

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 22 February 2007

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

FORMER MEMBERS, RECOGNITION

Mr PISONI (Unley): I move:

That this house:

- (a) recognises the leadership of two of this state's most visionary members of parliament, the Hon. Norm Foster and the Hon. David Tonkin AO; and
- (b) calls on the government, subject to consultation with their respective families, to name—
 - (i) the proposed South Road/Port Road tunnel the 'Hon. Norm Foster Tunnel'; and
 - (ii) the proposed South Road/Anzac Highway underpass the 'Hon. David Tonkin Underpass'.

With regard to paragraph (b), I have undertaken the consultation referred to and received the approval of both families. Sadly, both of these men have now passed away. The Hon. Norm Foster and the Hon. David Tonkin were on opposite sides of the political divide but of one mind in their dedication and commitment to the best interests of this state. As I have mentioned, I have spoken to the families of both men, and they have indicated their approval of my motion and, indeed, the honour that they would feel should this house see fit to support it. In fact, I would like to quote from a letter that Rob Foster—Norm Foster's son—wrote to me when I approached him about my intention to move this motion, as follows:

Given that both sides of this house made reference in condolence speeches of his personal integrity and the substantial courage and foresight he displayed in crossing the floor to support the indenture bill of 1982, I feel optimistic that some kind of visible recognition can be afforded to him on behalf of the state for what has become the world's largest open-cut mine; a huge source of wealth and employment. Although Dad was never one to seek recognition, I feel that he would have been well pleased that his contribution to the long-term wealth and welfare of his home state be recognised in a visible and longstanding way.

By naming the two main elements of the South Road upgrade—the tunnel under Grange Road and Port Road, and the underpass under Anzac Highway—after Norm Foster and David Tonkin, the legacy of these far-sighted politicians can be recognised in a lasting and visible way. I note that in his condolence speech for Norm Foster, the Premier proposed to talk to BHP Billiton about naming a road or public space in the Olympic Dam township after Norm Foster. He said:

I am going to propose today that I will talk to BHP Billiton. I think that, with the Roxby Downs/Olympic Dam expansion, a road or other public place in the Olympic Dam township should be named after Norm Foster.

This was undoubtedly a heartfelt gesture on the Premier's part, wishing to highlight the actions of a man prepared to wear the odium of his own party to do the right thing for our state. It is not just my view but that of many I have spoken to that a more prominent testimonial is warranted. I do not think it is necessary to ask permission of BHP or Billiton to name a remote road after Norm Foster, as the Premier is suggesting, when this house can use its authority to name permanent and significant structures, financed by South Australian taxpayers, after not just the man who voted against the party's wishes but also the man who brought the legislation to parliament in the first instance, the Hon. David

Tonkin. The vision shared by these men was a key ingredient to South Australia's future prosperity. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons South Australians can afford major infrastructure such as the South Road projects is partly due to extra revenue this state collects from mining royalties directly related to this project, the foundations of which were laid a quarter of a century ago. And let us not forget the GST reforms and the Liberal Party's overhaul to fix up Labor's State Bank mess. Let us hope that we never see another chapter in the history of South Australia like that one.

Although BHP estimates up to a thousand extra jobs going at Olympic Dam when expansions are complete in 2014, the area is still one that will remain largely unvisited by South Australians, so naming roads or streets after these men in remote South Australia does not give enough prominence to their foresight. By naming larger and more prominent structures in the metropolitan area after these visionaries, their contribution will be recognised by tens of thousands every day. Many more South Australians will be reminded of their forward-looking stance—a stance which was not appreciated at the time by those who would later benefit from it. In South Australia we already have important and much used roads, infrastructure and public venues which are daily reminders of the great contribution to our community or sacrifice on its behalf made by certain individuals or groups; the Heysen Tunnels, Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Anzac Highway, the Dunstan Playhouse, all come to mind. The Olympic Dam reserve is estimated to contain 38 per cent of the world's known uranium. The boom in China has seen buoyant prices, and with a planned \$5 billion expansion the mine's production could potentially treble to 15 000 tonnes a year post 2010.

South Australia is poised to capitalise on high uranium prices and ever-increasing Chinese demand. The benefits of our state's economy and our children's future will be immense, not to mention the millions of tonnes of greenhouse gases that China would otherwise be pumping into the atmosphere if we had done what Labor and its key advisers had wanted and continued to lock up our uranium reserves. China today would be forced to burn coal to feed her increasing demand and energy to power her double digit growth. But what did John Cornwall say in his dissenting report? He said:

Despite its size, the project may only be marginally profitable. Roxby Downs will certainly not be the centrepiece for economic revival or survival in South Australia.

I understand that a young New Zealander named Mike Rann was advising the Labor opposition at the time! Our state's mining boom was made possible by the responsible and forward-looking policies of David Tonkin and the Liberal Party, and supported, at great personal cost, by Norm Foster who paid the ultimate political price for his vision. To give an example of the potential for our youth (made possible by the foresight of David Tonkin and Norm Foster), average weekly earnings for those workers engaged in uranium mining approached \$1 700—\$600 more than the average across all industries.

Of course, the flow-on effect in terms of increased economic activity, jobs of all kinds and taxation revenue for the state are most significant. It should, of course, be noted that AWAs have also made possible greater productivity, flexibility and bargaining power allowing attractive wages and conditions in the mining sector generally. South Australia's democratic political history this year celebrates 150 years, and its history is as interesting as it is young.

One would be hard pressed to find two men more distant in their make-up, personality and background than David Tonkin and Norm Foster: David Tonkin, a trained surgeon; Norm Foster, a former wharfie with little formal education. However, both men were intelligent, well read and well informed. They have gone on to share the credit for their foresight and initiative that today and for decades into the future will benefit South Australians from across all sectors of the workplace and the community. They were both instrumental in the establishment of Roxby Downs. Like the great Tom Playford, David Tonkin knew that this state needed to broaden its economic base. Just as Playford saw the need for South Australia to reduce its dependence on agriculture by introducing manufacturing to South Australia, David Tonkin could see the opportunity to broaden the South Australian economy even further by recognising the international opportunities that untapped uranium and copper reserves would give this state's economy far beyond the next election cycle.

Whereas the Liberal Party was united on the benefits of Roxby Downs (and there was very strong public support also), the Labor opposition was bound by the ALP's federal anti-uranium policy and was forbidden to support it, even though there were many in the Labor Party who found this policy difficult to digest. Even today, Labor has in place a 'no new mines' policy, and I am sorry that our Premier—who had a remarkable transformation reversing his opposition to uranium on the road to Damascus—was rolled by the anti-uranium senator, John Faulkner, for the job of federal President of the ALP. The federal ALP convention will be a hoot, I am sure. I wonder whether the Premier will take the advice of his most vocal supporter during his push for the ALP presidency, Dr David Suzuki, on this issue, and backflip again and vote to leave uranium in the ground, but that is a story for another day.

This motion is about the celebration of the lives of David Tonkin and Norm Foster and the recognition of their great contribution to South Australia. The naming of these tunnels has no cost, yet will provide a great benefit of recognition for two great South Australians for future generations of South Australians to share.

