for him that he does not have a single desk marketing arrangement, because they have a computer where they have pressed four buttons and asked the question, ‘Do you like the single desk?’ The computer comes back with a response of ‘no’, and that is good enough for them. There is a presumption that it is crook. It must be crook because it is there and, unless you can displace this presumption with evidence—and God knows how you would do that—then that goes.

Look what this same crowd have done with the national Wheat Marketing Authority, which was at one time safely in government hands. You privatise it or corporatise it—whatever you call it; put a bunch of cowboys in charge of it—and now who is suffering?

Mr Venning: Everybody!

Mr RAU: Exactly. The only people who did well was that funny trucking company in Jordan. The commonwealth government is at the moment a bully—a fiscal bully and a policy bully. I am glad the Treasurer is here because he loves me talking about this. The commonwealth is very guilty of bullying the states in relation to national competition policy. We had 20, 30 or 40 bills go through this place in the past couple of years and, when I ask why a bill is coming through, they say, ‘National competition policy’. Do not touch the pharmacies or newsagents because the Prime Minister has put his protective hand over them—they are to be left alone.

Mr Bignell: Tentacle.

Mr RAU: Tentacle, I beg your pardon. Do not touch the pharmacies. I do not necessarily disagree with him because even the Prime Minister is right occasionally and he may well be right about pharmacies and newsagents. Back to the main point. I look forward to the member for Schubert getting up and giving a robust and rousing cheer for the member for Napier for bringing forward this very useful and positive motion. I congratulate all those involved in assembling this body and I hope, on a more sober level, that it turns out to be

more than a talkfest, as it would be a great shame if that is all it was. It is a very important subject; it needs to be addressed and needs to be worked on. I look forward to seeing some positive measures come out of this motion, and I congratulate the member for Napier on bringing it forward.

Mrs REDMOND secured the adjournment of the debate.

THIELE, Mr C.

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

That this house acknowledges with pride the great contribution of Colin Thiele as an author, educator and gentlemen.

I had the privilege of having Colin Thiele as one of my lecturers when he was director of the Wattle Park Teachers College. Colin Thiele was born in Eudunda in 1920. He is the offspring of a paternal grandfather who migrated from Germany to South Australia in 1855. On reflection, it is a pity we did not get more of those migrants from Silesia at that time because they were wonderful citizens whose offspring have also become wonderful citizens of our state and country.

Colin Thiele married Rhonda Gill in 1945. They had two daughters. He went to school at a little place called Julia Creek and Eudunda Primary School and his secondary schooling was in Kapunda. He studied at the University of Adelaide, where he completed a degree and did his teacher training at Adelaide Teachers College. He served with the RAAF in the Northern Territory and New Guinea from 1942 to 1945 and after that he completed a diploma of education. He taught English at Port Lincoln from 1946 to 1955, and it was at that time that some of his literary contributions were starting to emerge, including radio plays, poetry, and children's features. He later taught for a year at Brighton High School and joined the staff at Wattle Park Teachers College (later known as Wattle Park Teachers Centre) as a lecturer in English from 1957 to 1963. He later became the principal of that establishment, which was subsequently named Murray Park College of Advanced Education.

During his lifetime Colin Thiele wrote or edited more than 100 books. It is interesting to note that one of his contributions *The Sun on the Stubble* (a particular favourite) remained in print for over 45 years—and as far as I know it is still in print. The book *Storm Boy*, which is probably one of his best known works, has sold in excess of one million copies and is available in various languages. The privilege of having someone like Colin Thiele as a lecturer and the principal of a teachers college is that he used to share his literary expertise with the students. When we had assembly, he used to read to us from some of his forthcoming works, and there are a couple of extracts that stick in my mind.

He was particularly fond of talking about Barossa Deutsch, which has been defined as ‘that quaintly inbred and hybrid language evolved from a century of linguistic isolation’. I remember him telling us the story of the annual seaside picnic, where the people from the Barossa went down to Semaphore (I think it was) by train. He was talking and reflecting, I guess, on Barossa Deutsch and the fact that some of those people when he was a boy still did not necessarily have a good command of English. During the train trip one of the senior members in charge of one of the carriages called out ‘Look out!’, which was meant to mean to be aware of the danger. Unfortunately, some of the people on the train took ‘Look out!’ to mean to put their head out of the carriage, which put them in danger. Fortunately, no-one lost their head, but it is an example of how the different meanings in English

can cause difficulties for people who may not have English as their native tongue.

One of the best stories, or examples of his imagination, that he ever told related to lawnmowers. I have not seen this published anywhere, and I would like to track it down. He spoke about the noisy output of lawnmowers. I know they have improved over time, but the early Victor mowers were very noisy. He told us this wonderful story of how the lawnmowers got together and, in effect, were copulating, and they all ultimately disappeared into the sun and the world was spared their noise, distraction and annoyance.

Mr Venning: Lawnmowers! How did they do it?

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: The member for Schubert asks, 'How did they do it?' I will have to take him aside and explain that, presumably, lawnmowers have a particular way of getting together. Colin Thiele won many awards. It was always in his nature to be a very modest person. I cannot list all the awards because I probably will not have time; however, I will give some examples. In 1994, he was awarded the W.J. Miles Poetry Prize; in 1951, he was the South Australian winner of the World Short Story Quest; in 1952, he became a Fulbright Scholar in the United States and Canada; in 1959-60, he was awarded the Grace Levin Poetry Prize; in 1962, the Children's Book of the Year Award; in 1962, the commonwealth Literary Fund Fellowship; in 1967-68, the Hans Christian Andersen Award; in 1972, he attained the International Honours List for *Blue Fin* in the 1972 Writers Award; and in 1973, for *The Fire in the Stone*, he won the Children's Book of the Year Award—and so the list goes on.

In 1977, he was awarded the Order of Australia and, as pointed out by Stephany Steggall, it was the first time, apart from the award to Sir Mark Oliphant, that a South Australian had received the highest award. Colin Thiele was honoured for 'eminent and meritorious service to literature and education'. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate in 1999 by the University of South Australia. He clearly deserved all those awards—and, as I have said, there are many I cannot list because of time constraints.

As well as being a great writer, I have already mentioned that he was a great educator, and he was a very fine person as well. It is one thing to have ability and talent, but it is a bonus if you happen to be a decent person as well—and Colin was. It reflected his commitment not only to society at large and our community but also to his family, and I guess that was the influence of his upbringing in the Lutheran church. His modesty and dignity were always part of his life. His friend and fellow author, Max Fatchen, described Colin, as follows:

Colin Thiele illuminated our lives, generations of us, with the joy and warmth of his prose.

I have never come across anyone who has had a bad word to say about Colin Thiele or ever suggested that he said a bad word about anyone. He was universally respected and admired. I can vouch for the fact that any student who had the privilege of going to Wattle Park Teachers College will refer to Colin in terms of the highest respect and regard.

I think that in Australia we are getting better at acknowledging our sons and daughters, if I can use that term, who have contributed so much to our society. We tend not to be a nation of chest-beaters but, when it comes to someone like Colin Thiele, we should take pride in what he has done in his various roles throughout his life, sadly passing away recently at the age of 85. I have written to the Premier, as the Minister

for the Arts, and also to the Hon. John Hill, as Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts, suggesting that somehow we—and that means the government and the wider community—commemorate the life of Colin Thiele. I understand that in Eudunda there is already a sculpted bust of Colin, but I do not think it would go astray to have one on, say, North Terrace, because a lot of people from overseas, as well as locals, would delight in acknowledging Colin's contribution.

The other possibility, if there is not to be a sculpted bust (and I think there is a case for that), is perhaps some sort of award focusing particularly on children's literature and writing—for example, a scholarship at one of our universities (and I would be happy if more than one were established). I have spoken with the Premier about this and also written to him and to the Hon. John Hill. I think it is important that, as a community, we give thought (and I certainly encourage the government and our universities to do the same) to how we can create a permanent reminder of the contribution of Colin Thiele, other than that which obviously exists in his written work, which will go on giving pleasure to not only Australians but also people all around the world. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to a good bloke and to a great South Australian. I thank Colin Thiele for his contribution as an author, educator and gentleman.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I also rise to express my condolences, through this motion, to Colin Thiele's wife Rhonnie and his daughters Janne and Sandy, sons-in-law Jeff and Ron, and seven grandchildren, Ben, Tom, Sam, Amy, Nicholas, Scott and Lara, as well as one great grandchild, Alex. I represented the government at Colin Thiele's funeral, which was held at Henzell's Chapel, Mount Pleasant in Queensland on 8 September. At first, it might seem strange that one of South Australia's most famous and influential sons should be buried across the border, but it was an exquisite location in rolling hills in a site he chose for this last gathering to commemorate his life. It was a very moving morning, with tapes of him reading from *Storm Boy*, with film clips prior to the service, and with generally a sense of celebration about a life well lived, full of generosity and achievement.

I do not think there are many people who would be able to admit to not having read a Colin Thiele book or seen a film produced from one of his publications. In fact, his writing has spread so significantly around the world that for many years, even in England, people have known about *Storm Boy* by virtue of the book and also the film which is shown regularly on television. Always his books were written in a style that engaged and involved the reader. His elegant prose was charming, whether in poetry, in fiction or in his occasional forays into factual writing. In fact, on my desk I constantly have *Grains of Mustard Seed*—a history of the first 100 years of public education in South Australia, commissioned by the then commissioner for education in South Australia. I have to say it is an illuminating and very witty account of education. It is fitting that he should have written this book, because he was the product of public education from Eudunda, a great advocate of teaching and perhaps one of South Australia's best ever teachers. His capacity to engage and inform was second to none, and the books that he has produced, I imagine, will be in print for many years to come.

I mentioned earlier the popular film version of *Storm Boy* and the story of Mr Percival the pelican. It was interesting to

hear how he spoke about this book. None of his writing was without judgment, without values, without opinions. In relation to *Storm Boy*, he said:

It was written for children to enjoy, but also to widen their horizons. Does every worthwhile book teach us something? Yes: *Storm Boy* teaches something of grief and joy, of life, of beauty, of natural places and preserving our precious heritage, the richness of the life of the Aboriginal people, and it is about the cruelty, stupidity, kindness and wisdom of humans.

I think it is true to say that what he spoke of was from a life of observation. Of course, he lived in Eudunda, taught for some years in Port Lincoln and was engaged in teaching other teachers to teach. His humanity and capacity to touch other individuals was second to none.

It is interesting to hear accounts of his life, because wherever I go in South Australia I seem to bump into people who want to tell me of their experience and meetings with Colin Thiele and his impact upon their life—sometimes teachers but also children, and people in the city whose school he visited 40 years ago when they were students. I quote further from the words of Max Fatchen, who said:

It's not too extravagant to say his mind was a magnificent mansion which we entered when we turned the pages of one of his books. He engaged us, entertained us and often enchanted us. In a way he led a double life because he was one of our outstanding educators as well as one of our most notable authors. One might say he felt that life was a matter of learning to live and living to learn to get the best from it and this philosophy he shared with countless young people whom he influenced.

Indeed his life was a deep well in which one could always draw refreshment and encouragement. In a way he will always be with us as pelicans soar over the Coorong or the hills of Eudunda catch the morning sun. He walks tall down the road of recollection among the people and the land he loved and portrayed so well.

He leaves a legacy of books, of those he taught and of writers he encouraged. He was always a mentor with time and enthusiasm to encourage others, because he loved the written word, he loved good literature and he loved the power of ideas to change people's lives. I also would close by passing on my condolences, once again, to his family; and I also say that he was perhaps not only one of the most significant sons of South Australia with an impact across our teaching profession in public education but also someone who had a national and international effect. He was a very important South Australian. He will be sadly missed, and I do not think there will be another person of his calibre.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I would like to pass on our sympathies to Colin Thiele's family. He will be missed by them, I know. He will be missed by many South Australians who, even though they may not have met him, will have heard about him and read his books and may have been taught by him. Colin Thiele was an outstanding South Australian and South Australia will be worse off for his not being with us any more. It is said that you are not dead until people stop talking about you. People will continue to talk about Colin Thiele: his life, his books and the man that he was—the teacher's teacher. Colin Thiele will live forever through our memories of him and his books.

The minister has quite comprehensively summed up Colin Thiele's life. I thank her for her contribution today. It is great to be able to stand in this place and, in a totally bipartisan way, appreciate a South Australian such as Colin Thiele. He will be sadly missed. The Liberal Party extends its sympathies to members of the Thiele family.

Ms FOX (Bright): I rise to add a personal story today. The minister referred to a number of people who were encouraged by Colin Thiele. My mother (children's author Mem Fox) was deeply encouraged by Mr Thiele. He was a very sweet man, a very kind man, and he was deeply encouraging to her. Colin was never threatened by other writers. He encouraged them; he sat down with them and talked to them; and he told them stories of his own awakening as an author.

One story I particularly remember hearing him tell was how, as a very young man at Julia Creek Primary School, he loved flood days. He loved it when it rained because the school would then have about half its complement of students and the teacher would decide not to teach but, instead, would read all day long to Colin and his classmates. He absolutely loved that, and he said that it encouraged in him a love of the written word.

On behalf of myself and my family, I would like to thank Colin Thiele (and, indeed, his family) for everything he did to encourage other writers and to encourage the celebration of literature in this state. His contribution was immense; it was colossal. As the member for Morphett said, it will never be forgotten.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I just want, again, to commend the mover of the motion, the Hon. Dr Bob Such, and I join with my colleagues and, indeed, the government, in supporting this motion. As has been said, Colin was born in Eudunda but, of course, he was the prodigy of his grandparents who came out from Germany, as did many of the Barossians back in 1855. In fact, Pastor Kavel led the people out of these persecuted countries to Australia, and what fantastic citizens they became. Colin Thiele was born of this line of German folk.

The member for Fisher spoke about Barossa Deutsch. You need to live with it to understand what he is talking about. To fraternise with fourth generation Australians who still have this strong Barossa Deutsch, or this German influence, is unbelievable. It is not only the way they talk, it is their whole attitude: it is what they eat; it is the way they live but, most importantly, I think it is the most genuine trait you can have in a person—one of security and loyalty—because, if you earn their trust, these people will be with you for the rest of your life.

As has been said, Colin Thiele was born in Eudunda and he frequented the regions in my electorate. He went to school at Julia Creek, and that school is still there. What a quaint place it is. No wonder he was a man full of the beautiful things in nature, because Julia Creek is a special place. It is like a little shrine to everything that is Australian.

He then attended Eudunda Primary School. Eudunda is quite a unique community. I do not represent it now; it is represented by the member for Stuart, but it is a great community. It is an old town, in which there are some beautiful buildings. One would not call it a community flush with cash. The people have always been battlers, because it is on the edge of Goyder's line. However, the people who live there have a great attitude to life. They are grateful for what God gives them, and I think this had a lot to do with the way in which Colin Thiele was brought up; how he set his roots down. He was very familiar with the Barossa—in fact, he often used to tell people that he came from the Barossa.

It was, indeed, an honour to meet this man in person. One of the privileges we have as MPs is that we get to speak to these sorts of people, and often they are very frank with us.

I met Colin Thiele on several occasions, and one realised that one was talking to a man who was quite famous—not that he ever sought fame, but there was an aura about him. He certainly has left a huge legacy for us all to appreciate. I am not a great reader, but my children and I have an appreciation of pelicans (amongst other things) as a result of reading *Storm Boy*. What a fantastic use of the medium of writing to introduce subjects such as that. Of course, we also have *Sun on the Stubble*. What a delightful depiction of the Australian way of life, of the things we take for granted, and it is written like that. The man certainly had a gift. All I can say to those who were lucky enough to be in his class at school is: good luck to them. As a teacher, he undoubtedly would have left an indelible mark on them. Although I was never that fortunate, he certainly has left a great legacy.

Colin Thiele reached a pretty good age—85 years—and I think he was reasonably active right to the end. The timing of his death was all the more unfortunate because, as we know, it occurred in the same week as the deaths of the crocodile man and Peter Brock; if it had been a stand-alone moment in history, Colin Thiele would have received even more accolades than he received—accolades that he so rightly deserved.

As I said, he was very much appreciated by the locals who live in the area. As I think the member for Fisher said, there is a bust of Colin Thiele in Eudunda, which was his home. I support the erection of a similar memorial to him in our cultural precinct along North Terrace or even, indeed, at the State Library. I think that is a good idea, and I would certainly support it. This gentleman was a great educator, author and poet. He was a great family man, as was evident through his writing. He was a great bloke and, proudly, a great South Australian. In supporting this motion, I join the parliament in offering my condolences to Colin Thiele's family.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson): I rise today on behalf of the children of South Australia: the children from my generation who grew up on Colin Thiele's books. I include here also the children of my son's generation. My son is eight years old, and at the moment we are reading *Blue Fin*, which I read as a child. After reading the book, I went and saw the film on a school excursion in grade 6. Colin Thiele was a great South Australian and, as other members have pointed out, his legacy will live on through his books. Yesterday the member for Enfield and I were in O'Connell's Bookstore, a great second-hand book store in Hindley Street that has been there for many years. I bought a copy of Colin Thiele's *Labourers in the Vineyard*, which is set in the Barossa Valley and about which the member for Schubert has just spoken. I am happy to lend it to the member for Schubert when I have finished it.

I also think that is an important thing to do, because I have never actually read any of Colin Thiele's adult literature. When I came across that book yesterday I thought that we could probably honour this great man's legacy by actually reading some his adult literature. As I said, I am reading *Blue Fin* with my son, who is now eight years old (and I had not read that since I was eight or nine). We had finished Hemmingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, and Colin Thiele is just as good as Hemmingway in bringing a story into the imagination of children and adults alike.

I grew up in the South-East at a place called Glencoe. We used to drive to Adelaide regularly every few months and, of course, that meant driving past the Coorong. Having read *Storm Boy* it really opened up what had been, to me, a

desolate place that we passed on the left-hand side of the car, a place that had its own unique smells—and when you read Colin Thiele's book *Storm Boy* and discovered great characters like Mr Percival it really did open it up. That is what children's authors are all about; they are an important part of the development of children, opening up their imaginations and teaching them things not just about far away places but also about places around them. I think it is fantastic to have good South Australian authors who write about the places in which we live and in which we grew up, and long may we continue that tradition.

Before I finish I would also like to mention that Colin Thiele always had great respect for his elders (as pointed out by the member for Fisher, and I thank him for the information). One of Colin Thiele's lecturers when he attended teachers college, someone whose tutorials he attended and for whom he had a great respect, was Sir Douglas Mawson, after whom the seat of Mawson is named.

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I would also like to add my acknowledgment of Colin Thiele's contribution to literature in South Australia. I had the joy and good fortune of working as a librarian at the State Library of South Australia, initially starting in what was called young people's services, which incorporated the children's library and the youth services. Colin Thiele's books were certainly amongst the most popular in the library and there was always a long waiting list of young people wanting to get hold of them. As the member for Mawson has already indicated, one of the fantastic things about Colin Thiele's books is that they are set in South Australia, they are about us, and they are about our stories. We also used to prepare packs of books for the country lending services and used to send books to young people in the country who did not have their own libraries. Again, they really appreciated Colin Thiele's books for that same reason; they could identify with the characters in the novels.