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

Delete all words after 'families' and insert 'to honour the late Hon. Norm Foster and Hon. David Tonkin by naming significant new infrastructure projects after them.'

While this government recognises and respects the contributions to South Australia made by the Hon. Norm Foster and the Hon. David Tonkin AO, the appropriate process for naming a road would need to include a comprehensive consultation approach working closely with councils and others. It is preferable when naming a road or other significant structure in recognition of a person that the road or infrastructure has some significance to that person. This principle is exemplified by the recent naming of R.M. Williams Way, a road that recognises the late R.M. Williams' birthplace and commemorates his contribution to the Mid North and outback of South Australia.

As all members are aware, the government has commenced detailed planning, design and property acquisition for the South Road upgrade/Anzac Highway underpass project. The community has been consulted on all stages of the project development, and one of the key design principles that has been adopted to date has been that the project will honour

the spirit of the ANZAC. It is important that the cultural importance of Anzac Highway as a memorial boulevard be recognised, and that we continue to recognise the significance of the contribution of the ANZACs to South Australia's history.

Suggestions for naming the new underpass have already been received by the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. In particular, the RSL is keen to ensure that the underpass is named after an ANZAC; and, in light of the significance of Anzac Highway, this suggestion is considered to have great merit. Further consultation needs to occur on the naming of this underpass, and this process can commence within the next few months. Norm Foster is well remembered for his contribution to the development of the Roxby Downs mine, and it may well be a more suitable commemoration of him to name a road or infrastructure associated with the huge developments of that project after him.

Indeed, this has already been proposed. In addition, in his speech to this house on 23 November last year following the death of Mr Foster, the Premier noted that it would be an act of reconciliation, affection and respect if a road or other public place in the Olympic Dam township could be named after Norm Foster. The South Road/Grange Road/Torrens Road project is still in the early concept planning phase. Any consultation on possible naming associated with the project could be undertaken as part of the community engagement process throughout the project's development.

The government agrees that the contributions of the Hon. David Tonkin should also be commemorated and that a suitable project which has special meaning honouring his work should be identified. On that basis, the government does not support the motion proposed by Mr Pisoni and instead proposes an approach whereby the community is engaged in any names adopted for the new structures, and that when structures are so named they are significant to the person being honoured.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I have great pleasure in supporting the motion moved by the member for Unley. I had the pleasure of serving with the Hon. David Tonkin in the parliament; we came in to parliament on the same day. I also served in the parliament with the Hon. Norm Foster. I recall the great controversy which surrounded the Olympic Dam project at Roxby Downs and the nonsense that was put forward by the then opposition and the Labor Party across this country. I happened to be the member at the time and I recall the great demonstrations up at the site. I also recall that on the occasions when the bill was recommitted in the upper house, the star force had to escort Norm Foster into this parliament because of the threats and intimidation by those eccentric cranks who indicated to people that the sun would not come up if the mine was developed.

This motion sets out to honour the contribution of both of these outstanding South Australians. David Tonkin, as Premier, played a very significant role in the development and the advancement of this state. Norm Foster, having served his country with distinction, like many young Australians of his time, then came to the parliament and made a contribution which has helped bring economic prosperity to this state by supporting that indenture legislation. We now see, nearly on a daily basis, discussions across South Australia indicating the benefits which flow from that development.

In bringing this matter to the attention of the house, the member for Unley has clearly indicated that we should

acknowledge his contribution. The two propositions put forward appear to me to be fair and reasonable. If the amendment is successful, how long will it take before that particular amendment is put into effect? Is it going to be one month, six months, 12 months? How long will it be? I think that sufficient time has passed and these people should be recognised. Their conscious and wise counsel has given South Australia lasting benefits and we should, in this very small way, recognise their contribution to the people of this state.

By putting this on the *Notice Paper* and having it debated in this house, the member for Unley has clearly brought this matter to the attention of the government and the community, and I commend him for it. I support the motion and believe that we should all process this matter with a great deal of haste, because the contribution of these two people has been significant and generations of South Australians will benefit from their wise counsel.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite): I rise as the shadow minister for transport to commend the member for Unley for the motion. I think it is a most worthwhile motion for the reasons other speakers have identified, and that is, the statesman-like role that Norm Foster played in ensuring that South Australia did not lose forever the Roxby Downs investment, which senior members of government, including the Premier, vehemently opposed. They now recognise that was a mistake; that they were wrong, and that the Roxby Downs investment was the right decision for South Australia. Had it not been for Norm Foster's leadership, the benefit to the state and its people would never have been achieved.

I think Norm Foster is a most worthwhile member of this place to be remembered in such a way. Having been a 2nd/10th soldier and a Rat of Tobruk, he was prepared to go through considerable personal pain and stand apart from a party that he clearly admired and respected in the best interests of the people of South Australia. That was the spirit of the man. It was a most courageous decision on his part and one for which South Australians will be eternally grateful. For similar reasons and for reasons mentioned by my colleagues, the Hon. David Tonkin AO needs to be commemorated and remembered.

The member for Unley has proposed that these two particular tunnels or underpasses along South Road respectively be named the Hon. Norm Foster Tunnel and the Hon. David Tonkin Underpass. I think that is a worthwhile proposition. I note the government has chosen, I think, to call the Port River Bridge the Power Bridge.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No, Mary MacKillop.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Isn't it going to be called the Power Bridge?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I thought it was the Mary MacKillop Bridge. Maybe there's two of them.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: We will clarify that. I am not meaning to in any way knock the Power. In fact, I am a supporter, and members may know I am a member of the club.

Members interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: And I am delighted to see it.

Members interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Here we go, I've lit the house up. I am a strong Crows supporter except for two games every year, and one of them is this weekend. I think these major infrastructure works provide an opportunity for us to recognise individuals in particular in the way proposed by the

member for Unley rather than to generally recognise football clubs or similar entities that, after all, are recognised anyway by the community. I think it is more appropriate and more serious, and more relevant, to name them after people like Norm Foster and David Tonkin rather than after a sporting team or something similar.

I note the government has moved an amendment. My understanding, if I understand it correctly, is that the spirit of the amendment is to recognise the need to name an important piece of infrastructure after David Tonkin and Norm Foster, but perhaps not these two particular pieces of infrastructure. I take the point that the government has made that, in the case of Norm Foster, for example, maybe it would be more appropriate to name an important piece of infrastructure in the Roxby Downs precinct after him and something more particularly relevant to David Tonkin after him. I would say that David was quite visionary in his ambitions for the state, and a major underpass like South Road would, in my view, be quite irrelevant a piece of infrastructure to name after David Tonkin. I do take the point in regard to Norm Foster. There are about to be billion of dollars of major infrastructure development up at Roxby and perhaps there is an opportunity for that to be looked at as a possible naming right, if you like, for Norm Foster.

However, I would say that, before we vote on this measure, I think it would be better if the government could indicate what piece of infrastructure in particular it might think appropriate and when it might be named. Otherwise, we give up the member for Unley's proposition in the hope that the government will do the right thing and name another significant piece of infrastructure after Mr Foster and Dr Tonkin respectively, but there is no guarantee; in which case, I guess the member for Unley might choose to reintroduce his motion at a future time, should the government fail to pick up the message. Noting the Premier's comments at the passing of Norm Foster and hearing them reinforced today by the member for Mawson, I am encouraged by the amendment. I think it demonstrates a bit of bipartisanship and good spirit in that the government clearly agrees that these two gentlemen warrant recognition.

I support the member for Unley's proposition. He may choose to accept the amendment. Either way, I think it would be a good outcome for the families concerned, for the memory of the two gentlemen concerned, and for the house. I commend the motion and I am happy also to consider the amendment.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I commend the member for Unley for putting forward the suggestion that we honour two former outstanding members of parliament. David Tonkin I knew personally: he was a very decent man, one of the most pleasant people you could ever deal with and honourable in the full sense of that term. Likewise, Norm Foster. The more I have found out about him, the more admiration I have for him, not only in respect of his political life but also in other aspects. I have within my electorate members of his family. In fact, one of his sons, Rob, is a constituent of mine and I have met with the family to talk about how to commemorate and recognise the achievements of Norm Foster. I have not spoken with the Tonkin family: I leave that to the member for Unley.

As I indicated earlier, I would be more than happy to see David Tonkin honoured in some significant way. My suggestion for honouring Norm Foster is more in line with what the Premier was alluding to when he spoke in this place

at the end of last year. I wrote to the Premier on 4 December, and part of that letter reads as follows:

Dear Mike,

I was pleased to hear your gracious reference to the late Norm Foster MLC OAM and your consideration of a memorial to him. Can I suggest that the highway leading into Olympic Dam Roxby Downs from the Stuart Highway be officially named the Norm Foster Highway as recognition of Norm's contribution to the establishment of the mine? I have discussed this matter with two of Norm's sons, one of whom is a constituent, and they would be thrilled if this tribute could be undertaken.

I received a reply on 12 December from the Premier as follows:

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your suggestion of naming a highway into Olympic Dam after the late Norm Foster MLC OAM, in your letter dated 4 December 2006. As I have indicated to the parliament, I intend raising the suggestion with BHP Billiton, and will do so at my next meeting with the Managing Director of BHP Billiton's Base Metals, Mr Roger Higgins. I think that naming a road or a piece of infrastructure associated with what will be the largest open cut mine in the world in Norm's honour would be an appropriate and fitting way to recognise the significant role he played in the development of the Roxby Downs mine and the Olympic Dam township.

There was another private matter in that letter relating to the family, which I will not read out. I also wrote to the CEO of BHP Billiton, Mr Chip Goodyear, asking if his company would consider commissioning a statue or bust of Norm Foster to be placed in an appropriate location in or near the village at Olympic Dam, Roxby Downs. The initial response from BHP Billiton was that it would, in effect, consider the suggestion, but it did not actually make a commitment to support the commissioning of a sculptured bust of Norm Foster. As was indicated by the member for Waite, I think there is a spirit of bipartisanship in relation to honouring these two gentlemen. We do not need to make a decision today, and I do not think the parliament needs to lock itself in one way or another. The sensible thing is to look at the amendment, so that there is some flexibility in terms of what would be appropriate infrastructure to name after the two gentlemen.

As I indicated in that letter to the Premier, I think a most appropriate recognition for Norm Foster would be the highway leading in from the Stuart Highway to the township of Roxby Downs. I commend the member for Unley for bringing this matter to the parliament. The outcome will be a positive one. Whether it be the tunnel, the underpass or the highway into Roxby Downs or some other infrastructure, it is significant that we can all agree that something should be done to honour both of these former great South Australians.

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I move an amendment to the amendment:

After the words 'after them' insert 'in metropolitan Adelaide'.

My understanding of the rules is that if I speak to the amendment then I can only speak once; I cannot speak to the motion generally. In addressing the amendment to the amended motion, the confining of the projects (which will recognise and honour the late Hons Norm Foster and David Tonkin) to the metropolitan area of Adelaide will ensure that the recognition is seen by and known to many more South Australians than if a project were identified and its recognition noted in regional South Australia. I think it is important to recognise that the Hon. Norm Foster made a contribution as a member of this house. His work—and I put that in the broadest category possible—in being influential in the passing of the indenture bill to facilitate the opening of the

Roxby Downs mine was significant, but he also made a statewide contribution. One of the aspects that is acknowledged by the house is that the position of the mine is in remote South Australia, and very few people relative to our population either travel in or out of Roxby Downs or visit the site of the mine in order to appreciate the decisions made by the Hon. Norm Foster. That is not to say that Roxby Downs township and Olympic Dam are not very significant features and structures in South Australia's regional area, but it is important to acknowledge that their remoteness does restrict access to ordinary men and women in South Australia.

Therefore, the project in his honour, as well as the project in the Hon. David Tonkin's honour, should be ones to which South Australians have access—not only those who live and work in the area and who would use the proposed roadways and these significant tunnels and underpasses through the centre of the greater metropolitan area of Adelaide but also other metropolitan transport users and regional people when they come to Adelaide. I think it is important that the level of recognition which the motion intends be respected and that it have some benefit by being seen, utilised, understood and recognised by daily use of South Australians, not to mention those who visit South Australia and travel on these major infrastructure projects.

In support of the motion generally—amended or otherwise—I consider it a very worthy contribution from a new member of parliament (the member for Unley) in his first term to present such an important bipartisan recognition in the terms of this motion. He should be congratulated in so doing because not only does he recognise the importance of the contributions of these two men, in particular, to the history of South Australia but also he presents it on the basis that it is completely non-partisan. As a new member of parliament he deserves some accolade for the motion.

As a member of the house and a member of the Liberal Party, the record of the Hon. David Tonkin is one of which I am extremely proud. We can think about many of the historical firsts that the Hon. David Tonkin gave to this state, not the least of which was the introduction into this parliament—the first in Australia—of equal opportunity legislation as a private member's bill in 1970. For those members who are not aware of the history, he was raised by his mother and that is why he introduced a private member's bill and introduced for the first time into this parliament—indeed, any parliament in Australia—equal opportunity legislation. It was supported and it was the beginning of extraordinary legislation. He made a very important contribution to Aboriginal lands legislative protection in this state.

I will not traverse all the important things he did, but in the short time he was premier, let alone as a member for what was then the new seat of Bragg, he made an extraordinary contribution; and I commend it. As a local member I have established the annual David Tonkin Scholarship, which we proudly operate within the seat of Bragg and which recognises young people who either live or go to school in the electorate of Bragg. I am proud that we sponsor that scholarship. I have dedicated the main meeting room in my office in honour of the late Hon. David Tonkin; and that is recognised as the David Tonkin Room. A special plaque has been made. I am very pleased that Dr Tonkin's widow, Mrs Pru Tonkin, visits us annually to receive and congratulate the annual scholarship winner—which, of course, takes place in the Tonkin Room. Dr Tonkin made a very significant contribution to this state both politically and in his work as a medical specialist; an ophthalmologist. I am very proud to have

known him. Any legacy that he has given to this state should be appropriately recognised in infrastructure projects in South Australia and in the metropolitan area of Adelaide.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

MULTICULTURALISM

Ms PORTOLESI (Hartley): I move:

That this house reaffirms its commitment to multiculturalism as a policy based on mutual respect, understanding and coexistence and which values the cultural diversity and economic opportunity brought to Australia by migrants.