Colin Thiele has been a great contributor to South Australia and, again, there was a great joy in being able to meet people like himself and Max Fatchen when they used to come down to the library and when young people had the opportunity of meeting with them and discussing things. Sometimes we think of authors as being people who are far removed from us and, in the same way that they were able to meet Colin Thiele and Max Fatchen, it is great that young people these days can also meet authors such as Mem Fox, who make literature so alive and so relevant to them.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms CICCARELLO: An excellent author. In fact (and to digress), I was speaking to Mem a couple of years ago at one of the Writers' Week functions and I said, 'Mem, I used to use *Possum Magic* in my story-telling sessions at the library.' She sort of winced and said, 'That was a long time ago, Vini.' I think it might have been about 20 years ago that we were first using *Possum Magic*.

Colin Thiele's family should be very proud of the legacy he has left not only to Australians but to everyone who can learn about our country and about young people, and I offer the family my condolences.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: I would like to speak very briefly. One thing I did not mention is that from about the age of 35 Colin Thiele suffered greatly from severe arthritis but, while it crippled his body, it certainly did not cripple his spirit or talent. One of the reasons why he moved to Queensland, apart

from obviously wanting to be close to his two daughters, was to try to get some relief from the affliction that he had in the form of severe arthritis. I conclude by extending my condolences to his widow, Rhonda, and to the extended Thiele family.

Motion carried.

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND REPORT

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta): I move:

That this house notes the United Nations Population Fund report entitled 'State of the World Population 2006—A Passage of Hope: Women and International Migration' which was released on 6 September 2006 and, in particular, acknowledges the observations concerning the plight of migrant women and encourages—

- (a) governments and multilateral institutions to establish, implement and enforce policies and measures that will protect migrant women from exploitation and abuse; and
- (b) all efforts that help reduce poverty, improve gender equality and enhance development, so that migrants, particularly women, are not compelled to leave their own countries and help achieve a more orderly migration program.

I am pleased to move this motion on behalf of my fellow members from both sides of the house who are members of the parliamentary group on population and development. We are a non-partisan group from all parliaments in Australia whose primary aim is to raise awareness of population and development issues. This year we are working to support and promote women's human rights and empowerment in the Asia-Pacific region through the publication of the United Nations Population Fund report on the state of the world's population. It is entitled 'A Passage of Hope: Women and International Migration' and it was released on 6 September 2006.

Today women constitute almost half of all international migrants worldwide. This equates to 95 million, or 49.6 per cent of migrants totally. It is only recently that the international community has begun to grasp just how much migrant women contribute to the economy and social wellbeing of populations living in both source and receiving countries. For many women, migration opens doors to a new world of greater equality and relief from oppression and discrimination that limits freedom and stunts potential. Many of them leave situations of inequality, insecurity, exclusion and limited opportunities. Millions of female migrants every year face hazards not experienced by male migrants, such as enslavement of trafficking and its exploitation as domestic workers.

Every year millions of women working overseas send hundreds of millions of dollars back to their families and communities mainly to feed and educate the children, provide better health care or provide support for elderly parents. Migrant women actually send a higher proportion of their earnings than men to support families back home. On the downside, migrant women represent a massive outflow of medical professionals such as nurses, midwives and doctors from poorer countries to wealthier nations such as ours. This is exacerbating already critical health care crises in many of the poorer countries already overwhelmed by infectious diseases and HIV/AIDS.

The motivation for migration includes the usual indicators of poor pay, bad working conditions and a lack of opportunity. The demand for even more health care workers, particularly in wealthier countries with an ageing population—again Australia is guilty—will continue to rise. It is vital that, before the health care systems of these poorer countries

totally crumble, we must look at supporting the working conditions of health care workers to enable them to stay in their own homelands and work in safety and equality and to reach their full potential in their chosen field of study.

Throughout history it has been the migrant women who have been left to shoulder the care of the young, the elderly and the infirm. In war torn countries women and young girls are often the target of rape, and many will be forced to contend with unwanted pregnancies, HIV infection or lifelong damage and injury to their reproductive systems. Women who are forced to migrate from these countries are more vulnerable and require special protection and support. Global population migration is a good thing when the migrant has free choice. I am a migrant myself, and coming to Australia was one of the best choices that I have ever made, but I was not compelled to migrate because of inequality, insecurity, exclusion or limited opportunities. I did not fear daily for my safety or for the safety of my children. I did not live in poverty or worry about health standards. I did not need to fear my home or my living being taken away from me. Women in too many countries face these overwhelming odds.

The parliamentary group on population and development therefore calls on all governments to implement and enforce policies and measures that will protect migrant women from exploitation and abuse. In addition, we need to commence our efforts to help reduce poverty, bring about gender equality and enhance development, thereby reducing the push factors that compel many migrants, particularly women, to leave their own countries. At the same time, we will be working to achieve a migration program where the migrants have a true choice to migrate.

Sound immigration policies that respond to economic interests and safeguard human rights and gender equality are critical to the progress of a world where freedom of migration will become even more frequent than it is at the present time. We all need to remember that migrants are first and foremost human beings with human rights. Australia needs to remember this when implementing migration policies, and it is our duty as members of the parliament to keep an awareness of the situation.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I rise to support this motion. There is nothing more important than making sure that every human being on this earth is treated with respect and as a human being. Certainly, the stories that we hear about abuse of women, sex slaves, the trafficking of women are just a small part of the whole picture where there are serious issues that need to be addressed. It is good to see that the United Nations has begun to address this through the Population Fund Report.

The need to protect women, particularly in Eastern European countries, is well known. At last count, 620 000 Poles have migrated to England. Bulgaria and Romania come into the EU in January. I was in England in July, and there were many reported cases of women being forced from their homes to work in England, because now they are part of the EU they can travel freely there. They are open to exploitation by unscrupulous employers and unscrupulous landlords. The stories we heard were quite horrific. I know that all governments around the world should be working very hard to fulfil the aims of the United Nations resolutions.

The need to put money into these sorts of programs is something that should be a priority for governments. This is a vital part of human rights and civil liberties that are being protected here, particularly in the case of women—I am not

being sexist in any way—but they seem to be open to a lot more exploitation than men. It is often the men who are doing the exploiting, and, as a man, I am ashamed that that is the case. I support the motion.

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I commend the member for Morialta for drawing the attention of the house to this important report. It is very comprehensive and every word of it deserves repetition in this place, it is just so important and noteworthy. Members will be pleased to know that I am not doing that; however, I will read extensively from the press summary.

However, I want to start by noting that we live in a highly developed, wealthy country, with pretty good health and education services—which we all acknowledge are able to be improved but, nevertheless, in terms of world standards, we are right up there with the top countries. But we have an important role in addressing some of the issues raised in this report, and four of them that I can think of very quickly include: our own treatment of refugees; our own definition of asylum seekers; our own recruitment of people from developing countries to work in our health work force (which the member for Morialta spoke of); and the role of our troops in current conflicts around the world. I will address them briefly, and commence with our own treatment of refugees.

It is important that we recognise the particular needs of women who are refugees in the practices and processes that we use in our handling of refugees. Many colleagues on my side disagree with the way the current federal government incarcerates refugees for so long, and I was interested to hear somebody from the Bahamas recently speaking with contempt about Cuba for the fact that it locks up all refugees. I did not put up my hand and say, 'So do we.' I hid under the desk. But one particular issue that disturbs me is the reports that I believe are quite reliable from people who have visited Baxter, and that is that women are required to line up several times each month to obtain two or three items of sanitary protection. They are not allowed to keep those in their room. Is this really what we should be doing in terms of our treatment of refugees? And are we really thinking about the respect that we should be showing to women refugees in that situation?

In terms of asylum definition, it is interesting that, while more than half of the world's refugees are women, they are not half of the world's asylum seekers, and that is because many countries, not only Australia, do not really take account of the special forms of persecution that women face in their countries of origin that might lead them to seeking asylum. The issue that I want to speak of a little later of rape in war and the attacks on women's reproductive health that occur in many countries around the world are areas that we need to be sensitive to in terms of our own definitions of asylum.

I will move on to the health work force and the way in which we are recruiting particularly women as nurses from countries that desperately need their own nurses. We have two ways of working on that. One is to support the health care systems in developing countries so that women who have trained as nurses are able to stay in their own environments and receive a decent pay for the work they do. The other is to be more proactive in terms of training our own health care work force, and there is much that we can do in that area. One issue I would mention is looking at suburbs that currently do not have young people going to nursing schools and medical schools to serve their own populations. But we really do need to be alert to our impact on health

services in developing countries as we undertake our health work force planning.

Rape in war is a horrendous issue that has always occurred. We can read about it in all forms of historical documents, and in the previous parliament I think the whole parliament was moved when we considered the role of Jan Ruff-O'Herne and the way she had been used as a sexual slave in the Second World War I when she was incarcerated in Java.

We now have peacekeepers around the world. Australia has a very high reputation for its role as peacekeepers. But I have not heard about the extent to which we have been proactive in intervening to protect women who were vulnerable in war to rape. When we hear of suicide bombings and cultural genocide, women are greatly affected by the impacts of those, particularly where rape as a means of destroying the purity of a cultural or racial group is used as a weapon in war. In our role around the world we need to be particularly sensitive to this.

A fifth area that I thought of while on my feet, despite my considerable thought and preparation for this important motion, is that of aid and the way that some First World countries put conditions on the aid that they give to reproductive centres in relation even to information about contraception. I had the opportunity earlier this year to speak with a US group that is active in providing reproductive services and information to Third World countries, to developing nations, and they are considerably hampered by the conditions that their government puts on the provision of aid to developing countries in terms of no information, let alone services, in relation to contraception or termination. Countries where the rate of infant and female mortality is extreme need every bit of help that they can get in terms of reproductive health and information to women about the control over their bodies.

If one looks at some of the figures that are provided in this report about maternal mortality ratios, some of the figures are really very scary indeed. If we look at a developed country like Ireland for instance, the ratio is five. If we look at the former Yugoslavia it is 23. In Haiti it is 680. In Nicaragua it is 230; Bolivia 420; Papua New Guinea, our near and precious neighbour, 300; Tajikistan 100. The figures range so widely from Australia eight; New Zealand seven; Ireland I have mentioned; to those horrendous figures of 680 as a mortality ratio. We should be doing better for women in our world. We should be doing better for women in our neighbourhood in terms of our support for Papua New Guinea.

Again I commend the member for Morialta for bringing this important report to the attention of the house, and I urge all members to read it and think of our responsibilities as legislators in this house and as active voices in our community in seeking to develop a better world, particularly for women and children.

Mrs PENFOLD secured the adjournment of the debate.

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.B. Such:

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.

(Continued from 21 September. Page 922.)

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): The motion of the member for Fisher is one that I do support. The moment you

mention stem cell research, embryo research, anything engineered or 'franken foods' the fear factor goes from one to 10 plus. It is rather sad that 99 per cent of the people who read or listen to debates on matters such as stem cell research have very little understanding of the whole issue. Their main reference material is the 12-year old comprehension level daily press and the opinions therein.

It is really sad that issues such as stem cell research can be dragged down to such levels. The issues involved are not explained and not understood and, as a result, the fear factor comes in and, in many cases, the issues go into the too-hard basket for politicians. Before we had any research into embryos and stem cells, we had a lot of research into tissue and organ transplants. Those members in this place who are not organ donors should become organ donors and enable people who are involved in accidents or who are injured or who have a disease to benefit from transplants of organs and tissues to give them better lives once the original owners no longer have any use for them.

We have had organ and tissue transplants, and people are quite comfortable with that. I am not aware of any moral or religious grounds that are voiced in the same way as they are for stem cell research. Also, we have seen xenographs, which are animal to human transplants. The most obvious of these, the most commonly used transplants, is the use of pig heart valves to replace defective human heart valves. Because of the unique nature of the tissue in heart valves, there is very little chance of rejection, so pig heart valves are quite suitable for the replacement of defective heart valves in humans.

Xenographs are being used much more as temporary graphs. We have heard information in the science media about the use of pigs' hearts for temporary heart replacement in humans. There are some problems with the haemodynamics of those. Pigs have four legs and people stand up, so there are some issues in that respect, never mind the issues relating to tissue. Certainly, xenographs are a lot more contentious. While there are a number of benefits from xenographs, it is one of those cases where a lot of research is going on. Certainly, there will be a lot of debate—both scientific and ethical—surrounding xenographs, and that will continue.

When it comes to stem cells, I am on the record in this place as supporting the original stem cell research that was covered in previous bills. In my contribution at that time I spoke about therapeutic cloning. There were some objections from members on the other side. I will be interested to see whether it becomes a conscious vote for the Labor Party, both federally and state. Certainly, it will be on this side. One of the reasons I am in the Liberal Party is that we can support motions put up by the government, we can object to motions put up by the government or, in this case, support a motion put up by an Independent member.

The moment people think about therapeutic cloning they think you will create 1 000 Adolf Hitlers, or a clone of some sports person or Miss Universe or, heaven forbid, a clone of the Premier. Therapeutic cloning is exactly that—It is therapeutic cloning. It is not the creation of clones of the people who donate the nucleus of the original egg that will then be allowed to develop and grow into a clone. Therapeutic cloning uses an ovum that has been donated. In some cases it can be from an animal, because only the chemical bath to put the nucleus in is needed. I have severe reservations about that and would like to have a look at more scientific literature regarding that.

When it comes to the use of donated human eggs—which have the nucleus removed and a new nucleus inserted from, in most cases, someone with a genetic disease or some other form of disease, such as a cancer of some sort—the nucleus from one of its cells is implanted into this now empty egg. It is then cultured to form an embryo which has exactly the same genetic make-up as the person who has the disease, or the person who donated the original nucleus. So, you are actually cloning the genetic make-up of that nucleus.

If that embryo is allowed to be implanted into a surrogate mother and develop into a foetus, then it is possible that it will develop into a human being. This has been done in animals. To my knowledge, it has never been done with humans, and I think it would be an absolutely immoral act to allow that. We hear of people around the world who are trying to do it. I would condemn them, and condemn them loudly. Therapeutic cloning is a different issue altogether. I have no fear of the science and technology involved in therapeutic cloning. With the rapidly developing knowledge in embryo and stem cell medicine, this is an area where cell lines can be developed to be used to repair damaged tissues and to assist in the healing of diseases, whether they be of genetic or some other origin.

Therapeutic cloning, to me, is not creating Frankensteins or a thousand Adolf Hitlers, it is creating life-saving tissues which cannot be obtained as easily from any other form. There is a lot of research in other stem cell therapy that is of huge benefit to the whole of the human race, but there is a real development in the potential for therapeutic cloning. The federal government is dealing with this issue at the moment and I am sure there will be much debate on it. The sad part of this debate, as I said when I began, is that the fear factor will surface and the popular media will try to ramp it up as if we are cloning super athletes or monsters. That is not the case; it is another development of science. If it were not for the developments in science we would not have the antibiotics or the broad range of medical technology and biomedical science that we have today, and the world would be a far worse place, and many of us would not be here.

If we are able to develop and utilise therapeutic cloning to develop stem cell lines that can be used on an original donor of a nucleus, that is a very good thing. I would like to think that people in this place would not object to that on any other ground than religion, and when religion and politics start to mix to those levels I have serious concerns. Can I just say, if it was ever thought that there were factions in the Liberal Party, just look at who gets together when the vote is taken. Actually, we do not have factions in the Liberal Party, we have personality cults. When it comes to these types of issues, when religion does get in the way of politics, just look at who sides with whom in the federal government. That is when I have serious concerns for my constituents, because this issue is above religion and politics: it is about life-saving therapies and stem cell therapy. Therapeutic cloning should be encouraged by all thinking people in society. It should not be relegated to an issue that generates fear and creates phobias, thereby losing huge benefits.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

KING STREET BRIDGE

Adjourned debate on the motion of Dr McFetridge:

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.

(Continued from 21 September. Page 926.)

Ms FOX (Bright): I listened with interest last week to the remarks of the member for Morphett, my colleague from the south-western suburbs, and I would like to point out a few things. Whether or not one likes it, this is a council road. The council argues that, because people outside the area use the bridge, it becomes a state responsibility. That is its argument. If we accept that argument, it then means that any road that is owned or looked after by a council is necessarily the responsibility of the state, and that is a very silly argument indeed. I understand that the bridge project may be expensive. The council estimates the cost at \$2 million, the local *Messenger* estimates \$5 million to \$7 million, and the member for Enfield estimates \$6 million, but just because it is expensive does not mean that the Holdfast Bay council can move the cost from the council to the state, as the honourable member well knows.

We are very happy to help the Holdfast Bay council, which has some excellent councillors, look for funding. We have begun that process in a number of meetings, including one in June. We have talked to officers from Holdfast Bay about seeking funding through the AusLink Strategic Regional Program. We have had a meeting about the commonwealth government's special local roads program and we are happy to help them in that process. However, I would love to know, as I am sure the member for Morphett would as a ratepayer in the Holdfast Bay council area: what is it spending the money on? It is not spending it on the bridge; apparently the bridge is too expensive. It is not spending the money on the Brighton Jetty Road Festival, which yesterday it announced it was cancelling. It is not spending money on fireworks for the local population. What are these people spending money on?

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): This piece of infrastructure, King Street bridge, was originally built by the state government and handed over, thrust upon, given to, divested or devolved to the ratepayers of Glenelg council, as it was then, in the mid-1950s. It is an ancient bridge, between 75 and 80 per cent of its usage being by people who do not come from the City of Holdfast Bay. This is a small council, with 31 000 electors, and I look forward to the upcoming elections, because there are some issues down there which I have probably spoken about. The perception is that the council has been dysfunctional, and that perception could be the reality in some areas.

When it comes to funding vital state infrastructure, such as the King Street bridge, everybody, including the federal, state and local government authorities, should put their hands in their pocket and not cost shift all the time. I do not expect a free ride for the ratepayers from Holdfast Bay—far from it. They are certainly not getting it. The need to put money into infrastructure down at the Bay is a huge impost on ratepayers and at times it becomes too much. There may be issues in the City of Holdfast Bay where the ratepayers have been badly treated. Some of the councillors—not the bureaucrats—could have treated issues with greater deference and spent more money on things that really will benefit the community, rather than just on Excel loos and on some of their wish list items.

The need to keep the roads paved down there and the rubbish collected is a lot more than that now. As we know,

councils are responsible for an absolutely huge range of service delivery, much of which has been cost shifted onto local council. It is an old story; read the Hawker Report. The triplication of services between federal, state and local council is about \$20 billion. Surely, by looking at the responsibility for various pieces of infrastructure, we could reduce the imposts, the bottom line, on taxpayers, also known as the ratepayers, because they are paying three times: they are paying the GST; they are paying state and land taxes; and they are paying the rates. They are being hit in a number of ways, and they deserve a bit of a contribution.

I have been very vocal when talking to my federal colleagues and saying, 'Put your hand in your pocket,' because there is no doubt that the federal government is absolutely rolling in money. I look forward to the federal government spending more money in this state, even if it is to prop up five marginal seats. I do not care who knows how I am thinking, because we are going to see a lot of federal money spent in this place in the next 15 months—and it is a good thing. It is taxpayers' money coming back here. It is that river of gold, the GST, which is coming to the states—but it is also ratepayers' money. There are three levels of government and three levels of taxation, yet we cannot get any extra money for the King Street bridge from two levels of government at this stage, and the poor old ratepayers have to pick up the tab for what was a state government built and owned bridge. It was then cost shifted to local government many years ago, and now the current generation is into what you might like to call generational debt and is having to pick up the tab for the repairs.

I hope members will support the motion. I can count; I do not expect much support from the government, unfortunately. Like the fireworks down at Glenelg. What did we get? Zip; \$25 000.

Motion negatived.