Before I commence, I draw to the attention of the house the fact that the member for Bright and the member for Light are here, both of whom share a birthday today. I wish them a happy birthday. In moving this motion today, I seek to give the South Australian parliament an opportunity to acknowledge that, despite recent developments driven by the federal government to abolish multiculturalism and rewrite history, we in this state have a very proud record with respect to multiculturalism, and we are sticking with it. We have been left a legacy by many fine people, such as Don Dunstan and Chris Sumner, who first championed the benefits of multiculturalism at a time when leaders were capable of taking the community with them. In fact, South Australia was a leader 30 years ago in this field.

I have in front of me the debates dating back to the establishment of the Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1980, a bill introduced by the then Liberal government and, of course, supported by Labor in opposition. In his contribution, the Hon. Chris Sumner detailed a long list of pioneering South Australian initiatives and achievements dating back to 1977. I will list many of them, because a lot of us have taken them for granted or cannot imagine a time when we did not have these privileges. They include: the state interpreter service and the establishment of an ethnic affairs branch; the translation of government material into languages other than English; and welfare grants to ethnic organisations. One that is particularly fascinating is permitting written driver's licence tests in a person's native language, and accepting an overseas driver's licence as evidence of a person's ability to drive. Can members imagine proposing that now? There was a special fund for ethnic festivals and encouraging arts development for ethnic organisations; financial support for ethnic broadcasting in the area of education; and the development of a multicultural education centre and, of course, appropriate curriculum material. In 1965, South Australia was the first state to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race.

I drafted the motion in a politically neutral way in an attempt to appeal to my colleagues on all sides, because the future of multiculturalism is too important to kick around like a political football. It is a shame that John Howard does not share the same feelings. My motion could easily have condemned the Howard government or praised past Labor governments, but it does not, because I want to make it as easy as possible for everyone here to be honest and say, 'You know, actually, when it comes to multiculturalism, we got it right.' Multiculturalism is a public policy that has worked and, better still, has stood the test of time (I just wish that they had invented a shorter word).

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

Ms PORTOLESI: I would like John Howard to stop turning back the clock on this subject. We all know that he

will do what he wants. But let us remember that the states do have a policy capacity and, for the last 30 years or so in this state, and on all sides of politics (I remind the member for Waite), we have embraced multiculturalism as a policy for managing new arrivals. This is the point of the debate. If, as a nation, we are going to have a migrant intake (as we should), we need a way of managing it and the answer has been, and is, multiculturalism.

I do not want to spend a great deal of time today talking about the merits or otherwise of multiculturalism, because I have made my views known previously in this place. However, I will say that, just because someone likes foreign food or is a migrant or the child of a migrant, it does not necessarily make them an advocate of multiculturalism.

There are some basic points that I want to revisit and put on the record. The first is that multiculturalism is a two-way street, which is why it has been so successful. New migrants learn English, abide by Australian law and uphold Australia's commitment to human rights in exchange for the right to participate in Australian society. There is an exchange. Multiculturalism is a policy for all Australians, not just migrants, which, again, is why it has been so successful and become entrenched in our national psyche. Multiculturalism is not a policy of separation, as Andrew Robb would have us believe. It is a policy of integration and inclusion based on mutual respect and cultural diversity, not assimilation and paternalism. In the words of the Hon. Chris Sumner 20 years ago:

We are all Australians. We share a common commitment to this country, to its democratic institutions, to its economic growth, prosperity and wellbeing. But within that commitment everyone has a right to his or her individuality and unique heritage. Our aim should be to achieve a situation where that diversity is accepted as a natural part of our daily lives.

Finally, multiculturalism has given this state and nation massive economic opportunities. Why would we turn our back on that?

For the sake of completeness, I would like to revisit briefly the circumstances of the last few months, which caused me to speak out about this matter and ultimately move this motion. It started with this: 'No future for multiculturalism'. That was the lead of the story on page 1 of *The Weekend Australian* on the weekend of 4 and 5 November. I might be wrong, but I believe this was the first public signal we in the community had that the federal government was thinking about changes in the area of multicultural policy. That article, which was written by journalist Cath Hart and extensively quoted Andrew Robb, the then parliamentary secretary, now minister, referred to the government's plans to scrap the word 'multiculturalism' as part of its revamp of ethnic policy. Back in November, and a lot has happened since then, the attack on multiculturalism was kicked off by making the word the focus.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

Ms PORTOLESI: The member for Waite is right. This is what Andrew Robb said:

... and the fact that it [referring to multiculturalism] means all things to all men and women and that there are a lot of other ways that what is being mentioned can be clearly expressed. I expressed my frustration that the term is not often helpful because different people listen to it and give different meanings to it and a lot of others expressed similar frustrations.

I would have thought the fact that lots of different people, different communities, take different meanings and interpretations from the word 'multiculturalism' is a good thing. Is this not the very nature of multiculturalism? For John Bloggs

it might mean interesting food, for the next person it might mean an opportunity to learn the customs and traditions of a foreign culture and for another it might mean trade opportunities. Is this not a key feature of a healthy democracy? Multiculturalism is very pragmatic and sensible; take from it what you want.

We do know how John Howard works: Tampa, children overboard and, of course, that other blight on our history which was allowed to flourish like a cancer, Pauline Hanson. Tampa worked a treat for the Liberals and we would all acknowledge that no-one does the politics of division better than John Howard. So, it was obvious to me that weekend in early November—although I could not quite believe it, actually—that multiculturalism would be the next battle ground, the next opportunity for John Howard to play the politics of fear in an election year, a fact recognised by Malcolm Fraser, when he said:

Is this the government using code to say that Muslims are different and that they don't fit in? The next election will be the Muslim election, as 2001 was the Tampa election, with the parties competing to claim they can best protect us from our fears.

Of course, the conditions were perfect for John Howard to start planting the seeds of division from which fear and loathing grow. It was like the perfect storm. Condition number one was clearly the comments made by Sheik Hilali about the treatment of women. I do not need to revisit them here but his comments were wrong, offensive and have no place in our community. Thankfully, our democracy sprang into action, which meant he was publicly repudiated. Condition number two was the Cronulla riots and, of course, condition number three is the ever-present threat of terrorism, a threat brought closer to home by John Howard, but that is another matter.

So, what does the government do in this situation? In the case of Sheik Hilali, it sees a political opportunity to hold him up as an example of how multiculturalism has failed, how we need to rethink the policy, how there is a crisis which needs to be fixed, and, of course, he is the only one who can fix it. Instead of encouraging the situation to calm down, and recognising that Sheik Hilali's comments are extreme and not representative of the Muslim community, the Prime Minister and his government feed the frenzy. John Howard has not forgotten how the community embraced Pauline Hanson and her simplistic solutions, and this was simply more of that. How could he go wrong? So, the conditions were right for the federal government to start undermining multiculturalism as a way of generating political support for his government.

The other pretty obvious point (to me) that I want to make is that this is not a difficult position for John Howard to adopt because we all know what he thinks of migrants. I take you back to his comments about Asian immigration in 1988. I think I was 20 years old then, and I remember John Howard coming under enormous fire for his comments, and pretty quickly he realised that if he ever wanted to make it into the Lodge he would need to recover the damage quickly. So, what we are dealing with today is a Prime Minister who has been shamed into supporting multiculturalism; a policy he was not really committed to, but finally he is free to express his real position.

It was early November when the government first tested the waters about abandoning multiculturalism. Since then the debate has morphed into an argument about national identity, citizenship tests, English language competence and values. Just on this subject, I remind members that we presently have a citizenship test. Have they ever assisted a constituent who

wishes to become a citizen? There are a number of tests that must be satisfied. How many in this place would pass this test now?

On 23 January this year, the government finally got its way and began the process of wiping multiculturalism from the national language. For example, the immigration department and portfolio were renamed, losing the title of 'multiculturalism' and replacing it with 'citizenship'. We might ask, 'What's in a name anyway? Isn't it just a word?' The term multiculturalism means everything because it tells the world in one simple expression that we are a nation of many cultures and we value that. It is such an important signal to the community. Replacing the word with a label is just the beginning of the end. The new minister, Kevin Andrews, said:

The new message is that ethnic affairs is no longer about multiculturalism and fostering diversity. Instead, Australia's ethnic affairs policies will be driven by a desire for migrants to integrate into the broader community.

In this state we cannot control citizenship tests or values debates; that is very clearly the purview of the federal government, but as a state we do have an active policy commitment to multiculturalism and this is a fine opportunity to say, 'We're sticking with it.'

I want to read very briefly read from a letter that the Attorney received from the Committee of Italians Abroad (COMITES), and it is signed by Mr Vincenzo Papandrea. It is addressed to Mr Hieu Van Lee, and it states:

Our national policy of multiculturalism has been recognised as one of the most enlightened in the world and our track record in social harmony is a direct result of this policy. It is unthinkable that in the climate of fear and escalating racism any Australian government should contemplate the removal and dismantling of one of the very cornerstones that has contributed so much to the fabric of our nation. This is a time of great social change and global insecurity. Now, more than ever, we need a clear and resolute policy supporting multiculturalism and its values: access, participation, respect and equality of all the communities that collectively make up what it is to be Australian.

I also would like to refer to a document I received from Dr Tony Cocchiaro. Tony is the President of the Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia and a member of FECCA. He says:

Multiculturalism is widely acknowledged to have been the single most successful social policy in Australian history, but multiculturalism is being challenged. The use of division and fear to influence electorate response has led ultimately to the detriment of the social cohesion and to the devaluing of multiculturalism.

I would like to wrap up by referring to another of Chris Sumner's speeches, which he gave in 1986 to the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia conference. For me, it sums it up perfectly. He refers to a colleague who talks about the rise of negative nationalism among various groups in Australia, as follows:

The idea that pluralism in itself threatens social cohesion and in a time of economic difficulty is a luxury that must be sacrificed. This negative nationalism is by its nature assimilationist and a denial of cultural diversity. In periods of economic difficulty—

we do not have that excuse these days—

the retreat to negative nationalism appears for some attractive. But in such times communities and governments which believe in social justice and equality of opportunity must be prepared more than ever to make an ongoing commitment to these values. Tolerance has been the underlying rationale for the last 200 years of liberal-democratic philosophy. It underpins our type of society in Australia, and it holds the key to a free and equitable society in the future. Tolerance lies at the heart of multiculturalism.

How prophetic! Continuing:

The essence of pluralism lies not simply in the tolerance of diversity. It also has a positive, activist side: that is, a recognition of the positive value of diversity in itself. For this diversity has a crucial role in contributing to the variety and richness of the community. It provides one main force for social regeneration and change. If multiculturalism faces one threat, one limit, it is the danger that our tradition of tolerance could be threatened. Should this happen, far more than multiculturalism as a policy will be at risk. In that regard, the campaign for multiculturalism is, in microcosm, a mirror of the fight to ensure freedom and equality for all Australians, regardless of origin.

I urge members to support the motion.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Fisher, I draw to the attention of members the presence in the chamber today of students from Trinity College North School who are guests of the member for Light.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I would like to make some observations and I will be brief, because I know that the member for Light has some important business to undertake. I speak more in the way of making observations than any criticism. I think that the term 'multiculturalism' is coming to the end of its workable life. That is not to say that the value implicit within it of tolerance should—I hope it does not. A lot of these words evolve over time. The term 'ethnic' now is almost used in a derogatory way; it used to be a very popular term used to describe ethnic groups, but I think it has almost become a term of abuse. I am not suggesting that multiculturalism is exclusive in regard to the points I make. First, I think we need to understand that multiculturalism is essentially non-definable. I have had a look in a few dictionaries and even the dictionaries have trouble trying to define what is meant by the term 'multiculturalism'. One could reflect that it is probably not a bad thing that you cannot define it because it can then mean all things to all people and fewer people will be upset because it can mean a whole range of things to different people.

But the key element, as I indicated just now, is one of tolerance and acceptance of others and their right to be different but within the framework of the Australian culture. The point about multiculturalism which upsets many of the Anglo-Celtic tradition is that sometimes there is an implied assumption that Australia began around 1972, that the pioneers who developed this country did not actually do anything, and that upsets a lot of people who know that those pioneers suffered great hardship, did not have medical facilities and, in fact, created the European aspect of our society in large part. I think that resentment exists and some of it is coming out now with the desire for people to fly the flag because they see often a statement of what they regard as multiculturalism as denying the contribution made through the Anglo-Celtic tradition in Australia not only, but partly, in terms of the efforts of pioneers.

The other aspect is a reluctance to accept that 100 000 young Australians gave their lives in various conflicts for this country and, if you take the view that Australia began around 1970, by definition you exclude the 100 000 dead, and that is also a reason for some soreness and aggravation involving people associated essentially with the Anglo-Celtic tradition. The other source of concern involves the Aboriginal community who have been living in this land—and I think the Attorney last night called them a nation, but that is not correct. The Aboriginal people were never a nation; that is a bit of political speak used at the moment. There were approximately 300 tribes of Aboriginal people but

they never constituted a nation in any political sense of that term. Nevertheless, the traditional Aboriginal culture was a fantastic culture. It could have gone on for ever. You cannot say that about our culture.

They could have lived for ever. They were the practitioners of sustainability in a way that no other culture on earth today can even get close to, and they had fantastic values. It saddens me greatly that many of the young Aboriginal people do not know anything about traditional Aboriginal culture. The values that were built into that culture are fantastic. I attended the opening of an extension at my local Catholic school on Tuesday. It was a wonderful occasion; Archbishop Wilson was there and he managed to throw some holy water over me. He was blessing the classroom but I copped a fair amount of it and, as a result, I feel a lot better. In welcoming us, the children said, 'This land was owned by the Kurna people.' Wrong, wrong, wrong! Aboriginal people did not have a concept of ownership of land; the land owned them—the complete opposite to the concept of ownership.