NATURAL BURIAL GROUNDS

Adjourned debate on motion of Hon. R.B. Such:

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

(Continued from 21 September. Page 928.)

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I rise to support the motion of the member for Fisher, the Hon. Bob Such. I remind the house that this matter is before the ERD Committee as a reference, and I ask the question whether it is in standing orders that it is still on the *Notice Paper*. However, it is on the *Notice Paper*, so I presume that it is above board discussing a motion that is before one of the committees. I will continue while the Speaker considers that point. The ERD Committee is also looking at coastal management at the same time.

It has been a passion of the member for Fisher for many years. That is why, as a member of the Environment, Resources and Development Committee, the member for Fisher has introduced it there—and apparently we are out there calling for witnesses on this very subject to give evidence to the committee. We predict that it will probably take us two to three months to get into this matter properly.

As we all know, South Australia has a problem with burial spaces, particularly here in the metropolitan area, where a lot of our cemeteries are full. Of course, it is a very emotive issue when they try to resume graves after fluctuation of time when relatives cannot afford to re-rent the space, and

headstones are pulled up and neatly stacked up by the fence. It takes up a lot of room for people to lay permanently in a space in the metro area. There is also a problem of cost to the average family not only to maintain but also to rent and re-rent these plots after time passes. To the average family it is a big impost and, as generations pass away, new generations are less likely to support the retention of the grave site. Of course, that then causes problems within the family—there are those who do and those who do not want to look after grandma's or grandpa's grave and to keep it where it is. We are very lucky in country South Australia because, as country people, we do not have this problem. It is great to walk around country cemeteries. I have four generations of my family in one cemetery, and it is lovely to walk there and—

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Quite often. I am very much into family history, as the member for Finniss may wish to know. In fact, I am President of the Venning Family Association in Australia, a position I have held since 1980. We are very proud of our family. Incidentally, I raise this matter today on my wedding anniversary. Kay and I have been married for 38 years.

Mr Pederick: Big night tonight, Ivan!

Mr VENNING: It is a big night because I have the leader in my electorate tonight. The leader will be giving a budget speech in Schubert tonight, and Kay is coming down. We will celebrate a fantastic occasion with my good friend, my leader the Hon. Iain Evans. What a way to spend one's anniversary!

Mr Pengilly: I presume you would rather spend it with Kay.

Mr VENNING: That's right; I would rather spend it with my wife—and I will.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: I do not think that those interjections are going on the record; they had better not! The problem for the average family is the huge cost of maintaining these plots. We do not have this problem in country regions. I will always try to protect our historic sites and these graves in country areas. In fact, we have often gone through a town cemetery and paid for the upgrading of graves of families long gone because they are part of our local history. People who walk around cemeteries appreciate being able to read the headstones and see the plots being kept in a reasonable order.

Certainly, one of the many privileges of a country person is to be buried in a plot knowing full well that they will stay in that plot for many years and that the local community will look after it for years and generations to come without great cost. I presume, member for Fisher, that we are not subverting standing orders by discussing this matter today, as they are sitting in judgment on the issue. As the member for Fisher said, there are large tracts of land across South Australia that would be very suitable for this purpose. We have talked about areas such as quarries and so on which should be reinstated and which would be great areas for parks and burials. We have other areas of land, such as areas of polluted land, where you really could not build residences but which would certainly be very useful as a park for this use. I am sure that any other area not suitable for anything else would come under consideration. We always have this emotive problem with graves being resumed after the fluxion of time.

I think that this is a great opportunity. The member for Fisher always seems to come up with these popular ideas, and I think it will be very popular with the general public because planting a tree in memory of a loved one is a great idea. By planting that tree you are not only helping the local environ-

ment but also making the place pleasurable. I think that the idea has merit, and I am sure that the councils (some councils more than others) will certainly pick up on this idea and push it through.

I will reveal something today that I do not normally talk about. In our own garden at home we have the remains of relatives. At first, I thought I would be concerned about it, but I am not at all. We have a beautiful garden and it is a family home. I am the fourth generation of Venning to live in that home. I think it is very fitting that, if any Venning wishes to be in that garden, they should feel free to be there. That is just what has happened. I think it is a lovely touch.

I think that the member for Fisher in this instance has come up with an idea that is sensible. I think the ERD Committee will take evidence and consider this matter, and I feel confident that it will be found that this is a good idea. It is yet another option for people who cannot afford a huge contract in order to buy a plot for 10, 15, 20, 30 or 50 years, and they cannot afford an expensive cremation service. This option is probably affordable. When we lose loved ones it is always a difficult decision, but this option could solve a lot of problems. I support the motion and commend it to the house.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I thank members from both sides of the house for their positive contributions. The ERD Committee has this issue as a term of reference and will look thoroughly at the practicalities of the matter, the location, and so on. Many ministers have indicated their support, and the public has also indicated its support, as have many councils in the state. With those few words I commend the motion to the house.

Motion carried.

SCHOOL BUSES, SEATBELTS

Adjourned debate on motion of Mrs Penfold:

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

(Continued from 21 September. Page 933.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): Even though people will always say that the numbers do not stack up, more children die from cars reversing in driveways. That is a terrible thing in itself. As the father of a five year old, who day and night catches a bus which does not have seatbelts and which stops on the major highway to Melbourne, I always wonder whether the worst may happen. I support the motion and I support members of the Masonic Foundation for bringing forward this matter, and putting not only their thoughts into the project but also their money where their mouth is. It is something which should be taken up.

I know people speak against only sash belts or lap belts, but at least lap belts are a step in the right direction. These can be fitted for about \$2 000 per bus, although others will argue that full sash belts over the shoulder are warranted. There are problems with ensuring that children do wear seatbelts, but, as mentioned in the bill of the shadow minister for transport, the bus driver will not be forced to ensure children wear the belts. They can only do their best to make students wear the belts. As a parent whose son does have to be on a bus that traverses the main road to Melbourne, it concerns me.

Over the last couple of years, there have been a couple of terrible accidents involving school buses. We have been fortunate that in most of these accidents people have not died. There have been a couple of deaths—and they are deaths too many. I support the Masonic Foundation in moving forward this issue, and I support the motion.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I, too, commend the Masonic Foundation for what it has done in this instance. I declare that I am a member of the Masonic Lodge and, although I am on leave at the moment, I am still on the register as a member of the Masonic Lodge. I will return to active service when my duties allow.

Mr Piccolo: As Grand Master?

Mr VENNING: No, I am not, and nor will I ever be. It is very commendable that an organisation such as this (indeed, a wonderful organisation), which has been seen traditionally as a secret society of men, is now very much coming out. They were on the Channel 7 *Sunrise* program this morning, with all the regalia for everybody to see, and they talked freely about what the organisation does. People will never know the amount of work it does for charities and communities generally. Huge amounts of effort in the past have gone unknown, but now they are coming out with instances like this, where they have put up a substantial amount of money towards the idea of getting seatbelts into school buses. I think, 'Good on them,' because it is a great idea.

As the member for Hammond has just said, these school buses pull up on major highways with our children and grandchildren on board. My first grandchild started school only last week and uses a school bus. If there were seatbelts in the bus—which there are not—the children would be restrained in their seats. We know what kids are like in buses—they move around, and it would be much easier for the driver, who is responsible for them, to control them if they were strapped into their seats. Also, it would limit the overcrowding that occurs because, once all the seats are occupied, children who could not be restrained would not be allowed on the bus. I believe it is certainly a step in the right direction.

We keep putting this off because it is all too hard and all too expensive, but we have to bite the bullet. We make laws—

Mr Piccolo: Your government did, too.

Mr VENNING: The regulations have been coming in all the time. We have strong laws in relation to seatbelts in our motor cars. There are fines and demerit points for the non-wearing of a seatbelt. Large passenger buses (as in touring buses) are fitted with seatbelts and they have to be worn. When you get into a passenger bus today and you sit down, you are asked to put on your seatbelt. Why are our children missing out?—because our school bus fleet is aged, that is why. In relation to this motion, we have to say that we commend the Masonic Lodge for putting up the money, and we commend the comments made by the RAA and all other organisations concerned. The government might say that this is a big outlay and that perhaps over a period of 10 years it will strive to have every school bus fitted with seatbelts, but we are not hearing anything.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: It is all very well to say that previous governments—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr VENNING: It is all very well—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Torrens will cease interjecting.

Mr VENNING: The member for Torrens says one year. I am happy to say one year, but that would be a huge cost. Let us be realistic. Some of our school buses are pretty old and you could not physically fit seatbelts in them because the structure is not there to maintain them. In fact, you could create a bigger problem by fitting the belt than by not having the belt there at all. I think, as new buses come on to school bus routes, it should be mandatory that they be fitted with seatbelts.

Mr Piccolo: The minister is doing that.

Mr VENNING: In that case you are going to support this motion.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: The government has not indicated to me, or anybody in the house, whether it supports this motion. Let us hear from the government whether it supports it. I am happy to sit down now if it facilitates the passage of this motion. I certainly cannot let a motion such as this go unsupported, because I agree with it 100 per cent, and I hope the government does, too.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

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

QUESTION ON NOTICE

The SPEAKER: I direct that the written answer to a question, as detailed in the schedule that I now table, be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: No. 22.

ARTS GRANTS

22. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** What are the details of any Art Grants or funding allocated to the following amateur theatre groups: Tea Tree Players, Marie Clark Musical Theatre, Gilbert and Sullivan Society of SA, REDChilli Theatre Company Inc, Holden Street Theatres, Therry Dramatic Society, SA Light Opera Society, Blackwood Players Inc & Matt Byrne, in each year since 2001-02?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I have been advised of the following:

The government has provided arts grants and sponsorship of at least \$152 000 to the amateur theatre sector since 2001-02.

Of this funding, \$20 000 in project assistance has been provided to Holden Street Theatres. The other groups named have not received funding in this period, nor have they applied. This is due to the government's priority to support professional arts activity through this program.

The government has also supported the amateur theatre sector through its funding (of \$25 000 since 2002) to the Theatre Association of SA, which represents these groups, towards its coordination and promotion of amateur theatre.

JOINT PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE REPORT

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the report of the Joint Parliamentary Service for 2005-06.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Summary Offences Act—Dangerous Area Declarations—
1 April 2006 to 30 June 2006

Criminal Law (Undercover Operations) Act—Report
required under section 5

By the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, on behalf of the Minister for the River Murray (Hon. K.A. Maywald)—

River Murray Act—Report 2005-06.

CRIMINAL LAW (UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS) ACT

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: In April 1995, after the High Court decided an appeal in *Ridgeway v The Queen* in favour of the accused, parliament passed the Criminal Law (Undercover Operations) Act 1995 with the support of both sides. The object of the legislation was to place the law of police undercover operations on a legislative footing and to ensure certainty in the law. The High Court ruling on entrapment by police of drug dealers and other criminals had created uncertainty for the police and the courts.

As honourable members may be aware, one of the safeguards that was built into the legislation that extended police powers was that there should be notification of authorised undercover operations to the Attorney-General and an annual report to the parliament. I am pleased to assure the house that the system is meticulously adhered to by both the police and my office. The details of these notifications form the basis of the report that the statute requires me to give to parliament. I now table the report.

The legislation is working well. There have not been any South Australian court decisions on the legislation in the preceding 12 months, or on this specific aspect of *Ridgeway*, of which I am aware. I am in a position to assure honourable members that the legislation is working as it was intended to do and that no difficulties have appeared in its effective operation. The law in this area appears to be well settled now.

MURRAY RIVER WATER ALLOCATIONS

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): On behalf of the Minister for the River Murray, I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: Drought conditions across the Murray-Darling Basin mean that the River Murray water allocation in South Australia will be reduced from 80 per cent to 70 per cent from mid-October. The Murray-Darling Basin is now entering its sixth consecutive year of drought, the most serious drought since records began in 1891. This is the first time we have had to further reduce allocations during an irrigation season, which shows just how serious the drought is becoming for southern Australia.

For the fourth month in a row, River Murray inflows have been at record lows. So far this September only 112 gegalitres have been recorded compared with the previous September minimum of 178 gegalitres in 1902 (the median inflow for September is 1 558 gegalitres). This has never happened at this time of year in the 116 years during which we have kept records. We are truly in uncharted territory.

The total storage of the Murray-Darling Basin is now going backwards. Total storage levels as at the end of September 2006 were 3 354 gegalitres (36 per cent) compared with long-term averages at this time of year of 7 070 gegalitres (75 per cent). Since the end of June 2006 storage levels have fallen by approximately 490 gegalitres while over

the same period in 2005 storage levels rose by approximately 2 480 gegalitres. In July we started the water year at 80 per cent of allocation, which was very conservative, based on the storage levels and anticipated flows into South Australia at the time. However, with the driest winter on record in the Murray-Darling Basin, South Australia will not receive its entitlement flow of 1 850 gegalitres. The updated Bureau of Meteorology forecast is for a warmer than average spring and summer, meaning that storage will be under further pressure with very high evaporation rates.

This cutback in allocation will place farming and regional communities under enormous pressure, and the government is looking at measures to ease the strain through the new Premier's Drought Task Force. A drought hotline has been established, including referrals to help people with queries about water restrictions and referrals to assist growers with concerns about water and crop management. Workshops are also being organised across regional South Australia. We will continue to monitor rainfall and catchment storage levels extremely closely during the coming months in line with South Australia's drought water allocation policy.

Most environmental watering projects planned for this year will not proceed. We have 100 000 hectares of River Murray flood plain in South Australia and we are planning to water two per cent and provide some benefits to the Coorong. We will also continue our efforts through the Murray-Darling Basin Ministerial Council, which meets tomorrow in Sydney, to ensure that the focus on returning environmental water to the river is maintained.

VISITORS TO PARLIAMENT

The SPEAKER: I call honourable members' attention to the presence in the chamber today of students of Glossop High School and to members of the Loxton Advanced Diploma Leadership Group, who are all guests of the member for Chaffey.

QUESTION TIME

HOUSING TRUST

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Housing.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member: Come on, boy; answer this, boy.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. How does the minister justify the government's increasing Housing Trust rental and water charges to the most vulnerable members of our community? In the Treasurer's press release of 21 September, it was announced that \$5 million in savings per annum would be achieved by increasing the rental and water charges for Housing Trust tenants. These tenants in discounted accommodation, bedsits and small cottages, the Treasurer announced, would have their rent increased from 19 per cent to 21 per cent of their income, and a number of people residing in this accommodation have contacted the opposition expressing their concern.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): If I was the deputy leader of the opposition, I would be wanting to change the subject as well. The opposition is shedding crocodile tears on behalf of Housing Trust tenants.

What a gall, from those people who ripped 10 000 homes out of the Housing Trust system! Many hundreds and thousands of South Australians now are paying more than 50 per cent of their income in rental. So let us not have this nonsense of crocodile tears on behalf of those low income earners.

We have had a modest increase to 21 per cent of earnings. I think it is regarded generally as a standard across the community that 25 per cent of a person's income is the benchmark and someone should not be obliged to pay any more in terms of rental, so we think it is a modest increase that we have made, and that makes a contribution to the budget and the other community services that are being made available. The other measure about water saving is indeed a water-saving initiative. It ensures that excess water charges are met by the tenant, and not by the housing authority. It is a very sensible conservation measure.

HEALTH BUDGET

Mr KENYON (Newland): My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the President of the AMA been sold a pup in relation to government health announcements?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): Last night, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made extraordinary comments in this place attacking the head of the AMA. Dr Cain, the head of the AMA, is a respected surgeon and advocate for the doctors of this state. Anyone who has worked with him will tell you that he is fiercely independent. In fact, he has criticised both sides of politics and is happy to do it in the future. The deputy leader claimed that Dr Cain was sold a pup because the budget does not deliver on the visiting medical specialists agreement announced during our caretaker period just before the election. In fact, only yesterday I told the house where in the budget papers that funding agreement could be found. The government package for visiting medical officers is being delivered on time and, in fact, surgeons already have the first payments of that agreement in their pockets.

So, the deputy leader's claim is demonstrably untrue and, if she had listened to my answer to her question yesterday, she would have known it was demonstrably untrue. It was on the basis of this false premise that the deputy leader launched her personal attack on the AMA president Dr Cain. In fact, the deputy leader's incompetence in understanding budget papers caused her to cause her leader to repeat similar and erroneous claims on radio station FiveAA.

As I told the house yesterday, the extra \$640 million for health is on top of and not including funding for enterprise bargaining agreements. She made the same mistake in relation to nurses' salaries and the same mistake in relation to doctors' salaries. This is clearly a leadership test for the opposition. Does the leader support his deputy leader's scurrilous attack based on this false claim? He should stand her down. The question is: will he?

HOUSING TRUST

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Why is the Treasurer now going to include family tax payments as part of the total income for families in Housing Trust homes in order to increase the total rent collected by government? The family tax payment is specifically targeted at low income parents to enable them to feed and clothe their children. Housing Trust families, especially those with a number of children, have told me that they are already

struggling to feed and clothe their children and are now concerned that they will be penalised by the new requirement to pay up to 25 per cent of the family tax benefits as rent.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): The total income of the household is taken into account when assessing the relevant charges for the Housing Trust. I must say that many low income families would be absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to get into a Housing Trust house and pay no more than 21 per cent to 25 per cent of their income in rent.

HOUSING MINISTERS COUNCIL

Mr PICCOLO (Light): My question is to the Minister for Housing. What will the housing ministers be addressing at tomorrow's Housing Ministers Council meeting?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): The ministers at the housing ministers' meeting tomorrow will be addressing a number of important issues, and no more important will be the call by South Australia to negotiate a new national affordable housing agreement to replace the current Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement which will expire in 2008. For the first time, this government is asking the national government (which has been in place for 10 years) to take a serious role in national housing policy. It does not have a national housing minister and it does not run an affordable housing policy.

We are one of the few nations on the planet that does not do such a thing. It is a gaping hole in the national policy framework. The federal government is beginning to work out that it is now becoming a political issue. Certainly, it is a political issue in places such as Sydney, and it will soon spread to other states as cities cease to be able to function as they cannot provide sufficient affordable accommodation to allow the workers—who need to make those cities function—to live near enough to their workplaces.

This is a national issue that has a national dimension. South Australia, fortunately, has been less affected by this issue than other states, but it is labouring under the same burdens. We want a national affordable housing policy. We also have an action plan for things to happen now before that national agreement is put in place. We will be putting a number of items on the agenda whereby the commonwealth can use its levers to assist us. At the moment, something like \$1 billion of effort per annum is going into the Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement.

That \$1 billion, though, is contrasted with another \$2 billion that goes into commonwealth rent allowance, and a further \$1 billion goes into first home owners' grants. So, \$4 billion of effort—even if the commonwealth did nothing else but spend its current dollars on that effort if it was able to be brought together into a national framework on affordable housing—would make a massive improvement in the coordination between the state and the commonwealth.

What we have heard up to this point is the commonwealth government prepared to blame the state government for matters such as land release, which has been discredited as the sole solution for this issue. What we want is a partnership with the commonwealth. We want a partnership that will lead us to increase the supply of affordable housing. We have real and viable projects that we want to put on the table (for instance, a rent-to-buy scheme), but we do need commonwealth cooperation.

We need cooperation around GST arrangements and first home ownership arrangements. We need cooperation around

all kinds of arrangements that could bear on these issues. There is no point in simply giving people a commonwealth rent allowance and having them wander around town looking for a rental property when all they are doing is bidding up the price of the rental by the value of that commonwealth rent allowance. We can do much better. We would like the commonwealth to put in more money, but even with the money it puts in at the moment we can do much better and get a much better outcome for our community.

They are the things that we will be seeking from the commonwealth government. We have an agenda, and we hope the commonwealth government is prepared to partner us in it.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Minister for Housing. How does the minister—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: How does the minister justify cancelling the—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The deputy leader has the call.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. How does the minister justify cancelling the private rental subsidies for low income families as part of the 2006-07 budget? The budget papers show that the government expects to make a saving of \$18.2 million over four years by cuts to private rental subsidies. Thousands of low income families rely on the rental subsidies to be able to access private rental. I am advised by some of the low income families who rent privately that, if this rental subsidy assistance had not been available, they would not have been able to enter the private rental market and would have remained homeless as they waited, along with 25 000 other people on the waiting list, for Housing Trust homes. A key plank of the government's election platform was to make housing more affordable and reduce homelessness.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:

Ms CHAPMAN: For the benefit of the Treasurer and Attorney, yes, there are housing trust units in my seat.

Ms THOMPSON: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I think the honourable member sought leave for a brief explanation. This seems to be debate.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I was about to make the point that the deputy leader's explanation was essentially argument.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): Indeed, this rent relief scheme was somewhat an anomalous scheme. No other state runs a modest rent relief scheme of this nature. It is in the order of—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In fact, it was cancelled by the previous Liberal government, and the honourable member's mentor, the former member for Finnis, closed this scheme. There have been no new entrants since 1995. The reality of this scheme is that the commonwealth runs the major commonwealth rent relief scheme. This is a small scheme, and the only people who are still in it are those who have not exited their accommodation. There has been a small and shrinking number of people. Unfortunately, the costs of administering this scheme are now approaching a very large proportion of the total value of the benefits. It was a scheme

that was uneconomic. It is a barrier to people finding other accommodation because, if they do seek to move out of it, they lose the benefit of that scheme. A small number of people are affected. Notice will be given to those people, but it really is the height of hypocrisy for the honourable member to speak about a scheme that her predecessor closed.

SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson): My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What is the government doing to assist the South Australian seafood industry to deliver training and capacity building programs to meet its current and future work force requirements?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I thank the member for Mawson for his question, knowing that he loves nothing more than a seafood platter and will do anything to get more on his plate. In fact, I even understand that, on some occasions, he has out fished the Minister for Infrastructure. The South Australian seafood industry is a significant contributor to the state's economy. The value of seafood production has increased substantially over the past decade, with the current gross food value being around \$900 million. The South Australian seafood industry target is to achieve \$2 billion gross in revenue by the year 2015. It is a very ambitious target that I believe we are best placed to achieve—and we will.

Following the 2004-05 Dundon review into seafood industry training, the Seafood Training Centre of Excellence was incorporated on 1 June this year. As a result of months of consultation and collaboration between the state government, seafood enterprises and their employees, a seafood—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P. CAICA:—this is a very serious subject—industry training plan was developed to address work force development and training needs to support sustainable growth in the industry. I am delighted to advise that, in response to recommendations from the Seafood Training Centre of Excellence, the government has committed \$1.5 million to support the delivery of training to seafood industry employees. The Seafood Training Centre of Excellence will focus on seafood industry research and training, with particular emphasis being placed on post-harvest skills training, market development training and production research. It will also make work force development for the seafood industry a high priority.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: Thank you, Tom, I am glad that you are listening. The board of the Centre of Excellence, comprising representatives from government and peak seafood industry bodies, will identify processes to enable the integration of the two existing seafood training programs that are offered by the Australian Fisheries Academy and TAFE SA. Collaboration will be central to the business principles and processes of the Centre of Excellence, as well as the development of alliances and networks to enable industry to share resource facilities and ideas. Partnerships will be established with such bodies as the Australian Maritime College, the National Aquaculture Training Institute, the Academy of Maritime Training, Flinders University and TAFE SA.

Various schools in regional South Australia have also established seafood and aquaculture related programs. Their

participation in an integrated and highly focused seafood network will assist the industry to attract new entrants to its work force. As the global demand for seafood continues to grow, the establishment of the Seafood Training Centre of Excellence will ensure that South Australia's seafood industry can continue to grow by meeting its work force demands.

HEALTH BUDGET

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Health. How does the minister justify a cut in capital works in health by \$6 million, from \$136 million last year to \$130 million this year?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): As I said to the house yesterday, the opposition was determined before the budget came down that this was going to be a budget, as they put it, of broken promises and lost opportunities, and all the rest of it.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, the facts are that it is the reverse of that. All of our promises are being kept, every single one of the promises are being kept, and, in addition, there are massive amounts more money for health—\$640 million extra for the health budget. They want it to be a bad budget so they keep inventing things. This is a massive investment in capital in our budget. We have committed \$88 million for the first stage of the redevelopment of the Flinders Medical Centre. There is \$42 million or \$43 million-odd for the Lyell McEwen, and there are additional funds for the other hospital systems. We are committed to rebuilding our hospitals to create twenty-first century hospitals to serve twenty-first century citizens.

CHILDREN'S LITERACY

Ms FOX (Bright): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. How is the government strengthening the literacy levels of our children, particularly in the early years?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): Can I thank the member for Bright for her question. She understands that the basics matter in education and that the Rann government is indeed investing in children's education and targeting the early years. We were the first government in South Australia to recognise the importance of early literacy and to invest in a significant, cohesive and comprehensive program that included a range of ways, programs and processes to improve teaching and learning of literacy in the early years. In fact, the program begins in reception and goes through to year 3 and is part of the South Australian State Strategic Plan to equal or improve on the national average of literacy attainment across our country.

Our \$35 million Early Years Literacy Program works in a way that invests each year in a range of programs, and this year we will be investing \$10 million for the 2006-07 year, on top of the \$15 million that has already been invested, to provide teachers with specialist skills, mentors and one to one help for children. The early years program includes, of course, the collection of data, because we want evidence-based changes in our schools and data collection and assessment is very important.

In 2006, a form of assessment was used for the first time across the state in a system called Running Records. It is used

by teachers and will be used to assess 25 000 students on their reading levels. It is a cutting edge process which enables teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and invest focused attention on improving their areas of weakness. It is particularly good at targeting difficulties before they become entrenched in early readers and making sure that by the time those weaknesses are identified those small children are not left behind by a cohort of other students.

The statewide assessment follows last year's trial in 73 schools, when only 2 000 children were tested. Teachers used the information that was gathered in the June and November assessments and that informed their intervention processes. Over the next six months a second round of assessments in November could measure the students' progress. Over that six month period we found the number of children who had reached an acceptable year 1 reading level had doubled.

Due to the high level of success, the assessment method found that 2 000 teachers across the state have now been trained to implement it, and they will be using Running Records as a diagnostic tool and an intervention process for those children. Our State Strategic Plan is quite clear about the relevance, importance and need for basic skills in schools and we are investing money and making a difference. Running Records assessment is part of a broader strategy of a cohesive and strategic approach to improving reading in our state, and is one of the planks of the reform process that the Rann government is implementing across the whole of education.

HEALTH BUDGET

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question again is to the Minister for Health. Given his stated commitment to rebuilding our hospitals, as he told the house today, will he explain why eight major capital works projects were cancelled (or delayed) from last year's budget?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): The reality is that in any capital works budget things, on occasion, slip, priorities change, and new directions are sought. Let me tell the house what is in the—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: There would be some credibility to the implied criticism if it were different when the Liberal Party was in office, but it is not. The QEH—as the member for Mawson said—slipped eight times. Let me tell the house what the targets are for 2006-07. We have \$138.7 million in our health portfolio capital works program for construction works to be completed at the Margaret Tobin Mental Health Centre, the Flinders Medical Centre—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: That's another act of misleading the parliament, I point out, but I will take that one later on—the Aged Acute Mental Health Unit at the Repat Hospital, the Murray Bridge Hospital redevelopment, the Flinders Medical Centre car park, the Aldinga GP Plus Health Care Centre, the Ceduna Aboriginal Step Down, the Port Pirie Hospital Hammill House Aged Care refurbishment, the Flinders Medical Centre redevelopment (\$88 million), the GP Plus Health Care Centre at Marion (\$27 million), another one at Elizabeth (\$8 million), a renal dialysis unit at Port Augusta, and \$6.14 million for ambulance stations at McLaren Vale and Adelaide. The McLaren Vale Ambulance Station, on its own, is an interesting promise made by the former member

for Mawson without any recurrent funding associated with it. There is also \$4 million for the relocation of the northern base of Metropolitan Domiciliary Care.

This government is committed to rebuilding our health system, as I said. It is investing considerable sums of public money to make sure that we have a modern 21st century health system for the people of our state.

HOSPITALS, NOARLUNGA

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

My question again is to the Minister for Health. Again, given his statement that the government is rebuilding hospitals in this state—which he has just repeated to the house—will the minister inform the house why the \$6.5 million mental health facility at the Noarlunga Hospital has been cancelled from last year's budget when \$222 000 has already been spent on the project?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): As the member knows, mental health issues are the responsibility of another person in another place. I understand that the member of the opposition who is responsible for those issues is also in another place. Therefore, the logical and sensible thing to do would be for the opposition to have their shadow minister, who is in another place, ask the real Minister for Mental Health in another place. But, no, they want to go through this charade where the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asks me questions about a part of the health portfolio for which I am not responsible. So, what I will say to her, as I say every time, is that I will happily refer that question to the minister responsible for mental health in another place.

However, as the member herself and all members would know, the government is focusing a lot of attention on mental health. Monsignor David Cappo—another person whom I think the opposition has attacked from time to time—is reviewing our mental health strategy and working with the minister to come up with a strategy which I am sure will provide appropriate investment in mental health in South Australia.

Ms CHAPMAN: I ask the same question then of the Minister for Southern Suburbs.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Can I say to the shadow member for the eastern suburbs: refer to my former answer.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The question is out of order. A member cannot ask the same question twice.

HOSPITALS, WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

My question is again to the Minister for Health. Given his statement about rebuilding hospitals in this state, will he explain to the house why \$7 million in funding for a capital works project for the Boylan Ward and the Helen Mayo facility at the Women's and Children's Hospital has also been cut? The history of this matter, which is covered under the portfolios of health and mental health, is that in 2002-03 this project was allocated \$4.5 million. In 2003-04 the project was cut. In 2004-05 the project was still cut. In 2005-06, \$7 million was allocated to the project, yet now in 2006-07 it has been cut again.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): The Liberal Party is expert at announcing and cutting projects. One only needs to look at the program of announcements in relation to

the QEH over the years. This is a government that actually does what it says it is going to do.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes. Regarding the facility to which the member refers, I will happily get a report for her.

HOSPITALS, LYELL McEWIN

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

My question is again to the Minister for Health. What is the justification for reducing the number of mental health beds to be provided as part of the Lyell McEwin Hospital redevelopment—to which the minister referred in his answer to an earlier question—from 65 to 50, which will leave rural people (that is, country residents of this state) at the Glenside site?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): As I said, I am not the minister responsible for mental health issues, and I am happy to get a response for the honourable member, but I would have thought there would be pages and pages of material in the budget for which I am responsible on which the deputy leader might like to ask questions, but no, she prefers to adopt this theatrical approach. I am happy to ask the minister responsible in another place to provide a report, but as I understand it the decision to keep those beds at Glenside is what the mental health community—if it can be referred to as that—wanted.

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):

My question is to the Treasurer. How can the Treasurer justify an increase in the number of South Australian public servants of more than 10 per cent while the overall South Australian population has grown by only 2.6 per cent during the past five years? In 2001, the South Australian Public Service totalled 68 884; in 2006 it had increased to 75 808; and, according to the ABS, the South Australian population was 1.511 million in June 2006 and it has increased to only 1.552 million persons.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): This question has been asked many times in various ways and during the election campaign and the answer is clear. The jump in numbers can be explained by a number of factors, one of which is reclassification of employees already employed in the government sector into the general government sector. There are disputes in terms of the numbers, but what this government defends proudly is that with a substantial increase in the amount of money that we had even prior to this budget in our health system, with those extra activities that we are funding comes extra nurses, doctors and support staff. When you spend more on your schools, you put more teachers into your schools. When you spend more on your police, you put more police on the beat.

This Labor government has balanced each and every budget; it has delivered a AAA credit rating; and it has delivered the largest tax cuts in the state's history—and that was just our first four budgets. With the budget that was just brought down, we are putting more money into schools; we are putting record amounts of money into health; we are putting a record number of new recruits into our police force; and we are doubling the amount of infrastructure spending to replace ageing infrastructure in this state. Every commentator has seen this budget for what it is: a good budget for South Australia. The only tactic that the opposition can come up with is to attack the AMA. They are a disgrace.

TECHPORT PROJECT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): Mr Speaker, my question—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: —is to the Minister for Infrastructure. If he is not able to answer, I am sure that the Treasurer will. What are the real reasons for the blow-out in the Techport ship building infrastructure project at Osborne from \$140 million to \$243 million, and why was the original scoping and costing of the project so inadequate? Information leaked to the opposition prior to the government's 6 July announcement of the \$115 million blow-out indicated that the unexpected cost was not linked to new work designed to expand the scope of the project, as the government has claimed but, rather, was the result of bungled project development and incorrect costings at the outset.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): Did I hear the member right? Did he say that he had something leaked to him in July, but it is now coming to the end of September? Mr Speaker, that must have been a red hot leak! He could not get it into the media quickly enough: it has taken three or four months. What a silly question. I would have thought that someone with a distinguished military career would not be attacking some of the best military people whom we have recruited to drive this project.

Ms CHAPMAN: Sir, I rise on a point of order. My point of order relates to both relevance and a reflection on the member in relation to his military background.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think the Treasurer was reflecting adversely on the member.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The deputy leader is having a tremendous 24 hours. I humbly apologise and withdraw my reflection on the member for Waite by referring to his career as 'distinguished'. The deputy leader does not agree that Martin's career was distinguished. Dear oh dear! I like Martin Hamilton-Smith. He is a former colonel and the first head of SAS. He was an outstanding military officer, and we are lucky to have him in this parliament, even if his own deputy does not believe that his career is distinguished and worth noting. As much as I can disagree with the member for Waite, I will leap to his defence when it comes to his military career.

The amount of money that we are investing in Techport, a project that this state has won, with the support of outstanding former military officers such as Admiral Kevin Scarce, former number three in the navy and former head of military naval acquisitions—

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Sorry?

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Actually, Rear Admiral Scarce did not correct my costings: they were his costings.

Mr Hamilton-Smith: He got it right.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Sorry?

Mr Hamilton-Smith: The costings were right—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I am happy to put on the public record the member for Waite's distinguished military career, but I cannot say the same about his political career. Rear Admiral Scarce and Admiral Shackleton—some of the best military people one could get—have worked on this project. We have now brought in General Cosgrove and Andrew

Fletcher, a great South Australian. We have rescoped the project. We have enlarged the project and provided the capacity to move ships off the ship lift.

It is an absolute nonsense for the member to suggest that this is anything other than a good investment for the state, a larger investment for the state, and one that will underpin our manufacturing sector for decades to come. As I said, I am happy to defend the military career of the member for Waite, but certainly not his political career.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I am glad that the people mentioned by the minister came in and sorted out his figures. My question is again to the Treasurer. Did the government take action in February to close down an interdepartmental steering committee on the Techport shipbuilding infrastructure at Osborne after questions were raised about the cost of the project blowing out of control, so as to keep the cost overrun information concealed from the media and the public prior to the election? When was the minister first informed of the cost blow-out and the decision to close down the steering committee?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: What a nonsense question. Is the honourable member suggesting that I closed down some steering committee that I cannot even recall ever knowing about? I have never heard of this; however, I will get a detailed answer and come back to the house.

I will say, though, that this is an opposition that, at the end of budget week and having already launched an extraordinary attack on the head of the AMA, is now launching an attack on the fine people who advise this government on the infrastructure that we need to deliver the air warfare destroyer and that is required by the commonwealth government. I will come back to the house, but some of the—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: We have finally heard a word from the Leader of the Opposition. He could not have kept further away from Vickie over the last 35 minutes; he even had to leave the chamber a few times, and the body language says it all. Look at the gulf between them.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the Treasurer has answered the question.

OFFICE OF SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): My question is also to the Treasurer. Why is the government abolishing the Office of Security and Emergency Management, which carries out an intra and intergovernmental coordinating role, particularly in the case of counter-terrorism activity? Under an agreement with the National Counter-Terrorism Committee it is required that a state crisis centre be established. The Office of Security and Emergency Management was formed in 2003; however, the government is now abolishing it at a meagre reported budget saving of \$800 000.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): I will get a detailed answer for the member and for the house. However, I will say that bureaucratic changes to how we manage the very important task of ensuring that the state is kept secure, whilst important, should not be reflected upon as some reduction in activity. In fact, quite the opposite. We have invested substantial resources into counter terrorism with the police department itself, and we now have an assistant commissioner responsible for counter-terrorism. I can tell the honourable member that the front line of fighting terrorists is not

bureaucrats in government departments; the front line of fighting terrorists is our police—trust me on that one.

Bureaucratic alignments to make sure that we supervise the policy framework is a matter for government, and we should always be looking to do that most effectively. We have done nothing that in any way reduces our commitment to fighting terrorism. In fact, we are building on that all the time, and one example is that we are actually investing a substantial amount of money to better train the police security services—which is, of course, the government security arm that secures this place. We are substantially improving the skills base of that resource to government so that it has a far better capacity to secure buildings than in the past.

This government is substantially increasing its commitment to positioning the state as best we can, and always in close cooperation with the commonwealth government, other state police forces and other state governments. The state is as secure as we as a government, in concert with the federal government, can make it. We must always improve, and we are always improving, and any bureaucratic change will have been done simply to streamline the effectiveness of government policy.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: No, it is not budget saving. What a nonsense question. In politics—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: In politics there should be restraint when it comes to alarming people. There is no reduction in activity in positioning the state in counter-terrorism, and any bureaucratic change is appropriate efficiency and reform.

SCHOOLS, FUNDING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Was the minister correct in her answer to my question regarding consultation with schools over losing \$6 million in interest on school accounts when she indicated schools will not lose interest on any fundraising money? In her answer to a previous question the minister said:

Money from school fundraising, such as chook raffles, is exempt from the government policy of taking the interest earned on school accounts.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): That question has been answered. It is the government grants that are held and managed by the South Australian Financing Authority. We have been very up-front and very clear on that.

UNLAWFUL TERMINATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Does the minister intend to raise any issues regarding the unlawful termination of employment assistance scheme with the federal minister at the upcoming Workplace Relations Ministerial Council and, if so, what are they?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Industrial Relations): I thank the member for Florey for her question and acknowledge her particular passion for workers' rights. In Melbourne tomorrow I intend to raise with Kevin Andrews our government's concern regarding the operation of the Unlawful Termination Assistance Scheme at the Workplace

Relations Ministerial Council. The federal government has previously announced an assistance scheme for workers who believe they have been unlawfully sacked. Concerns have been raised that workers may be unaware of the high legal costs incurred in making such claims. Legal costs for unlawful dismissal cases in the federal court can cost anywhere up to \$30 000. These costs are, of course, a major impediment to any worker seeking to have their case heard. Most workers do not have the money or the assets to risk incurring legal bills of this kind.

The federal government has made great fanfare about the \$4 000 in legal assistance it is prepared to offer workers who pursue unlawful dismissal claims, but the devil is in the detail: the assistance is also means tested. The operational arrangements of the Unlawful Termination Assistance Scheme state:

It is a condition of the scheme that the lawyer providing the legal service will not be able to subsequently represent that person.