Here we have Europeanised the Aboriginal values system and we have turned it around to say that the Aborigines owned the land. They did not, and that is completely alien to their culture; the land owned them, and we would be a lot better off environmentally if we understood that the land owned us instead of the other way around, but it is deeply ingrained in our culture. The point I make—and I am not saying that it involves all supporters of multiculturalism—is that by implication it is important that people do not exclude Aboriginal people in our country, the majority of whom are making a positive contribution, despite what we may see or hear in the media.

I am sure, Mr Speaker, you have the privilege, as I had, of meeting ambassadors from various countries. When I was Speaker I met several, and I know that the Hon. Graham Gunn would have met them when he was Speaker. Several of them said to me, 'We can't understand in Australia—people have come from our land—why they continue the fighting, the infighting, the tribalism that existed years ago in our land, because we have moved on, and where we used to have hatred between groups we have now actually got those groups in the armed forces working side by side.' We have to be careful with multiculturalism that it is not an umbrella for tribal leaders to keep a hold over people for their own ego and for their own sense of importance; that if you are in Australia you have to realise that countries, whether it be Italy, Greece or whatever, are not the same as they were back in 1945 or 1954—the world has moved on.

Another issue is that we tend to communicate with people from non-English-speaking backgrounds often simply to try and secure their vote, and we see this vote-catching exercise happening quite frequently. I think in terms of multiculturalism in the broad sense, going beyond simply tolerance, we must bear in mind that people need to be not only in Australia but of Australia, and there are many people in Australia, even those born here, who could be living anywhere in the world; there is nothing distinctively Australian about them except the fact that they live in Australia. For a start, these people do not embrace Australia; they do not embrace the ecology or the environment of Australia. They could just as well be living in London or anywhere else in the world. They are in Australia but not of it. I think one of the requirements people living here is not only that they be in the country but that they be of it.

I think a better term than 'multiculturalism', although it sounds a little bit heavy, is the term 'cohesive pluralism'

because, if you have too many groups pulling apart and doing their own thing—and not only have we intensified that in relation to people migrating here but we have now got a lot of private schools where the children are collected from home by bus each day—those people do not mix with anyone. We used to have the great leveller of the state school or the Catholic school, and it did not matter whether you were of Italian background or whatever; you went through the great melting pot of the state school or Catholic school system. We have to be careful now that we do not create separate parts to our society that will lead to a breakdown in cohesion because, if you do not have something that holds you together, you will fall apart. I like the term ‘cohesive pluralism’, meaning that we are one nation but there are differences between and amongst us which we accept in a spirit of tolerance.

So I think that the term ‘multiculturalism’ is probably coming to the end of its useful life. As I said before, that is not to say that the principles of it are coming to the end of their life; one would hope that tolerance would remain. But we should not use multiculturalism to allow people to create, for example, disrespect for women; we have enough of that from our own people, let alone anyone coming here to live. And we should not allow the term ‘multiculturalism’ to be used as a cover to break down respect for people and to treat them as second-class citizens. I do not have a problem with this motion, but people need to understand that it means different things to different people, and perhaps it is better if we leave it that way.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

SURF LIFESAVERS

Mr PICCOLO (Light): I move:

That this house acknowledges 2007 as the Year of the Surf Lifesaver and commends the thousands of volunteer surf lifesavers Australia-wide, who have patrolled our beaches over the past century, for their invaluable voluntary contribution to the safety of our community.

In speaking in support of the motion, I ask: why am I moving this motion since my electorate is not a coastal electorate?

The Hon. R.B. Such: It will be in 20 years.

Mr PICCOLO: Yes, if we have a Howard government it probably will be. I have a confession to make to this house, first, which I hope members will keep to themselves and not convey to others. I think one of the reasons I have become involved in this motion is that I am one of the few members of my age who actually cannot swim, and so I very much appreciate the work performed by surf lifesavers.

An honourable member interjecting:

MR PICCOLO: I cannot swim, that is correct. It is an Italian thing. The federal government has recognised the efforts that volunteer surf lifesavers have made to the Australian community over the last 100 years by declaring that 2007 will be known as the Year of the Surf Lifesaver. This community-based group is the first to be recognised with such an honour, and acknowledges the efforts of thousands of trained volunteers who have saved over 500 000 lives over the century. The year 2007 is also the 55th anniversary of surf lifesaving in South Australia. The Henley, Glenelg and Moana lifesaving clubs formed this association out of the Royal Lifesaving Society in 1952.

In South Australia there are now 18 surf lifesaving clubs, with the most recent club being established at Normanville in 1998; and 14 of these clubs are located along the metro-

politan coastline at Aldinga Bay, Moana, Southport, Port Noarlunga, Christies Beach, Seacliff, Brighton, Somerton, Glenelg, West Beach, Henley, Grange, Semaphore and North Haven. In addition, clubs are located at Port Elliot, Chiton Rocks, Normanville and Whyalla. In 2006, Surf Life Saving South Australia reported membership of more than 5 300, including 1 600 junior nipper members who also receive instruction and training in water safety rescues.

The mission of Surf Life Saving SA is to save lives on beaches through education, prevention and rescue services.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: Yes; I can't do the breast stroke! These surf lifesavers undertake practical and theory training, and they use these skills and knowledge to provide beach patrols and surf rescues. Many members also undertake further training to join specialised rescue crews which use jet rescue boats, a helicopter and, from this summer, rescue water craft (otherwise referred to as jet skis). Surf Life Saving SA has two lifesaving jet rescue boats, four jet skis, the Westpac lifesaver rescue helicopter and a major radio communications network.

The Year of the Surf Lifesaver highlights the important role that surf lifesavers and surf lifesaving clubs—together with professional lifeguards—play in keeping the Australian beaches safe; and, just as importantly, they create an Australian beach culture. Today, the movement is at the forefront of world research into aquatic rescue, marine stingers, resuscitation and first-aid techniques. In 2005-06 surf lifesavers in South Australia provided a total of 10 113 patrol hours, performed 201 surf rescues and assisted ambulance personnel on 21 occasions. Surf Life Saving South Australia has also reintroduced helicopter patrols which, in addition to its aerial surveillance, has also reported a number of shark sightings.

Surf Life Saving South Australia provides lifesaving and education services, aquatic safety, signage, consultation and audits, contract lifeguard services, emergency response plans for aquatic activities, training courses, leadership and management courses, education programs at varying levels and much more. Surf lifesaving Australia-wide has changed significantly since 1907 when it was first developed. For example, the traditional and iconic belt and reel—which is often the picture we see of our surf lifesavers—introduced in 1907 was eventually phased out in 1970. The belt and reel have been replaced with modern technology, such as jet rescue boats, helicopters and rescue boards and tubes.

Another example of the changing face of surf lifesaving is that before the 1970s women were not permitted to join surf lifesaving. From the 1970s girls Australia-wide were permitted to join the ‘nipperettes’ groups but not beach patrols. In 1980 the first women gained their surf lifesaving bronze medallions and were allowed to patrol the beaches. Now, women make up 40 per cent of all active surf lifesavers in Australia. South Australia has the first female President of a surf lifesaving club. Surf lifesaving functions have been delivered in South Australia since the mid 1920s. However, it was not until 1952 that a direct affiliation of the South Australian clubs was made to the national body, Surf Life Saving Australia.

Surf Life Saving South Australia officially formed in 1952 after Captain Miller navigated waters and confirmed they were open ocean waters around the coast. The origins of Surf Life Saving Australia can be traced back to the actions of Mr William Gocher at Manly Beach in September 1902, when he defied the law of the time by bathing during

prohibited hours, which were daylight hours. At the time, the law prevented people from bathing during—

Ms Fox: It was too racy!

Mr PICCOLO: Too racy? His and similar actions by other people forced the recognition of daylight bathing, and the pastime of surfing began to grow into a national heritage. Surf bathing—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: Yes; let's not go there. While surf bathing grew rapidly in popularity, its dangers just as quickly became apparent. Small groups of experienced surfers began to form themselves into lifesaving bodies to assist those unfamiliar with the surfing environment—like myself who, obviously, would not go out there. As these clubs grew in size and numbers, the need for a unified front to raise funds and seek assistance from local and state governments resulted in the formation of the New South Wales Surf Bathing Association on 18 October 1907. The name was later changed to Surf Life Saving Australia to which Surf Life Saving SA became affiliated in 1952.

The Henley Beach Surf Life Saving Club was the first formed in South Australia in the mid to late 1920s, followed by both the Glenelg and Seacliff clubs in 1931. Surf Life Saving South Australia became an affiliated body, as I mentioned, to the national body in 1952 when it was officially declared that South Australia was not in enclosed waters. That had to be officially declared. For the 2005-06 summer, 51 705 volunteer patrol hours were performed and surf lifesavers provided first aid for 463 cuts/abrasions and other assorted wounds, six fractures, 116 marine stings and four resuscitations. In 2005-06 surf lifesavers performed more than 10 000 preventative actions, more than 200 major rescues and found and returned 28 lost children. Over the past five years there have been 2 200 rescues, 48 307 preventative actions and 5 201 first-aid cases.

Surf lifesavers come from no particular region or social, religious, political or ethnic group. They are men and women from all backgrounds who come together to be part of a team committed to the protection of others. This government is proud to support surf lifesaving. It has provided more than \$7 million since 2002, including \$3.7 million for major capital works, which has now seen the facilities at Christies Beach, Somerton and North Haven either redeveloped or rebuilt.

Ms Fox interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: And Brighton as we speak. I thank the member for Bright for keeping me up to date, and I am aware of her strong commitment and support for lifesaving in this state.

Ms Fox interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: You can swim as well, thank you. I may need your support one day.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: I will not go there. The City of Holdfast Bay, the City of Onkaparinga and the City of Port Adelaide Enfield have also provided funding for these projects. I thank them for their support of surf lifesaving.

In December 2006, the Premier announced funding of \$18 000 to enable Surf Life Saving SA to purchase an additional rescue watercraft to expand its fleet and enhance its patrol service. In 2007, the government has also provided funding of over \$1.31 million from the community emergency services fund to enable a new facility to be constructed for the Brighton Surf Life Saving Club, as the member brought to my attention.

I would like to wish the officials of Surf Life Saving South Australia every success as they plan events and activities to recognise the Year of the Surf Lifesaver here in South Australia: the President, Mr Bill Jamieson; the General Manager, Mrs Elaine Farmer; the Chair of the Board of Life Saving, Mr David Swain; the Chair of the Board of Surf Sport, Mr Don Alexander; and the Chair of the Board of Development, Mr John Smith. I am sure that these people will be well supported by the presidents of the individual surf lifesaving clubs and their members across the state.

I take this opportunity to thank the 33 000 surf lifesavers across Australia who give up their time to undertake training and provide patrols to make our beaches safer. This service is greatly valued by the community and will be duly recognised in 2007, the Year of the Surf Lifesaver. I commend the motion to the house.

Ms FOX (Bright): I would like to echo the words of the member for Light. Happy birthday to you, member for Light. In the electorate that I am privileged to represent, there are a number of surf clubs including Brighton, Seacliff and hopefully very soon Somerton Park, should the draft redistribution become not a draft. I am the vice patron of all those surf clubs and I have been delighted to meet so many of the volunteers who spend their weekends making the beach a place where all Australians can go to have a good time and a safe time. Perhaps one day they will save the member for Light from something appalling, and he will be very grateful for them.

Mr Piccolo interjecting:

Ms FOX: All political careers end in tragedy, member for Light, but that is something we can discuss later on. One of the extraordinary things about these clubs is the level of involvement. Many parents come along for the first time because their children become involved in the Nippers program and the parents think, 'I'll just get my bronze medal while I'm here,' and then 20 years later you go back to the club, the kids have disappeared but their parents are still there, having a drink, getting out there and making friends. When you go down to these surf clubs you meet surgeons, plumbers, the unemployed, and the millionaire. They are all there in one place, working together for the greater good. That is a really fantastic thing to see.

I would also like to congratulate Elaine Farmer. I had a conversation with Elaine very recently about trying to make sure that younger people from African backgrounds get more involved in the surf lifesaving clubs. In the past 30 years, the surf lifesaving clubs have been very inclusive towards women. It was traditionally a male-dominated society. They have now included women, and I would like to congratulate them for the many initiatives that I know they are on the verge of taking with our ethnic communities. Congratulations to them on this achievement—2007, Year of the Surf Lifesaver. I would urge any of you who have never been to a club—and I am looking at the member for Light slightly scarily—to come with me on a Saturday afternoon, have a drink and meet these people. They are great people and I am very proud to know so many of them.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I have pleasure in speaking to the motion and commend the member for Light for bringing this matter to the house. As the shadow minister for emergency services, I am very well aware of the outstanding work that our surf lifesavers do in enhancing the safety of our beaches and attending to incidents that arise from time

to time. The people of South Australia love the beach and swimming in the sea, and the vast majority have been brought up with that seaside culture. I know that most of us—if we do not live close to the beach—look forward to a visit and a swim in the sea.

It was with real pleasure that I attended a function here in parliament house a number of weeks ago in the Old Chamber, celebrating the Year of the Surf Lifesaver, 2007. The Premier attended and spoke at the function. It was a small way of saying thank you and showing our appreciation to the people who volunteer for the benefit of the community. It was also my pleasure to attend the opening of the new refurbished surf lifesaving club at Outer Harbor. Since I have assumed the role of shadow minister, it has been a pleasure to meet and discuss issues with a number of people within the surf lifesaving fraternity. I have gained a far greater understanding of the role they play in our community and the contribution they make to the safety of our population. I have welcomed those meetings and there have been some interesting issues that have come from discussions at the meetings which we can progress in the near future to further enhance the safety of the people who enjoy the recreational pursuits of our coastline.