The Australian Financial Review reported on this issue on Friday 8 September in a story entitled 'Sacked workers fund hard nut to crack'. The story reported the following:

The UTA grant covers only preliminary legal advice, not the cost of running an unlawful termination case, and bars any lawyer who gives that preliminary advice from acting in legal proceedings that follow.

What this means is that a worker who qualifies for assistance under this scheme can go to a lawyer, get a small part of the assistance he or she needs and, once that \$4 000 is spent, the lawyer can no longer represent them. The worker will have to get a new lawyer and start all over again but this time they will have to pay for it themselves.

Taxpayers pay for this ineffective assistance and business will incur high legal costs fighting the claim. Only the lawyers win out of the Unlawful Termination Assistance Scheme. The lawyers win and the workers lose. *The Financial Review* has exposed the deception by the Howard government in the Unlawful Termination Assistance Scheme. The government will take every opportunity to expose the inadequacies of WorkChoices, and I will raise this again with Kevin Andrews tomorrow.

SCHOOLS, BANK ACCOUNTS

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Is money raised by school communities required to be deposited in the same South Australian School Investment Fund (the SASIF account) as money from the Department of Education and Children's Services?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): There is a series of compliance requirements because, after all, public schools are part of the public sector; they are not some autonomous state that is floating free from the rest of the government. We must have in place accountability and auditing processes, and we need to have that money secured properly. Having said that, the question is constantly being repeated. We do not intend to touch the chook raffle and we do not intend to touch the money that has been put aside for specific projects. Quite simply, what we are talking about is the money that is sent from government resources to schools to fund the education of our children.

If that money is being put into bank accounts and stored for some future period, some time long distant, today's children are not benefiting from the funding that has been

given to that school to educate those children. So, this will be a disincentive to schools to keep the money. Frankly, if I were a parent of children in a school where money was not being spent on my children today, this week, this year, I would be disappointed.

Dr McFETRIDGE: My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Given the answers from the Treasurer and the minister, why have school principals, school bursars and governing council members contacted the opposition and complained that the interest on funds raised at car boot sales, quiz nights and fetes is being taken by the government as these funds are deposited in the school's consolidated account?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We must get this in perspective. This is inaccurate, unsubstantiated nonsense. No school bursar (whoever that is), no school principal, no school community, no school—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I know what a bursar is, but it is not a funded position in our schools. Government schools do not have bursars.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I'm sorry, I know that members opposite do not often send their children to our public schools. Bursars are in private schools, just remember that. Let us just remember that no-one in the public education system has contacted a member of parliament and said, 'Money is being taken.' No-one can contact anyone and say, 'Money is being taken', because money is not being taken. A decision has been made that interest from SASIF accounts will not be given to schools in 2008. This is an announcement for the future. The member for Morphett is misleading the house. He is talking about people who, allegedly, are contacting him to tell him things that cannot be true.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the next honourable member, I caution members about saying that members are misleading or have misled the house. It comes very close to being unparliamentary. The member for Morphett.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I ask a supplementary question. If the minister wants to engage in pedantry and semantics, why—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. My point of order is plain: the honourable member is not allowed to say that.

The SPEAKER: I did not even hear what he said, to be honest. The member for Morphett.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My supplementary question to the minister is: why has a finance officer (aka a bursar) contacted me this morning and said that they will be losing \$30 000 out of their SASIF account, most of it raised by volunteers?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, can I apologise profoundly—I must have misunderstood the question. I understood it to be 'many principals' and 'many school communities' and 'many bursars'. We now have 'one bursar' in 'one school' who believes that perhaps they may lose some money. Let us get it straight: if that school is getting \$30 000 a year in interest—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot even hear what the minister is saying for interjections—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not tolerate members continuing to interject when the chair is on his feet. I will name members straightaway. That is something which I will not tolerate. There is too much carrying on by members on both sides of the house while the minister is trying to answer the question. I cannot hear what she is saying and I could barely hear what the question was. The Minister for Education and Children's Services.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Thank you, sir. Through you, can I respond to the member for Morphett? I think he has misunderstood what our government has done. We have made a massive investment in education. We have the biggest building project ever. We have announced six entirely new schools; 20 children's centres; 10 trade schools; and 20 major projects—a major investment—

Ms CHAPMAN: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The question was in relation to interest in bank accounts. It had nothing to do with the mantra from the budget speech.

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

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The reality is that we have been highly transparent. We have said that we intend to make some budget measures which will be addressed and developed over the next period and which will be implemented in 2008—a transparent, honest, accountable government. We have warned communities that we will be making changes in the year 2008. That is a long lead time: a long time to explain the process, train the school leaders and work through these issues. If the member for Morphett is concerned that we have now got it down to one school misunderstanding the process, then I am very happy to get the details, but I think he is deliberately not listening to my answer when I explain that we are not talking about interest on chook raffles.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Mr Speaker, I have a further supplementary question.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr McFETRIDGE: Will the government stop governing councils from opening separate accounts for moneys raised from fundraising?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Treasurer): What a silly question, honestly.

SCHOOLS, WORKERS COMPENSATION

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Given the government's decision to make schools responsible for managing workers compensation claims, will a school have to meet all the costs associated with managing each claim, including the extra costs of the replacement staff for the injured staff?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): Clearly, this process will be worked up as a project which we will send out to schools over the next months, but the reality is that it is appropriate that a locally managed workplace should take responsibility for staff. One of the challenges of a large system is the way you manage human resources and workers compensation, and our view is that these issues are best managed locally. We now

have a situation where teachers are chosen after interview and reference checks—a great reform which we made and which allows leadership in a school to select their staff. Having selected the staff, I think a level of responsibility in managing them is appropriate. However, the reality is that we do recognise that there are very difficult workplaces—special schools or circumstances where there is a higher level of workers compensation claims than one would expect—and clearly we have to protect those communities and schools from the impact of those events, but generally we would want the issues to be managed locally.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Does the model of transferring workers compensation to the schools, being considered by the government, include charging the schools an extra or increased premium and then paying a bonus if they have a staff member return to work, and, if so, will the government be covering the extra cost?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Of course, those technical details will be worked out, but the reality is that these workplaces are part of the government, essentially. We are the employer, so essentially we always have to manage the staff.

SCHOOLS, INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAMS

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Minister, why is the government removing or reducing the funding to the schools instrumental music programs?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I know that the member for Morphett has an interest in instrumental music teaching because he has Brighton Secondary School, which is a music specialist school, in his electorate, and in all fairness he does often speak highly of them and that school community. The matter of instrumental classes, and the whole range of activities within our schools, are, of course, assessed every year. We have already given a list of budget savings measures and issues that have come through the budgetary process, but I expect the department to refine and work on all strategies and all elements of the teaching and learning across various curriculum areas and align them each year.

SCHOOLS, CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is again to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Will the minister advise the house if capital works programs at Kapunda High School, McDonald Park Primary School, McLaren Flat Primary School and Woodside Primary School have all been cut? The projected costs at Kapunda High School, \$2.3 million, McDonald Park, \$3.7 million, McLaren Flat Primary School, \$2.2 million and Woodside Primary School, \$3.6 million, which appeared in the 2005-06 budget, have not been listed in this year's budget.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I think that, as to a list of detailed capital works projects, it is best to come back to the member, but anything that has been announced we would not renege on.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): As a supplementary question: can the minister explain then why those four schools appeared in last year's capital works and are not appearing in this year's capital works?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: There are always cashflow areas and issues in budgets, and once we have announced a project we will be dealing with it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Waite.

TRANSIT WATCH PROGRAM

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): My question is to the Minister for Transport. Is the Transit Watch Program, announced by the government on 28 August, to provide a direct link between police and public transport drivers now fully operational and, if not, what problems have been experienced? Drivers have advised the opposition that the promised radio communication system is failing and that drivers have had to use mobile phones.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): The first thing I will do is take with an enormous pinch of salt anything said by the member for Waite. He was in here last night, of course, describing—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: And he is telling porkies, basically, and it is particularly outside. In fact, one of the things he said was that our transport budget was condemned by all of those major transport groups, including the Freight Council. Just for the benefit of the member for Waite, perhaps I will read the first paragraph of their press release:

South Australia's road transport system will be significantly improved under funding commitments for key transport projects. . .

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: No, no, you said the Freight Council; it's too late, you can't get away with it, it's in *Hansard*. They go on:

The South Australian Freight Council, South Australia's peak freight transport advisory group, welcomed the state government's budget commitment to several major transport infrastructure projects.

They did go on to say that we should be doing more, but that is what they will always say because that is their job. So, can I say that, whenever the member for Waite comes in and says something is happening, I am going to take it with a big pinch of salt. Can I say he was down the South-East saying that there is only \$3.6 million in the budget for road maintenance this year. That is what he told people, \$3.6 million! It is, I think, \$73 million, an increase of 8 per cent.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: No, didn't you say all? Okay, I will read it out. I am quite happy to. He has also said \$9 million is not funded—

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the minister does need to turn to the issue of policing.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Sir, if he did not say the Freight Council, I will apologise to him. But if he wants to have a debate about telling the truth about transport we will do it all afternoon. The truth is, the budget has been welcomed by the peak industry body. His claim is also not true that \$9 million is not funded for the Penola bypass—committed, funded. He said there is nothing in the budget. On roads, there is actually a capital investment of \$250 million. It is a record capital investment in this budget, one never matched, never approached, by members opposite when they

were in government. More money is being spent on roads than in the history of the state. So, whenever this bloke tells you something, Mr Speaker, just be very careful.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Transport.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: You are going well, Marty. You are not going quite as well as the potty-mouthed member for Bragg, but you are going all right—and she wants more women in parliament. Goodness me, what bar-room language.

The SPEAKER: Order!

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

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

That standing and sessional orders be and remain so far suspended as to provide that Government Business have precedence over Other Motions on Thursday, 26 October, and that any Other Motions set down for that day be set down for consideration on Thursday, 16 November.

The house divided on the motion:

AYES (38)

Atkinson, M. J.	Bedford, F. E.
Bignell, L. W. K.	Caica, P.
Chapman, V. A.	Ciccarello, V.
Conlon, P. F. (teller)	Evans, I. F.
Foley, K. O.	Fox, C. C.
Geraghty, R. K.	Goldsworthy, M. R.
Griffiths, S. P.	Hamilton-Smith, M. L. J.
Hill, J. D.	Kenyon, T. R.
Kerin, R. G.	Key, S. W.
Koutsantonis, T.	Lomax-Smith, J. D.
McEwen, R. J.	McFetridge, D.
O'Brien, M. F.	Pederick, A. S.
Penfold, E. M.	Pengilly, M.
Piccolo, T.	Pisoni, D. G.
Rankine, J. M.	Rau, J. R.
Redmond, I. M.	Simmons, L. A.
Stevens, L.	Thompson, M. G.
Venning, I. H.	White, P. L.
Williams, M. R.	Wright, M. J.

NOES (2)

Hanna, K. (teller)	Such, R. B.
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Majority of 36 for the ayes.

Motion thus carried.

DENTAL PRACTICE (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts

of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

OPTOMETRY PRACTICE BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BILL

Her Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as may be required for the purposes mentioned in the bill.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ROADS AND TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: A moment ago during question time, the Minister for Transport attributed to me comments in a debate made last night in which he claimed I had said that the Freight Council had reported adversely on the budget. Those comments are completely incorrect and without factual base. I made no reference to the Freight Council last night. I will read from the *Hansard* draft (page 1055) the comments that I made. I said:

This is what the South Australian Roads and Transport Association had to say about this budget. In regard to roads, the executive director, when he was in the budget lock-up, stated:

... that officials, when asked to point out the detail on expenditure for road maintenance in the budget, couldn't because it was not there in any definable way. Obviously the government is seeking to hide behind the big projects and it will just keep saying that this is a big budget for infrastructure. That's fine, and we welcome the fact... However, the government's continuing failure to arrest the deterioration of the state's roads is nothing less than a grossly irresponsible act.

I point out that I was referring to SARTA, not the Freight Council. The minister's comments are completely incorrect and non-factual.

The SPEAKER: I think that is sufficient to correct the record.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise to speak on the subject of infrastructure projects that have been bungled and blown out by the government. I refer to two projects: the Techport project at Port Adelaide and the trams project. Let me start with the trams project. Yesterday, I asked the minister a series of questions about a \$22.6 million blow-out in the cost of the tramline from Glenelg to Victoria Square. The cost includes upgrading the rail line along that route and the purchase of new trams, not the extension along King William Street and North Terrace, which is a separate budget line. Last year in the budget, it was a \$72 million project. In fact, the government confirmed this as late as 28 December when the Premier put out a media release reaffirming that it was a \$72 million project and mentioned that the number of new trams would be 11. In this budget, the amount given is

a total of \$94.6 million. That includes \$10.6 million for purchasing new tram-related infrastructure and a blow-out in the cost of the Glenelg to Victoria Square tramline and trams to \$84 million.

I thought the minister would come back in here today and explain, but there has been no ministerial statement—I hope there is by the end of the day. I assume that, given that there has been no explanation and no clarification of the facts, we are on to something here. I say to the media that there has been a significant blow-out in this project. As late as Christmas the Premier was saying it would be a \$72 million project, but it is now something in the order of an \$84 million project—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Pengilly): Order!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:—with another \$10.6 million for tram-related purchases. This project has got itself into a pickle. If I am wrong then let the minister come in here later today and make a complete ministerial statement to clarify the facts, because I suspect there has been serious mismanagement of this project. I put to the house that at least one of the reasons for the cancellation of the extension of the tramline to North Adelaide is that the Glenelg to Victoria Square part of the project has got into trouble. If we needed more trams at the beginning, then why did we not know that at the beginning? If we needed to spend more at the beginning, then why were the sums not done correctly then? They were not, and the project has blown out.

Let me move on to Techport. This project is handled by the Treasurer, and it is really good. In a media release in May last year the Treasurer and the Premier were out there announcing that the Osborne maritime precinct infrastructure would cost \$120 million. They had looked into it and had scoped the project, they had worked out what needed to be done, and it was going to be done for \$120 million. What happened was that they realised they had mucked it up—another project bungled. They got in Mr Andrew Fletcher and others from the Defence Unit (and I commend their work), Admiral Scarce and those who followed (including General Cosgrove) and they checked the work. Guess what they found? They found that the Treasurer's work was tragically wrong. They found that they could not deliver it for \$120 million, that it would cost far more—in fact, about \$115 million of extra bail-out.

The opposition was actually tipped off to this back in July—in fact, there was an interdepartmental steering group working on it early in the year. When questions were raised about the project blowing out of control it was disbanded and wrapped up with the speed of light. The Treasurer did not want this out there before the election, so he came out with a big positive spin: 'We are going to reinforce this project. We are going to provide extra capabilities, extra rail tracks, extra infrastructure along the port.' These are all the things for which he forgot to scope in the first place because he bungled the project.

So the government said, 'We are going to put in an extra \$115 million.' Total bunkum. This is another project that the government has messed up; another project that it did not scope correctly from the outset; it did not do its sums. When it got in Andrew Fletcher and other professionals who did do their sums they pointed out the Treasurer's mistakes, and he had to come in here with his tail between his legs and put out a media release to make it sound as if the government was re-inventing the project. Whenever you mess up anything in this government you just say that you are re-scoping the project.

These are two bungled projects, with millions of dollars involved, because ministers did not get their sums right at the very beginning. They now have to come in here and reveal to the parliament that they have messed up.

Time expired.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The house has had ample time for frivolities during question time; I suggest that those making grievances be allowed to do so in peace.

SCHOOLS, WIRREANDA HIGH

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson): I rise to inform the house of a disgraceful case of bullying—

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mawson has the floor; he shall have his allocated time and he is able to speak without assistance.

Mr BIGNELL: I rise to inform the house of a disgraceful case of bullying in a South Australian school. I know members on both sides of this chamber would agree that bullying in schools is totally unacceptable. The case I refer to was so serious it resulted in an article being published in the Australian Education Union's journal, a leading education publication. The bullying I refer to was not carried out by students. They, thankfully, are better behaved than the perpetrators in the case to which I refer. The bullies referred to in the journal are Prime Minister John Howard and federal Liberal member for Kingston, Kym Richardson. John Howard is no friend of teachers. For more than a decade, he has been openly dismissive and disrespectful of them. The Prime Minister has continually devalued our teachers and public school system. His government spends 74 per cent of its education budget on private schools which are attended by 30 per cent of Australian children, yet he is only too happy to use teachers and public schools in a desperate bid to try to boost the slim re-election chances of one of the worst-performing members of his federal Liberal team.

Kym Richardson, the member for Kingston, who has supported the unfair changes to Australia's industrial relations laws, knows he is destined to be a 'oncer', a one-term wonder in the federal seat of Kingston. But that is no reason for the desperate, unbecoming behaviour he recently displayed at Wirreanda High School. On 29 August this year, Prime Minister Howard, who has regularly said that politics should not be taken into our schools and forced on students, joined Kym Richardson at Wirreanda High School gymnasium at Morphet Vale in an exercise in pure politics, and I now quote from the journal article to explain what happened that day. It states:

School staff involved in the event were required to pin on badges saying 'Kym Richardson: Security and Direction for the South'. Richardson also didn't miss the opportunity to boost his profile. He had his poster flying inside the function lest anyone forget who had organised it or what for its purpose was.

He certainly had a lot riding on it and seemed to be feeling the pressure. This might explain the threats he made against local senior citizen Patrick Sheehy who was giving out Your Rights at Work stickers as part of a small protest by retired workers. Sheehy told AEU Journal an angry Richardson confronted him on the school oval, which was being used as the car park.

'He was very dogmatic and told me if I did not stop he would have the police come and I would be taken away and arrested,' [Mr Sheehy said]. He ignored the threat which turned out to be hollow anyway.

The smattering of pensioners concerned with their grandchildren's future seemed innocuous enough but the Canberra spin doctors weren't happy. When Prime Ministerial adviser Marnie

Gaffney arrived 15 minutes ahead of her boss [John Howard], she had a word in assistant principal Zoe Christopher's ear.

'They've got their signs connected to the fence. . . so you might want to get out there and do something about it,' prompted Gaffney. To her credit, Christopher didn't get involved.

[Mr] Howard arrived and worked his way along a line of students and staff shaking hands. He ignored the basketball team who had spent all morning warming up to casually shoot a few hoops as he pressed the flesh.

There was an absurd air about the whole thing. Tech Studies Coordinator Dave Hooper could certainly see the funny side. 'It's nice to see the school all dressed up for the occasion. I haven't seen the gym shed fully painted for 16 years,' he quipped. 'The flower arrangements they've brought in across the front of the gym add a special touch as well.'

More than a few Your Rights at Work stickers were on display and members had made up their own 'Wirreanda—Public and Proud' t-shirts. The use of a public school for political campaigning didn't sit well with a lot of people. 'There's a lot of irony in Howard coming down here looking for votes. He's usually knocking public education,' said AEU member Keith Lord. 'As a teacher I feel undermined by him. That crap about public schools having no principles really cut to the quick for a lot of people.'

This week, Kym Richardson was at it again. At a function on Tuesday attended by students from five southern schools, at a public school and in school time, he gave the students plastic Liberal goody bags. I was also at the function and, in keeping with what is right, I provided the students with souvenirs from this house. Non-political parliamentary pen holders and bookmarks are appropriate gifts for students learning about leadership. It is important that, as leaders in our community, we go into schools, hand out awards and teach the kids about leadership and having a sense of community, but you should not be handing out Liberal Party propaganda in a desperate bid to win a seat.

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I rise today to correct some things that were alluded to about me. The other night I was speaking in the house and putting a proposition to the government that it do some things to try to help out the farming community and the regional towns which will be struggling as a result of having very little income.

The Hon. R.J. McEwen: Which I support and on which I complimented him.

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, absolutely. The minister did. The minister has told me that he has taken my comments on board, and I thank him for that. I am a little disappointed that the member for Bright was offended by my remark that her comment that the best thing we could do for the farmers in South Australia was for the federal government to sign the Kyoto Protocol was inane. In context I believe that her comment was inane, and I stick by what I said. What I did not do was name the honourable member. I did not say who said it. I simply said that the remark was inane because it had nothing to do with what I was talking about. I am a little disappointed that the member for Bright came into the house, started talking about issues, took everything I said out of context and tried to put on the record that, in fact, I have no concern about the potential for global warming to change our climate. I do have a great deal of concern about that.

I want to talk about a couple of other points made by the member for Bright in her contribution. She said that this issue is above politics, and I agree. This issue is above politics. If the government of South Australia agreed that this was above politics, it would not have set up a Premier's Council on Climate Change Control. As soon as you put the word 'Premier' in front of all these little groups, everyone in the

media and in South Australia knows that the Premier is playing politics again. That is part of the problem. The member for Bright reckons that this is above politics, and I agree with her. It should be above politics. I say also to the honourable member that accepting the evidence that global warming is potentially upon us does not mean that every announcement the Premier makes about global warming is necessarily a sensible or even beneficial initiative.

I would argue that putting photovoltaic cells on some of our schools and on the new terminal building at the airport is an absolute waste of money, which will have no beneficial implications with regard to global warming. People must understand that the laws of economics are just as sound as the laws of physics. The law of diminishing returns states very clearly—and it is a law that cannot be changed or meddled with—that every time you spend another dollar on the same function, service or good the return you get for that extra dollar is reducing.

The reality is that Australia already has quite effective and efficient electricity generation. Pouring more dollars into greenhouse efficient generation, such as photovoltaic cells, does not solve the problem. It is a poor use of those dollars that we are putting into this problem. We would be a lot better off if we spent those dollars building nuclear power plants in China and India. If we were serious about doing something about global warming we would be encouraging that to happen—unlike the Premier (in his tilt at the ALP presidency) who came in here this week and raised the issue of South Australia selling uranium to India.

If the Premier was serious about global warming, he would be helping the Prime Minister in Canberra to work out a way in which we can aid the Indians to get access to uranium and to build more nuclear power stations. That will do a lot more to solve the problem of global warming than putting a few photovoltaic cells on top of a couple of schools around Adelaide. I contend that the member for Bright just wants to take a deep breath and realise that other members are concerned about major issues. She does not have the complete hold on it. It is a much bigger issue than she alludes to.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: I never said that she did not make some good points, but she would have the house believe that she is the only member who knows anything about it. She would also have the house believe that our federal government is doing nothing about it. In fact, it is, and I invite her to look at the web site of the Australian Greenhouse Office in Canberra.

Time expired.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta): I was very pleased to be present last Friday at the 2006 Study Adelaide Letters Home competition awards presentation. One of the key goals of the state government is to increase our share of the international student market over the next five years. Having just come back from Vietnam, I can attest to the huge effort being put in by other Australian states in attracting students from that country, especially by Queensland. South Australia expects to attract more than 20 000 overseas international students this year alone. We know that international education is now our fifth largest export sector and provides significant financial benefits to the wider South Australian community.

In fact, it is now worth \$400 million to the local South Australian economy and supports around 2 500 jobs.

However, we need to increase this figure. The aim is to double our share of the national overseas student market to 9 per cent by 2013. Education Adelaide, led by the dynamic chief executive, Denise von Wald, is the government agency responsible for fostering and expanding South Australia's international education industry. Part of its role is to ensure that international students feel welcome and valued by the wider community. To do this, the agency runs a year long program of social activities and programs for students, via both its email database of 1 300 students and also through its member institutions. The Study Adelaide Letters Home competition formed part of the program of activities for 2006, and culminated in a charming cocktail party at the Festival Theatre where the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. Paul Caica) gave out the awards.

Winners received a \$500 ANZ bank account, and those who were highly commended received giant Haigh's chocolate frogs. There were five categories: schools; masters and PhD students; bachelor students; vocational, education and training students; and the ELICOS category for English language students. I would like to read some of the excerpts from the winning letters. Eriko Matsuura from Japan writes:

As you know, I study at Port Adelaide TAFE. Everyone here is very kind. If I have any difficulties with my studies, there is always someone here to help me. Unfortunately, my school days in Japan were very different. We concentrated only on the examination and we didn't care a lot about our fellow students.

When I first came here, I was very impressed with people's behaviour. As I always use public transport, people who I have never met, speak and laugh with me. If an elderly person needs assistance, someone is always there to help them. Japanese people don't communicate very much with people we don't know. I believe that we should embrace this Australian attitude.

Ngoi Jiang Li says:

I involved myself in ballroom dancing as well as in the Students Association. I deal with issues concerning international students like myself, one of the highlights being the annual Impressions Night. This multicultural night looks forward to an attendance of around 800 people. It's been tiring, but all good fun.

Tell you a secret, I've decided to be an Australian permanent resident after I finish my studies. For now... don't tell my parents about that!

Fan Li-Chieh says:

In Adelaide, the people are friendly. When I get lost or need help, they will give me a hand immediately. The city is very convenient, because there is perfect public transport which is similar to the MRT system in Taiwan.

The weather here is a little bit colder than Taiwan, but that is okay for me. The sky is so blue and the air is refreshing, because in Taiwan it is rare to see blue sky. At night, you can see a lot of stars in the sky, but in Taiwan you have to calculate on your fingers and toes!

These students are great ambassadors for our state. If they are happy, they will promote the state as a study destination to friends, family and other prospective students in their home country. The students to whom I spoke were—

Time expired.

BAROSSA VALLEY FUNDING

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I rise today to make a few personal remarks, which I am encouraged to make following the remarks yesterday about Mrs Janette Howard, wife of the Prime Minister, which were unpleasant, unnecessary and unwarranted; and also the comments by Prime Minister Tony Blair in relation to his wife Cherie. On my own 38th wedding

anniversary, I want to pay a tribute to my wife and thank her for all her wonderful support for me over all these years. I also want to refer to the spouses of all other MPs and the partners of all MPs in this place, and in all parts of Australia, because we do remember and appreciate our partners. We are the MPs and our careers certainly affect the life of our partners. We should never forget that.

I want to go on and speak today about the amount of money that the government is purported to have spent in the Barossa Valley. After being pressed on the subject, the Minister for Regional Development has listed a range of projects and funding that the state government has put into the Barossa, or at least says it has. Unfortunately, the residents of the Barossa Valley, including myself, have not seen any improvement in any area of state government jurisdiction in the region for sometime. The residents and visitors to the Barossa are the ones who have made the impact as regards the successful tourism industry that we see today. But it is under great strain and showing signs of lack of government promotion and lack of government marketing.

The minister claimed that during the last four years over \$4 million of state administered funds has been spent on repairs and improvements to Barossa roads. One road in particular she mentioned is the Barossa Valley Way. Well, Mr Speaker, I travel that road regularly and I have not seen any major improvement at all on the Barossa Valley Way in the past four years. It may be called the tourism boulevard of the state because it does lead to the heart of the Barossa, but without doubt it is one of the most dangerous and ill-maintained roads in the state, with thousands of tourists travelling on this road weekly to visit the Barossa Valley. I feel that it is about time the Rann Labor government put its money where its mouth is and started making a real difference, one that people can notice.

In the weeks prior to the March state election we saw minor upgrades to the road. We saw new roadside barriers, and guess how much work has been done since the election? None. That's right, none. They were there two days before the election putting up these new barriers, of shiny silver, and then the day after the election they packed up, and what has been done since? Nothing, zilch, absolutely nothing. Has the government spent all its money on its election campaign and now cannot afford to spend it on things that really matter to the state? As I said in a speech the other day, the government has a lot of priorities and a lot of it, I am afraid, is wasted.

The minister also stated that the government has spent money on other areas of infrastructure in the Barossa Valley, including energy, water, land, information and communications technology, health, education and training, and transport. Words, yes, but I do not see it. I would like to raise the matter of the amount of money which has been spent on health in the Barossa Valley. The minister stated that the government has spent money on the continued upgrade of the hospital facilities. We need new hospital and health facilities, not just an upgrade of them. Yes, we spent \$300 000 there about 18 months ago, but it was wasted. It is like putting new tyres on a T-Ford that is totally rusted out and had it. It was just a patch-up job. You are wasting your money. For far too long patch-up jobs have been the only priority for this government. We need much more than that. They are only just meeting the OH&S standards. I feel that if it was not for the fantastic, wonderful staff who work at these hospitals they would be closed down.

Transport, Mr Speaker, as you know, is poor. I have been campaigning for some time for a rail passenger service to the

Barossa Valley, and we have had no positive feedback from this government. We see freight trains running along these tracks. They have lost their accreditation to run a passenger service. I asked a question in this house a couple of weeks ago whether the minister could assist getting that accreditation back, and his answer was a terse, 'Well if the private enterprise can buy a train then the private enterprise can fix the track.' Well, what sort of encouragement is that? We know that Mr John Geber has actually bought the Barossa Wine Train, bought it, saved it from the wreckers, and what thanks has he been given? What encouragement has he been given since? None. None that I am aware of, none at all. So they saved the Wine Train and now there is no guarantee at all that they are going to be able to drive it on the tracks. So, really; this battle has been going on for three or four years, and there is nothing. At least a word of encouragement from either the Minister for Tourism or the Minister for Transport, one or the other, or both, would certainly help the operators. We do not get anything. Nothing. No offer, no message, nothing, and you wonder why the frustration continues.

WORKCHOICES LEGISLATION

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Much has been said in the media recently about Australian values. It appears that the sorts of things that are very difficult to define accurately—yet are intrinsic to our way of life—are core values which, for me, are underpinned by values of access and equity. These values form an important part of the curriculum in local schools, so my hopes for the future remain bright. As society continues to change, demands on parents and families increase. Without encouragement to embrace that most Australian value—the right to a fair go—it will be difficult to see the new IR laws deliver improvements, particularly for workers less able to represent themselves in the minefield of fine print that the new legislation has delivered.

We begin to see the impact of the IR measurements being enforced by the Liberal federal government, particularly here in South Australia, where, unfortunately, there are many struggles going on in work places. Even though some amendments are being made to the legislation, they are unable to ameliorate the effects of these IR laws, and Australian IR laws are now amongst the worst in the world. We all remember the MUA dispute in the late 1990s which created scenes which I hope will never be repeated, but the second wave, I fear, has already started.

South Australian unions have been playing a particularly active leadership role, and I commend their initiatives and efforts under state secretary Janet Giles. The unions have been supporting workers in their protracted dispute with the management of Radio Rentals. Unfortunately, there are many workers in the meat industry who have been battling on many fronts for a very long time, largely unnoticed. Recently their plight was brought to our attention by the sad death of a man, who was working in an abattoir and who may or may not have had an Australian workplace visa. He died tragically in the Murray River.

Apart from the difficulties and dangers (because of their lack of English) these workers are faced with in some workplaces, there is also the possibility that these workers may be exploited along with the locals who work beside them. It appears that visas (such as the one that this man came in under) are being used to bring in cheap foreign labour at the expense of local jobs. As Janet Giles said, we do not want

to see local workers denied the chance to work because labour has been brought in from overseas, just as we do not want to see foreign workers brought in and not treated fairly.

The fear of losing their job and being removed from this country leaves many of those workers in a very poor position. There is evidence of foreign workers being used at Holden's as well as in the meat industry. The struggle with T & R Abattoirs at Murray Bridge has seen Chinese workers exploited at a time when local unemployment has risen by another 160 following the closure of the Clipsal plant. Use of worker visas usually means that it is working by stealth. We all need to make sure this practice does not go uninvestigated.

Meatworkers have been fighting in New South Wales. The Cowra Abattoir was at the centre of a legal controversy over corporate restructuring under WorkChoices. It was recently closed and, I believe, put into voluntary administration with the loss of over 100 jobs. The meatworkers at that plant, no doubt, were going to be replaced by a whole new work force, and this was possible under the laws we are now talking about.

In our own state branch of the Meat Workers Industrial Employment Union, under the leadership of Graham Smith, one case involved a worker who was sacked after refusing to work weekends and taking time off to look after sick children. An unfair application was lodged in the Industrial Relations Commission where the company argued that the worker was on probation and that they could do what they liked. Suspect behaviour and allegations were taken to the commission and eventually, on the morning of one of several hearings, the company decided to withdraw the case and settle out of court. This type of case (which can take several weeks to resolve), can cause a great deal of stress to everybody involved.

A campaign to try to get workers off AWAs and onto collective enterprise agreements has seen delegates at sites threatened with the sack if they hand out newsletters. This type of threatening activity (aggressively pursuing a union delegate in the course of their job) is unlawful and very unAustralian. It is not the sort of behaviour you want to see on work sites and workplaces in our country. We do not want to see the fear element brought in to workplaces.

A card that is often played by the federal government—and we have seen it in the past over issues such as *The Tampa* and the children overboard—has become part of the Australian election campaign. I would not want to see this type of behaviour at the next election. It is important that truth is not the first victim in the IR battle that is about to take place.

SCHOOLS, CAPITAL WORKS PROJECTS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The member for Morphett asked me a question today in question time about capital works projects at several schools. I would like to inform the member that, thanks to the government's strong investment in public education, we have a large number of capital works ongoing at any one time and we only ever print

a sample of our capital works projects in the budget papers. Capital works at all of the locations to which he referred are in train and are funded. Woodside will go to tender soon, McLaren Flat and McDonald Park primary schools are currently out to tender, and Kapunda is already under construction.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES

The Legislative Council gave leave to the Minister for Police (Hon. Paul Holloway), the Minister for Emergency Services (Hon. Carmel Zollo) and the Minister for Environment and Conservation (Hon. G.E. Gago) to attend and give evidence before the estimates committees of the House of Assembly on the Appropriation Bill, if they think fit.

DEVELOPMENT (DEVELOPMENT PLANS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): 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.

The *Development Act 1993* and associated regulations came into operation on 15 January 1994.

This Act and Regulations set the statutory processes and procedures for the South Australian planning and development system.

Substantial amendments to the *Development Act 1993* were made in 1997, 2001 and 2005.

This Government is progressing with a wide range of initiatives to improve the State's planning and development system in order to provide greater certainty for the community and applicants in regard to policies, procedures and timeliness.

As part of this program, the *Development (Development Plans) Amendment Bill 2006* is the second of a suite of Bills that the Government proposes to introduce.

The introduction of these Bills highlights the breadth of amendments proposed by the Government. It also provides Parliament with an opportunity to consider each Bill in manageable parcels rather than the all encompassing Sustainable Development Bill introduced into Parliament in 2005.

In addition to splitting the legislative initiatives into separate, key parcels, a number of provisions in the Sustainable Development Bill have not been included or amendments have been made to the provisions as a result of consultation and amendments filed by the Opposition and other Parliamentary parties.

There can be no doubt that the necessary improvements to the planning and development system should involve State and Local Government giving greater priority to the setting of clear strategic policies in order to provide greater certainty for the community and applicants. Councils and agencies also need to have a clear strategic framework within which to work.

The Bill reinforces the importance for State and Local Government to undertake strategic planning on a regular basis and to involve the community in preparation of such policies. Such strategic policies set the framework for more detailed development assessment policies contained in Development Plans.

Strategic Planning

The Bill refers to both physical and social infrastructure. There is a requirement that the relevant Minister and government agencies provide councils with information on infrastructure planning. This is an important issue facing the State and the Government is committed to a systematic approach to the provision of infrastructure. The infrastructure planning associated with the section 30 review will be taken into account during the Development Plan Amendment process (herein to be referred to as DPA process). Additional infrastructure planning may also need to be undertaken at the DPA stage and this is acknowledged in the Bill.

The Bill requires the Government to review the Planning Strategy on at least a five yearly basis. Such policies need to also address infrastructure issues.

The Bill also requires councils to undertake strategic planning on a five yearly basis. Such provisions are addressed by clarifying the key elements in the council section 30 reviews which have been a requirement of the *Development Act 1993* since 1994.

Such State and Local strategic reviews ensure that the full range of economic, environmental and social issues including infrastructure planning are set out.

This Bill includes consequential amendments to the *Local Government Act 1999* to enable the "strategic planning" requirements of the *Development Act 1993* and the "strategic management" requirements of the *Local Government Act 1999* to be undertaken as a single and complementary exercise. This avoids a duplication of procedures under separate Acts of Parliament.

The Bill also encourages State and Local Government to ensure that development assessment policies contained in Development Plans are pertinent and up to date.

This means that the community is more confident in the way in which their neighbourhood will evolve over time, and will assist applicants in deciding the most appropriate location to undertake development.

As part of the streamlining of the amendments to Development Plans, the Bill places particular emphasis on State and Local Government paying greater attention to the timeliness of the review of policies in Development Plans.

Desired Character

The community has indicated that it considers the protection and enhancement of local neighbourhoods is important. Applicants have indicated that they require better information on the design standards by which their applications will be assessed. As a consequence, the Government through this Bill strongly promotes the inclusion of desired character policies in Development Plans.

The separate issue of Local Heritage listing in Development Plans is to be included in a *Development (Local Heritage) Amendment Bill 2006* which we propose to introduce into Parliament later this year.

Development Plan Amendment Process

The Bill sets out the revised procedures by which councils are to prepare and consult on proposed amendments to the Development Plan for the area.

The Bill replaces the existing term "Plan Amendment Reports" (or PARs, as they are known) with the term "Development Plan Amendment" (DPA), in order to more accurately reflect the role of the documents released for public consultation.

The Bill also provides three clear procedural paths to amend such policies. Process A relates to complex controversial matters with separate agency and public consultation. Process B relates to most policy amendments where the key strategic issues are clearly defined and agreed to by the council and the Minister. Process B involves simultaneous agency and public consultation and as such, the process will be shorter than that of Process A.

The third process (process C) is the same as Process B. However it enables the community consultation process to be shortened to one calendar month rather than two but on the proviso that every property owner or occupier affected by the proposed changes is notified by direct mail of the proposed DPA.

Agreement of Process A, B or C will be reached by the Minister and the council for each PAR/DPA at the initial Statement of Intent stage.

The amendments to the procedures associated with the preparation of Development Plan amendments gives greater flexibility to the Minister and councils on deciding upon the appropriate course to take. This avoids the "one size fits all" approach to amending Development Plans that currently exists and will enable the process to be tailored to the complexity of issues at hand. This amendment will importantly speed up the process for Development Plan amendments that are relatively simple or have initial, broad support, whilst allowing more time for the more complicated Development Plan amendments.

DPA Timeliness

In regard to timeliness of processing of DPAs, the Bill requires that the ERD Committee of Parliament be provided with a report showing the agreed timetable as set out in the Statement of Intent and the actual time taken. This will enable the ERD Committee as well as the Minister to monitor the progress of DPAs.

The Bill also enables the Minister to have an independent investigator to examine the policy review processes of a council if there are consistent ongoing delays in the policy review provisions of the Act. These provisions mirror the current provisions of section 45A of the Act relating to the investigation of development

assessment procedures of councils. The section 45A provisions were supported by the LGA when they were introduced in 2001.

Improvement in PAR Timelines

The Rann Government has over the past few years put considerable effort into improving internal processes within the existing legislation in order to improve processing times for PARs.

Two initiatives of the Rann Government have been the Better Development Plans program which has been warmly embraced by local government and the "Streamlining PARs" project that was introduced in September 2004 jointly by the former Minister and the late John Legoe who was at the time President of the LGA.

Recent statistics show:

- 109 active PARs in July 2005 increased to 131 in May 2006. This demonstrates the continued trend of high levels of activity being undertaken across the State in relation to Development Plans. The Government is keen to see such high levels of activity continue and acknowledges that increased levels of activity can at times mean resources are spread more thinly and can consequently result in longer timeframes. However, despite the marked increases in activity the statistics show:
 - more PARs are less than 24 months old (from 55% to 59%)
 - fewer PARs are older than 24 months (from 45% to 41%)

The intent of the changes proposed by this Bill is to provide councils, government agencies and the community with procedural certainty through a horses for courses approach that the Government is confident will over time deliver better quality Development Plans, whilst continuing to improve the timelines.

Median Times

- On the whole, Council PARs are being completed more quickly; the median timeframe for approved Council PAR process was 29 months in 2003/04. That figure is now down to 24 months in 2005/06.
- The average time to complete a Ministerial PAR has fallen from 27 months in 2004/05 to 21 months in 2005/06. This demonstrates that this Government is responding more quickly to issues of importance to the State.
- Given the recent progress of the *Development (Panels) Amendment Bill 2006* and the emphasis clearly being placed on councils to focus on engaging with their communities of getting their policies right, we expect the number of PARs to increase before the end of the next financial year.

The Role of Better Development Plans (also known as BDP)

- The Government has agreed to 12 BDP Conversion Statements of Intent.
- We now have the situation where Ceduna, Alexandrina, Whyalla and Playford are preparing SOIs. Twenty-five councils have shown general interest but are yet to lodge an SOI. 36/68 councils—more than half the State has voluntarily embraced the BDP program in preparing PARs.

Major Development Process Amendments

This Bill also incorporates provisions to improve the "Major Development" assessment procedures. Experience from the operation of these provisions since 1997 has indicated that the six week period associated with the Issues Paper provisions provide little or no additional information to that already identified by the expert panel responsible for preparing the guidelines. Thus, in line with the Government's priority of promoting timely decisions, without reducing the quality, these provisions are to be repealed. The six to ten week public consultation for the different forms of major development assessment remains unchanged.

The role of the Major Developments Panel is incorporated into the Development Assessment Commission. However, the current requirements for specialist experts is retained by the Minister appointing specialist members to the Development Assessment Commission when DAC is dealing with a Major Development proposal. Given the common membership requirements on both existing bodies and the ability to appoint additional specialist members, it is appropriate to reduce the number of statutory bodies. It will be easier for the public to understand the role of the Commission and meetings will be easier to arrange while still maintaining the benefits of the current system.

I commend the Bill to the House.

I seek leave to have the explanation of Clauses inserted in Hansard without my reading it.

EXPLANATION OF CLAUSES

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

This clause is formal.

2—Commencement

The measure will be brought into operation by proclamation.

3—Amendment provisions

This clause is formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Development Act 1993*

4—Amendment of section 4—Interpretation

This is a consequential amendment.

5—Insertion of section 10A

Under proposed new section 10A, the Development Assessment Commission will, when acting under Part 4 Division 2 Subdivision 1 of the Act, be able to be constituted of 1 or 2 additional members appointed by the Minister for the purpose. The role of the Development Assessment Commission in such a case will replace the role of the Major Developments Panel.

6—Amendment of section 11—Functions of the Development Assessment Commission

The role of the Development Assessment Commission is to be clearly focussed on development assessment. In doing so, the Development Assessment Commission will be able to provide advice and reports to the Minister on trends, issues and other matters that have emerged through its assessment of applications under the Act.

7—Amendment of section 21—Annual report

The period for the completion of the annual report is to be extended to 31 October in each year.

8—Amendment of section 22—The Planning Strategy

The Minister will be required to ensure that the various parts of the Planning Strategy are reviewed at least once in every 5 years.

9—Amendment of section 23—Development Plans

Express provision is to be made relating to a Development Plan describing clear directions with respect to the characteristics and other aspects of the natural or constructed environment that are desired within the community.

10—Amendment of section 24—Council or Minister may amend a Development Plan

These amendments relate to the initiation of an amendment to a Development Plan. Section 24(1)(a)(iv) of the Act is to be recast and, in doing so, the ability of the Minister to act under this provision will be limited to circumstances where the Minister considers "that the amendment should proceed after taking into account the significance of the amendment and the provisions of the Planning Strategy". Section 24(1)(a)(iva) is also to be recast so that an amendment may be finalised if a council has failed to take a step under section 25 after being required to do so by the Minister. Section 24(1)(a)(v) is also to be recast given the proposed new arrangements under section 30. Another new provision will allow the Minister to initiate an amendment in order to achieve consistency in the format of Development Plans, or in headings, terms, names, numbers or other forms of identifying or classifying material, or in order to introduce, revise or extend a set of objectives or principles that have been developed by the Minister to provide or enhance greater consistency across various policies. Another amendment will allow the Minister to initiate an amendment at the request of the Mining Minister.

11—Amendment of section 25—Amendments by a council

These amendments relate to the processes to be followed by a council that is proposing to undertake an amendment to a Development Plan. The council will now prepare a "Development Plan Amendment" (or DPA) rather than a "Plan Amendment Report". The processes surrounding consultation on a DPA will be set out more fully in the Act.

12—Amendment of section 26—Amendments by the Minister

This provision makes a series of amendments to the processes that are to be followed by the Minister when the Minister is considering an amendment to a Development Plan.

13—Amendment of section 27—Parliamentary scrutiny

It is proposed that when an amendment under section 25 is submitted to the Environment, Resources and Development Committee under section 27 of the Act, the Minister will provide a report that sets out—

(a) the timelines that were agreed between the Minister and the council for taking each step in the process; and

(b) the actual time taken for each step; and

(c) a report on the reasons for any delays; and

(d) if relevant, a report on why Process C was adopted; and

(e) other material considered relevant by the Minister.

Another amendment to section 27 will extend the period within which the Environment, Resources and Development Committee must consider a DPA if the period would otherwise lapse within an election period.

14—Amendment of section 28—Interim development control

A proposed amendment to a Development Plan will now be given interim effect according to a determination of the Minister (rather than the Governor).

15—Amendment of section 29—Certain amendments may be made without formal procedures

The Minister will be able, by notice in the Gazette, to amend a Development Plan in order to provide greater consistency with any provision made by the regulations. Another amendment will allow the Minister to remove from a Development Plan a place relevant to State or local heritage where the relevant building or other item that has been demolished, destroyed or removed.

16—Substitution of Part 3 Division 2 Subdivision 3

The scheme for periodic reviews of Development Plans by councils is to be revised and incorporated into a scheme involving the preparation of *Strategic Directions Reports*. A report will be required to be prepared within 12 months after a significant alteration to the Planning Strategy, as identified by the Minister, or in any event within 5 years after completion of the last report under this section.

17—Insertion of section 31A

This provision will enact a new power to initiate an investigation into a council if the Minister has reason to believe that the council has failed to efficiently or effectively discharge its responsibilities under Part 2 Division 2 Subdivisions 2 or 3 in a significant respect or to a significant degree. The provision is based on the scheme that currently applies under section 45A of the Act.

18—Amendment of section 45A—Investigation of development assessment performance

These are consequential amendments.

19—Amendment of section 46—Declaration by Minister

Proposed new subsection (1a) will allow a determination as to whether a development or project is of major environmental, social or economic importance under section 46 to take into account cumulative effects associated with other developments, projects or activities that may occur within the vicinity of the relevant site.

Proposed new subsection (1b) will allow the Minister to make a declaration under section 46 with respect to a development or project that is related to a development or project of major environmental, social or economic importance (and that is within the ambit of a declaration under subsection (1)).

20—Repeal of section 46A

The Major Developments Panel is to be dissolved and its role transferred to the Development Assessment Commission.

21—Amendment of section 46B—EIS process—Specific provisions

22—Amendment of section 46C—PER process—Specific provisions

23—Amendment of section 46D—DR process—Specific provisions

These are consequential amendments.

24—Amendment of section 48—Governor to give decision on development

It is proposed to deal expressly with a situation where a person who has development authorisation under section 48 is seeking to have that development authorisation varied. Another amendment will allow the Governor to delegate a power or function to the Minister (as well as to the Development Assessment Commission).

25—Amendment of section 48E—Protection from proceedings

26—Amendment of section 49—Crown development and public infrastructure

27—Amendment of section 49A—Electricity infrastructure development

28—Amendment of section 52A—Avoidance of duplication of procedures etc

29—Amendment of section 75—Applications for mining tenements to be referred in certain cases to the Minister

These are consequential amendments.

30—Insertion of section 101A

Each council will be required to establish a strategic planning and development policy committee in accordance with the requirements of this new section (unless the Minister is satisfied that another committee of the council is fulfilling the same functions).

Schedule 1—Related amendments and transitional provisions

The Schedule will make necessary or related amendments to other Acts, plus various transitional provisions in connection with the amendments effected by this Act.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN secured the adjournment of the debate.

**GENETICALLY MODIFIED CROPS
MANAGEMENT (EXTENSION OF REVIEW
PERIOD AND CONTROLS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 September. Page 889.)

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Frome): I rise to support the bill. I display some pragmatism in doing so in that I am a great supporter of genetic modification technology and I think it is going to be absolutely vital for Australia and South Australia that we adopt this technology, but one of the problems at the moment across Australia is that we have all these moratoriums in place and they come off at different times. What is desperately needed is a strong national debate where all the rubbish that has been talked about in the past disappears and we actually look at the technology and the benefits and weigh them up in such a way that we give due recognition to what GM crops actually offer us.

South Australia is very well placed. Our plant genomics centre is leading the way in a lot of these fields. Two of the really exciting bits of work that have been done by this centre are to do with drought tolerance and salinity tolerance. For South Australia this work offers some terrific benefits. At the moment, our farmers are in a terrible state with the drought. We keep hearing about climate change, Goyder's Line shifting, and whatever else. The future viability of South Australian farmers is tied up with their ability to use the best technologies available. The drought tolerance work that has been done is very exciting for much of the state, and not just in drought years because some of the lower rainfall areas will potentially gain enormously from drought tolerance.

The other issue that is really important is salinity tolerance. I visited the plant genomics centre a couple of weeks ago and I looked at some of the work it is doing. Environmentally, salinity tolerance will be absolutely vital. We know the challenge that we face with respect to the Murray. At the moment it is a lack of water, but there is a longer term problem of rising salinity in a lot of those areas. Whether they be trees, pastures or crops, without salt tolerance we will not win that battle. We will see an enormous amount of the basin become saline. If, in fact, there are not viable crops growing on that land, the wash into the river will see the whole system become choked with salt.

There is a great need for national leadership on this issue, and I think it is very important for the debate to take place

concurrently, particularly in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. That is absolutely vital. Overseas, state boundaries are not recognised as far as trade is concerned, and it will be very important that the three states all take the same approach, and do so at the same time. The danger of our not engaging in a decent debate and removing these moratoriums is that our agriculture in Australia will become non-competitive, which will then make it non-viable. That will create all sorts of social and environmental problems.

Unfortunately, a lot of the claims that have been made about GM foods over time have been proven to be incredibly wrong, but the fall-back position is, 'Yes, but because of the perception, we should not go there.' I think that is a pretty poorly informed point of view. If leaders in the past had taken the same attitude to GM as some people have, I do not think we would have either motor cars or electricity. It is a competitive world, and we will be assigned to agricultural mediocrity in Australia if we do not adopt the technologies that are available to us. I totally agree with the reasoning with respect to the bill, to bring us into line with New South Wales and Victoria, and I certainly look forward to the day when we can get on with it.

Some very exciting research is taking place at the moment. That it will benefit not only Australian agriculture but also the whole Australian community and the environment is beyond argument, and we need to get on with it. I urge the federal government to do everything in its power to make sure that the debate that will inevitably occur is well informed and is not hijacked by people with other agendas. I support the bill, and I certainly look forward to the time when the moratoriums across Australia are lifted and we get on with making this country competitive again.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I am speaking in support of this bill. I am supporting it principally because it gives us more thinking time, but I have some reservations, and I have an amendment that I will move in due course. The member for Frome in his contribution referred to his desire for a debate to take place in relation to GM crops, and I also sincerely wish for that. Perhaps I am hoping for an even more extensive debate than the member for Frome might have been anticipating. The member for Frome also talked about the debate potentially being hijacked by people with particular interests—

Mr Kenyon interjecting:

Mr HANNA: That is right. Would it not be awful if it was hijacked by scientists and people with concerns about health, or concerns about the market for our agricultural products? The fact is that it is not as clear-cut as the member for Frome or the minister have made out. We have a moratorium in South Australia at present in relation to commercial crops. I raise a real question about whether the open field trials taking place in South Australia are commercial, because seeds are produced that are sent overseas and, as I understand it, used commercially. It may not be a commercial crop in the very strict sense, but they are certainly producing material of commercial value that is being used commercially. One of the concerns about the open field trials that are allowed within the constraints of the current moratorium is the dispersal of pollen and the potential for genetically modified material to spread. I will pick up on some of those concerns when we consider the bill in detail.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I entered this debate four to six years ago. I did not support the legislation then, and I

certainly have some concerns about it now. Much of the debate has proven to be emotional and unfounded, and it has not stood the test of time. The debate over the four to six years has been clouded by misinformation, and we have seen what the cost of our delaying has done. We urgently need to cut our dependence on high-cost farm chemicals, and the rising levels of residues (which we do not advertise too much; we do not talk much about that) are of great concern, particularly when we experience a season such as this. We urgently need more drought tolerant cereal grains and legumes, particularly beans and peas, and we also need (again, without talking too loudly) salt tolerant varieties, and that includes grapes.

We need a national approach, and that is why I believe I understand where the government is coming from at this particular time regarding the legislation. However, I want to put on record the position I took four to six years ago, which I believe has been vindicated by what has happened since. Much of the negative rhetoric we heard then has not stacked up and, as the minister probably knows, this week meetings have been convened across the state, particularly on Eyre Peninsula, where growers now urgently require the start of a program to introduce Roundup Ready canola.

Canada leads the world in Roundup Ready canola, and the situation today in that country is that Roundup Ready canola and pure canola are put together in the same bin—and I heard that myself from a Canadian trader. In other words, there is no difference at all between the modified variety and non-modified variety of canola; there is no price differential, there is no penalty, and there is little or no buyer resistance. We heard that all this was going to happen, that you could not sell this product because you would pollute your seed base and would take a penalty on the world market. Well, that has not happened and a lot of these claims have been proved wrong.

As I have always said, South Australia, probably more than any other place in the world, has as much to gain as anyone by adopting a proper GM program. We have fantastic facilities here, as the shadow minister just said, particularly with the South Australian Plant Genomics Centre, and we are well placed to pick it up and do things responsibly.

Some of the stupid things that were said four to six years ago made it a very emotive argument and hijacked the whole issue. With what we know now I think we can have a much more mature discussion about the matter and come up with a decision. I agree that there has to be a national approach and I think we would be very foolish to go it alone here in South Australia. That is why I reluctantly support what the government is doing, and understand that we should not go anywhere without taking the other states with us. Until we get some clear water in relation to the other states it would be foolish to go out there and try to go it alone. That would force the hand of their governments and, in the long term, would probably be the wrong decision for all of us. With those few remarks I support this bill, although with much reluctance.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Members who were here in the previous parliament will know that I was one of the members appointed by this house to sit on a select committee into the very topic of this bill. In fact, it was as a result of that select committee that the principal act we now amending came into being.

Mr Venning: So it was your fault!

Mr WILLIAMS: Thank you, colleague. I would like to remind the house that the function of determining whether a GM crop has an impact on either human health or the

environment is nothing to do with the state jurisdiction. That power has been handed to the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, which was set up by an intergovernmental agreement between all the states and the federal government. It looks at and licenses any GM plant material that can be grown if it can be established that that poses no threat to human health or the environment.

Our legislation is about the potential risk to our markets, and members have to get their head around that. The only part of the jurisdiction that was left open to the states was the bit that revolved around the marketing of GM crops and our other crops—because, of course, through the chain from the paddock to the table pretty well all our grains go through the same handling system. That is the genesis of this act, how we protect that handling system—whether it be the silos that are spread out around the state or the major grain terminals at our ports from where we ship our grains and other produce. It is the market for existing crops that we set out to protect and, obviously, the whole debate concerns what impact on markets GM crops would have.

My colleague the member for Schubert has just pointed out that the Canadian experience (and, indeed, the North American experience) with regard to canola is that there is no separation of the GM and non-GM product, and that has not impacted on their marketing. In fact, people keep saying to me that the Japanese are averse to buying GM product yet the reality is that most of the canola oil they buy is produced on Canadian farms, and there is no distinction between GM and non-GM product in Canada. It is the same as the Americans and their maize and soy. In fact, I believe it is very difficult to get soy anywhere in the world today that has no GM product in it.

I never was convinced by the argument behind this bill. I have had discussions with the minister about the need for this and I accept that it would be good to have a national approach, certainly across southern and eastern Australia, but I think it is a great pity that Australia is losing—indeed, has already lost—a great opportunity to be at the forefront of this technology. We already have the most efficient farms and farming systems anywhere, and that is the only reason we are able to export farm product all over the world while utilising what can be described as second rate land with a second rate climate and poor rainfall.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: That is the situation across most of the farmlands of this country. However, as my colleague the member for Frome says, we have good farmers. We have very good farmers using cutting edge technology who are ready to move with the times and have done for the last 150 years. Any time new technology arrives on the scene, they have moved with it, kept ahead of the pack, and kept costs down and efficiencies up. That is the only reason we have been able to market to the world. The reality is that this country, in spite of what some people say, still relies very heavily on the export of farm produce. When you look at the export dollars that are earned nationally and at this state level, we rely very heavily on farm produce to bring in export earnings to the nation. So it is an important sector of the Australian economy, and it disturbs and disappoints me that we have allowed ourselves to let this opportunity get away to some extent.

I urge all members to contact the Centre for Plant Functional Genomics at the Waite Institute and see whether they can make an appointment and have a meeting to get their head around what is happening with the very highly qualified

scientists who are working in the area of plant genomics. The reality is that they will make discoveries through their research and, if we do not allow them to use the sort of technology which broadly has been labelled GM (genetic modification) technology, the results of their research will take years and years, if not decades, to make a difference to our farming systems and the plants we are able to grow. The member for Schubert talked about farmers in rural South Australia now wanting some improvement because they believe that there are some species on the horizon that may be drought tolerant. That is the sort of thing they are working on. They are working on drought and frost tolerant plants, and drought and frosts are probably the two biggest issues facing our broadacre farmers today. They are probably the two things that can cut into their viability more readily than any other circumstance that occurs on a property. So, thank God we have that research happening.

As the lead speaker said, the opposition will support this measure before the house today. I sincerely hope that, at the end of this 12 month extension, we do move forward, stop what I can only describe as a bit of nonsense, and get on and allow our farmers and our scientists to take advantage of this technology. We have had some of the best brains in the world working on this technology right here in Adelaide—and we will continue to do that, hopefully—but if we do not move forward very soon we will lose that expertise and the scientists. They will move to jurisdictions where they can ply their trade and put the results of their research into practice.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I thank all members for what they have had to say this afternoon and for their support for the bill, although I note that one member wishes to extend the moratorium a little further than is the case in the bill we have before us. The member for Mitchell said it is not clear-cut. Well, the bill is quite clear-cut. As it stands, the moratorium will expire on 29 April 2007. This bill will extend the moratorium to 28 April 2008 and, in so doing, will also cause the review required under the act to be completed by 28 April 2008.

It is also clear-cut, as the member for MacKillop pointed out, that we are dealing at a state level with a very narrow aspect of transgenics generally and genetically modified crops in that, nationally, issues to do with environment and health are dealt with and at state level we deal with impacts on markets.

The member for Frome (the shadow minister) made a couple of very valid points about the need to have a mature debate in the lead-up to April 2008. I can advise the house that the commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forests is continuing to commission studies that address issues relating to GM crops. In June 2006, DAFF issued a report on legal liabilities which was prepared by the Australian Centre for Intellectual Property in Agriculture entitled 'A farmer's choice: Legal liabilities of farmers growing crops'. In April 2006 eight studies were announced looking at:

- the international and national marketing acceptance of GM canola;
- a path to market for GM canola: lessons learnt and the way forward;
- a GM canola information pack;
- the impact of GM technology on the future of the Australian oil seed industry;

- the economic impacts on the organic farming industry of the introduction of GM crops into Australia;
- the potential for GM crops as factories for pharmaceuticals or industrial compounds;
- the value of biotechnology: tools for insect pest and weed control; and
- the value of biotechnology applications to Australian agriculture: applications not involving commercial release of genetically modified organisms.

So, the member for Frome makes a very good point that there is still work to be done and, when we come to address this issue again in April 2008, we will hope that the starting point for the debate will be these papers and a serious and mature debate.

The member for Schubert made a very valuable point, which is of course that in North America and Canada with canola (and, obviously, with soy and corn in the US) there is co-mingling, and the thing that is missing in Australia at a national level is a coexistence framework. I do not think we in Australia are prepared yet to go down the co-mingling path and, even if we do find ourselves in the future growing GM crops, I believe there will be an expectation from traditional farmers and organic farmers that we do have a coexistence framework. So, the point that the member for Schubert makes is not applicable, and I do not believe will be applicable, as we move forward in this debate within the state.

The other points, of course, is abiotic stress factors and the fact that it is quite clear now that probably the only genetic tool that will be able to add abiotic stress genes into many of our annual crops will be transgenic technology. So it is a matter of waiting until we have cleared the decks and can see a clear way forward.

The other thing the member for Schubert said is that he believes that a cost has already been borne. Clearly, there is no evidence to date that we have borne any cost for having our moratorium on the growing of GM crops for human consumption. On the contrary, we have the lovely little boutique industry on Kangaroo Island, which, again, is small, and I acknowledge the point made by the member for MacKillop that these boutique markets are small. Even in Japan generically GM free is not recognised. Certainly, our system and the growing of GM-free canola on Kangaroo Island has provided a premium to those growers. With those comments, I thank all members for their support. I believe that we need to move into committee because an amendment has been lodged.

Bill read a second time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of a delegation from the People's Government of Kaifeng, China; Mayor Liu Changchun and associates. Huan yin. Welcome.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4.

Mr HANNA: I have a couple of questions of the minister, which relate to inquiries which, no doubt, will be covered in the review. One relates to the existing crops in South Australia. Will the minister guarantee that the Office of Gene Technology Regulator guidelines have been followed in relation to those crops?

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: First, I acknowledge the presence of John Cornish in the chamber. John is the Manager of Grain Industry Development within Primary

Industries. Of course, before John, Peter Carr was the lead manager within the agency, which has done a lot of good work. Yes, I can assure the honourable member. In fact, the honourable member might remember that, although trials in South Australia are now under our act, by the time we were running a trial a licence did exist; and the Office of Gene Technology Regulator said that that particular crop was safe in terms of the impact on the environment and human health.

That notwithstanding, we still imposed the same conditions on that trial as would have existed while they were trialling for the AGTR. Some people see that as draconian. We say, though, that we might as well leave those conditions in place. It is not having an adverse impact on those trials that are possible under the act of this state. You cannot do any better than having the same conditions on trials on crops that already have a licence as are imposed federally on crops that are being trialled before they have a licence.

Mr HANNA: I have one other question in the course of which I want to place some material on the record. I think the minister has already acknowledged that, for those farmers who are growing in the traditional manner, that is, without GM crops, at present there is a premium in the market. I want to place on record some comments made recently by the Western Australian Minister for Agriculture and Food, the Hon. Kim Chance. These comments were made on 14 September this year, just two weeks ago. I think it is particularly relevant because one of the alleged reasons for putting forward this legislation today is to get in step with New South Wales and Victoria in relation to the review of GM trial crops.

I want to point out that a variety of views exist across Australia, and that the views that are ultimately concluded in Victoria and New South Wales may not be shared in Western Australia, for example. I would not want to see us go down the eastern seaboard's track without taking on board alternative views. Just a couple of weeks ago, in relation to Western Australia's opposition leader, Paul Omodei, minister Chance said:

Mr Omodei's proposal to open up the entire Great Southern region to commercial trials would almost certainly lead to large scale contamination, subsequent risks to market access and price advantages currently enjoyed by Western Australian farmers while imposing higher costs on them for product segregation.

Minister Chance also said:

While the opposition extolled the virtues of Canadian GM canola, the provincial government of Alberta, Canada last month had to provide \$261 million to help its farmers because of falling canola prices even though wheat prices are rising. Is this what the opposition wants—for WA taxpayers to have to pay millions of dollars to help our farmers with the costs and price penalties involved in GM production? Western Australian farmers are also experiencing the same high input costs but, because of our GM free status, our farmers are managing to sell the whole of our canola crop and are receiving premium prices for it—\$50 per tonne more than Canadian farmers receive, and the Canadians cannot sell the whole of their crop.

I query whether the minister agrees with the concerns of the Hon. Mr Chance, and I seek an assurance that the concerns outlined there by the Western Australian minister will be taken into account in the review that this legislation talks about.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: Yes, obviously, the whole point of the review (and, as I indicated, the eight studies that have been managed federally) is about considering all these issues. However, I do caution the honourable member in terms of simply attempting on the surface of it to compare production out of Canada with production out of Western

Australia and then just using a dollar per tonne as a comparison. Obviously, different levels of oil will have an impact on the market, and the honourable member will find that, in Western Australia, they have a higher quality of oil. The honourable member needs to be a little careful about comparing prices per tonne. Prices per litre of extracted oil would be a more accurate comparison.

Some markets will pay a premium—and that is the debate which we will have over the next 12 months. No-one wants to grow a crop at a loss—that is absolutely pointless. There must be a margin for any farmer to be producing a crop, and obviously markets will drive all those production decisions. But, yes, we will be looking at all those issues over the next 12 months. Minister Chance is right when he says that the discussion ought to involve the whole of southern Australia. The shadow minister in making his opening remarks in support of the bill made the very valid point that, in global markets, you cannot separate out the southern states. The infrastructure and so on that will need to be developed will have to be shared across the southern states to be able to justify the capital costs of servicing the markets.

Clause passed.

Clause 5.

Mr HANNA: I move:

Page 2, line 17—Delete ‘fourth’ and substitute ‘sixth’

The bill is designed to extend the period for the review of GM crops in South Australia. At present, that review is due in 2007, and the bill extends that effectively to 2008. This amendment ensures that the regulatory regime which implements the moratorium will extend to 2010. My simple amendment, which replaces the word ‘fourth’ with ‘sixth’ has the effect of extending the moratorium by two years. If we have the result of a review in 2008, it seems to me that there will still need to be time to assess that review, have the debate that various members have said is warranted and then reach a conclusion about the way forward for South Australia. I am proposing a very cautious way forward, ensuring that we have ample time for debate before that moratorium is lifted.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: I indicate that the government does not support the amendment. Obviously, we must do these reviews in a timely manner. We do not want to send a signal to the marketplace that we have a closed mind on this. We want to send a signal, as the select committee said, that we are saying, ‘Yes, but’. We are saying ‘yes’ to the technologies, but we are also saying ‘but’. We still have a few questions about whether or not we can achieve a margin in the marketplace by not embracing this technology. Obviously that question must be asked in a timely manner, keeping in mind, though, that this does not preclude a further extension if, when we get close to 28 April 2008, there is still some doubt in people’s mind. We can have that debate then.

I believe that we are sending the right signal. We are saying, ‘Give us another year to do all this work; work with DAF in terms of the eight papers I talked about and put some pressure on people to undertake that work in a timely way.’ I will ensure that answers are then brought back to the house. We are not precluding a further extension, but I think it would be sad to send a signal at this stage that we want to buy another three years. That will also send the wrong signal, as the member for MacKillop pointed out, to our great research people at the Centre for Plant Functional Genomics.

We want to be sending a signal to our world-renowned researchers that they need to keep working on a number of these technologies because we are desperately in need of

continuing to improve our crops and, if climate change is happening, then we will have to speed up the time between developing new traits and having them in the field. We cannot afford to send anything other than a positive signal to our world-renowned scientists and keep them working as quickly as they possibly can.

Amendment negated; clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I particularly thank John Cornish for the valuable advice he gave me during the afternoon.

Bill read a third time and passed.

EVIDENCE (USE OF AUDIO AND AUDIO VISUAL LINKS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill with the amendment indicated by the following schedule, to which amendment the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

No. 1. Page 4, after line 7 (clause 4)—Insert:

- (7) If the victim of an offence or an alleged offence, or a member of the victim’s immediate family, advises the relevant prosecuting authority that he or she objects to the use by the court of an audio visual link or an audio link in a proceeding in respect of the offence, the prosecuting authority must object to the use of the link.
- (8) For the purposes of subsection (7)—
- child—a reference to a child is not limited to biological and adopted children but extends to a person in relation to whom another (who is not a biological parent) stands in the position, and undertakes the responsibilities, of a parent;
- immediate family of a person means any one or more of the following:
- (a) a spouse (including a putative spouse);
 - (b) a parent or guardian;
 - (c) a grandparent;
 - (d) a child (including an adult child);
 - (e) a grandchild (including an adult grandchild);
 - (f) a brother or sister;
- victim, in relation to an offence, means—
- (a) a person who suffers physical or mental injury, damage or loss as a result of the commission of the offence;
 - (b) a person who suffers psychological injury as a result of being directly involved in the circumstances of the offence or in operations in the immediate aftermath of the offence to deal with its consequences.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (JUSTICE PORTFOLIO) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 September. Page 907.)

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): I indicate that I will be leading for the opposition on this particular matter. I indicate to the house the opposition’s tentative support for this bill, which was introduced by the Attorney-General, I think, last Wednesday afternoon. In fact, I was in the chamber when the bill was introduced and I suggested that it was what we colloquially call a ‘rats and mice bill’. I indicate that, in all probability, we will be supporting it and, indeed, my explor-

ations into the detail of the bill in the intervening week have not changed my view that it is likely to be properly considered a bill which should receive our unqualified support. Essentially, it changes a whole lot of existing legislation in minor ways, such as by deleting references to 'hard labour', since we do not have hard labour in South Australia any more, at least as a criminal punishment under our law.

We may have hard labour for some people who are fathers of young children, and so on, but we do not have it as a tenet of our criminal law, and this legislation does things like remove obsolete references, and so on. I will put on record my understanding of what these things do, but, as I said, the Attorney-General introduced this last Wednesday, so our intention today is to put on record our tentative support for it, pending some confirmation from those we wish to consult about it and my having a briefing on it. So it is agreed that, whilst I will put some comments on the record today, we will not take it any further than that in terms of voting on the second reading.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: Well, you didn't ask me when I would do it. This legislation amends 16 other pieces of legislation, and then makes some general amendments to a number of others, and it does some minor things in that regard. For instance, under the Acts Interpretation Act it makes it clear that an act may be proclaimed to commence at a particular time, not just on a particular day, and in the case of the Companies (Administration) Act there is a change to allow the Corporate Affairs Commission to delegate its powers to a specific position rather than to a specified person, which means that if that person who has the delegation changes jobs, leaves, retires, it is not necessary to then delegate a new person by a notice in the *Gazette*, but you can simply have the new person occupying that position being the receiver of the delegated powers.

They are quite small amendments for the most part, but they do cover a couple of things which I think do deserve some further exploration. In particular, I note the Criminal Law Consolidation Act, and the amendment in that deals with section 49. The section 49 offences are those relating to unlawful sexual intercourse. At the moment to prove the offence under section 49(1) the prosecution has to prove that the victim was under the age of 14, and to prove the offence in section 49(3) the prosecution must prove that the victim was over 14. The Director of Public Prosecutions has raised the problem that there could be an anomaly in relation to someone who is 14, precisely 14. The Attorney's comments in his second reading contribution actually refer to someone turning 14 on a particular day and that person not being caught by either section 49(1), under 14, or 49(3), over 14. But it seems to me that the comment equally applies to anyone who is of the age of 14 years. And the same problem arises in regard to the offence of sexual servitude, in section 66, so a similar amendment is inserted in the Criminal Law Consolidation Act and overcomes the problem, by making it clear to say that a victim was of or above the age of 14 years, in section 49(3). So it is quite clear that you do not have to be either under or over, but once you get to the point of being 14 you are of or above the age of 14 years, and that removes the possibility of an argument arising under that anomaly, although I am not aware of that having been a problem in any case.

The Judicial Administration (Auxiliary Appointment and Powers) Act is also amended and, whilst I note the explanation given by the Attorney-General in his second reading

explanation, this is another area where I just want to have a little clarification by way of some discussions and briefings. What it does is broaden the scope of who may be appointed auxiliary judges, to in fact allow someone who is from another jurisdiction, from another state or territory, to be appointed. The Attorney raises the example of a case, which could arise, where a judge is himself a party to legal proceedings. If a judge is a party to legal proceedings, who is going to sit in judgment on that case? There would always be the allegation that there was not sufficient lack of bias in any of the local judiciary if they were appointed to hear such a case. So the appointment of auxiliary judges from another state is designed, according to the Attorney, to resolve that issue, so that if that situation arises we do have the power to appoint someone who does not have any bias, does not have any knowledge, does not have any contact with the person, to allow that case to be heard in an unbiased way.

One of the other things that the legislation does is amend the Prisoners (Interstate Transfer) Act 1982, and that relates to a national cooperative legislative scheme. However, there was a 2002 Federal Court decision which raised concern about the factors which must be considered by the minister when deciding whether or not to refuse the transfer of a prisoner.

Members interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: That's right. The more the Attorney provokes me, the longer I will make this speech.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: The Attorney should have learnt his lesson about that by now. So, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General considered that the minister should have a discretion to consider matters other than, simply, the welfare of a prisoner and, not being aware of the scheme until I read the Attorney's second reading speech, I have to say that it is common sense to allow the minister to take into account other things, such as, public welfare, which might be a consideration for a minister in deciding whether to allow or refuse a transfer under that act.

Interestingly, one of the things which is to be corrected by this legislation is the power of the Residential Tenancies Tribunal. The tribunal can terminate and make orders for possession of residential properties. There can be a problem with the lack of power of the tribunal to order that a termination, for instance, be continued, or that someone should not be able to move back in. The problem relates mostly to situations where someone might own a house, as an investment, which they end up renting out to their children. It becomes an issue when their children become problem tenants, disrupting the rest of the neighbourhood, but mum and dad are not living anywhere nearby and they are quite happy to renew the lease, even though their behaviour is such that the rest of the neighbourhood does not want them.

The amendment gives the tribunal power to order the landlord to take action to take possession of the premises. It also gives the tribunal the power not to permit the tenant to occupy a premises for a specified period, or until further order. So, the Residential Tenancies Tribunal can actually have some teeth in terms of resolving the issues. The tribunal usually hears relatively small matters concerning the eviction of tenants in cases where the landlord is keen to get them out and is taking action because either they have not obeyed the terms of the lease or they are not paying their rent, or something like that. There are already enough problems with that type of issue, and I can imagine the frustration and the angst of people when they finally get rid of the neighbours

from hell only to find that the landlord lets them back in as tenants.

On the face of it, it seems an eminently sensible proposition to give the tribunal more power in terms of the orders which it can make.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: It was a private member's amendment in the first place.

Mrs REDMOND: The Attorney says that it was a private member's amendment in the first place and, in typical fashion of this government, it does not want any private members' amendments or suggestions about legislation to get up.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No, we moved it when we were in opposition.

Mrs REDMOND: They want to have the glory of the changes for themselves.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No, you misunderstand me, deliberately.

Mrs REDMOND: I suggest to the whip that she keep her Attorney on a tight leash, otherwise I could talk for a long time. The Security and Investigations Agents Act was amended last year and some pragmatic considerations arise, which were not identified when it was amended last year. Basically, the tightness of the controls on security agents was increased, but one of the problems that has arisen is that police currently cannot fingerprint people outside South Australia. This amendment allows the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs to receive and acknowledge fingerprints from interstate. As I understand the draft amendment, it allows the swapping of fingerprint information with organisations in other states, such as other police services, so that people can have their fingerprints taken elsewhere and have that fingerprinting recognised here. That might save a considerable amount of pragmatic difficulty for people being registered and checked under the system which was introduced.

The amendment also clarifies the commissioner's immunity, which is a standard thing in legislation. The commissioner, in carrying out his duties, will be immune from actions as a result of his activities in carrying out his duties. That also applies to his decisions to cancel registrations and not just to suspend registrations.

The Subordinate Legislation Act 1978 provides that subordinate legislation—that is, regulations generally made under legislation in this state—has a 10-year lifespan and automatically, theoretically, comes up for renewal and review on the basis that it is appropriate for us to review our regulations every 10 years to check that they are still relevant and operating effectively. As the member for Bright saw

yesterday in our Legislative Review Committee, quite a list of regulations are due for review at the moment.

The amendment proposed by the Attorney provides that, if regulations are made pursuant to an agreement for uniform legislation, those regulations will expire in the same way as any other regulation made in this state. I have not quite figured out why they would not have applied in the same way but, if it removes some real or imagined argument that they do not, then it is appropriate to correct it and make it eminently clear that regulations under uniform legislation agreements will expire in the same way as other regulations.

In terms of the other acts—subject to the Attorney not hectoring me and heckling me—I do not intend to go through the detail of all the items. As I said, these items are what we would normally classify as rats and mice in terms of legislation because they represent just a series of minor changes. One that caught my eye, for instance, was the Trustee Companies Act because I was not aware that that act actually lists the names of all the trustee companies. A number of those trustee companies have changed not once but sometimes twice and more frequently since they were originally mentioned in the act, so the act refers to organisations which no longer exist but which, in effect, have become the same organisation but under another name, so it is entirely appropriate that we amend that.

I would have thought that the most sensible thing to do with all legislation in that regard is not to include the names of companies, organisations or anything like that unless it is a government authority. It is a sensible-seeming piece of legislation which amends quite a number of things. It deletes some references to things which are now obsolete, and is generally what I would call a tidying-up exercise. As I said, it appears to be relatively straightforward but there are a couple of things that I would like to check on, and I thank the Attorney for arranging for a briefing to be made available to me.

We do not intend to hold up the progress of this legislation, hence I indicate general support for what is being proposed by the bill and indicate that we are likely to vote very promptly in favour of it as soon as we return on the next day of sitting.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5 p.m. the house adjourned until Thursday 26 October at 10.30 a.m.