With those few words, I acknowledge the motion brought to the house by the member for Light. This year, 2007, is certainly a year for celebration in commemorating the contribution that our surf lifesavers play within the state and, in a broader sense, right across our nation.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I commend the member for Light for introducing this motion, which I fully support. Once again, we recognise the great effort of volunteers, in particular those involved in surf lifesaving. Like the member for Bright, I acknowledge the great work of Elaine Farmer, a good friend of mine, John Fitzgerald, and many thousands of others over time who have helped make that organisation and its efforts so fantastic. The member for Bright mentioned involving new arrivals from Africa in surf lifesaving. I noted with some interest that, following the Cronulla riots, there has been a conscious effort by the surf lifesaving clubs in that area to get people of different cultural backgrounds together. What has been impressed on me is that many people from non-English speaking backgrounds have not had a tradition of surfing and using the beach in the way that Australians have.

If you think about it, we are not the only people on earth who use surf beaches, but a subculture has evolved in relation to surfing beaches and beaches generally in Australia. Many people who have come here to become part of our society have not had that tradition. I am told that one of the problems that gave rise to difficulties at Cronulla was that there were different perceptions about what a beach is or should be, who owns it and what it symbolises, and many of the people from non-English speaking backgrounds—many from an Islamic background, in particular—did not have a tradition of surfing or being involved in swimming in the way that Australians traditionally have.

It is a good way in which people in the community from all backgrounds can work together and undertake the worthwhile task of saving lives. I congratulate all those involved in surf lifesaving and thank them for the great job they have done over 100 years or more.

Motion carried.

SECRET BALLOT, WILLIAM BOOTHBY

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

That this house acknowledges the innovative effort of William Boothby, former Electoral Commissioner for South Australia, who pioneered the secret ballot, often called the Australian ballot, enacted into law in Victoria on 19 March 1856 and in South Australia on 2 April 1856, and subsequently adopted in other states and many other countries.

What prompted me to bring this motion to the house was a letter from the Hon. John Trainer, former speaker of the house and Mayor of the City of West Torrens, who wrote to me last year when I was Speaker, saying that it is great to celebrate the sesquicentenary of parliament, which we will be doing shortly, but how about acknowledging the great pioneering work of William Boothby? Like other members, I am familiar with the name Boothby, because that is an electorate very close to where I live. Unfortunately, that letter from John Trainer got sidelined a little bit, and when I rediscovered it amongst the treasures in my office I realised that we had let 2006 go by without acknowledging William Boothby in the year in which we should have. However, better late than never, hence this motion before us today.

William Boothby was the eldest son of a Supreme Court judge, Benjamin Boothby, which shows that judges do a lot of worthwhile things. He was the electoral commissioner for South Australia in charge of every parliamentary election from 1856 to 1903, and he was the state returning officer for the first House of Representatives election in 1901. As we know, the federal seat of Boothby has been named in his honour. Those canny and cheeky Victorians adopted his idea of a secret ballot on 19 March 1856. As we have seen with the AFL and probably with soccer, they have been resorting to similar tactics ever since, because they jumped the gun by a matter of two weeks and brought into law the secret ballot in Victoria, just pipping us at the post when it was enacted here on 2 April 1856. My advice to people is: watch those Victorians!

Elections in the Australian colonies before the secret ballot was introduced had followed the English practice and were conducted on the voices. Members know that in here we have voting on the voices. The way it was done in the electorate was that at local election centres the name of the candidate was called out and people made their choice, not in secret but publicly on a register. If you contrast that with our practice today, it is a very different approach. Clearly, it made the process vulnerable to bribery and intimidation and caused widespread concern.

Boothby came up with the concept of a secret ballot, sometimes called the Australian ballot, to get rid of the intimidation and the possibility of bribery that occurred under the system of voting on the voices where the vote was not secret and where one could be linked to the actual vote and the candidate. I think it is important that we acknowledge people such as Commissioner William Boothby. It is unfortunate that we did not do it last year but, nevertheless, now is as good a time as any. I appreciate the Hon. John Trainer making the information available to me.

I commend this motion to the house. I think, once again, members need to remember that South Australia pioneered a lot of innovative measures, not only political. We were one of the first places, if not the first place, to allow women to stand for parliament and we were about third in giving women the vote. We gave adult Aboriginal males the vote in 1856. How is that for being progressive? If adult Aboriginal

males wanted to vote they could vote. It was still discriminatory because Aboriginal women did not get the vote. Aboriginal women got the vote at the same time other women got the vote. Sadly, because of ignorance and racism by other states when Australia federated, that right to vote was taken off Aboriginal people and they had to wait quite a long time before they got the vote again.

I urge members to look at some of the historical achievements of South Australia. We used to have a constitutional museum, and I have long advocated a museum in South Australia to highlight the achievements of South Australians in political, economic and social areas and to pay testament to South Australians who have made a real contribution to the world. I will not list them all now; that is for another occasion. William Boothby certainly comes into the category. The system he adopted and advocated was used in the United States in 1892 to elect the first US President Grover Cleveland under that system; it was called the Australian ballot. I commend this motion to the house and ask members to spare a thought for the innovative work of William Boothby, commemorated in the federal seat of Boothby, so we can acknowledge the great work he did.

Mr PEDERICK secured the adjournment of the debate.

VICTORIA PARK REDEVELOPMENT

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

That this House expresses its concern about and opposition to the 245 metre long multistorey building planned for Victoria Park given that—

- (a) it will permanently impact on a key part of the Parklands;
- (b) it is out of character with the Parklands;
- (c) the proposed facility will not obviate the need for temporary facilities; and
- (d) the general public will be excluded from most of the facility.

I must admit that I was more than perplexed when I heard about this proposal. I do not have a problem with car racing and horseracing in the Victoria Park area, but I was absolutely taken aback when I heard that the Rann government had put forward this proposal—obviously with the support of the Liberal opposition. The reason that I was taken aback is that I believe, in fairness, this government, through its commitment to concern about global warming and so on, has shown it is committed to environmental issues in a positive, practical way. Not many people know that the government has expanded the number of national parks and done some other good things. We can argue about the global warming targets, and so on, being too far into the future but, nevertheless, I was absolutely shocked to hear about this proposal.

When one looks at the detail, many points arise. First, this proposal is not necessary. I have not heard people complaining about the facilities erected on a temporary basis in the Parklands for car racing or horseracing—and that would involve using the historic grandstand. The detail of this proposal is concerning. For example, the public who will pay for the multifunction building—the so-called grandstand—will not have access to most of it. In my view, 80 per cent of it will be off limits to the public who are paying for it.

Mr Kenyon interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: It is bizarre that the taxpayer will pay for a facility into which they will not be allowed entry. The only parts they will be allowed to enter are two public lounges and a betting facility—and I hope the Hon. Nick Xenophon is listening—on the horseracing side. That is one point. Another point (which is not covered in the glossy

brochures) is where all the cars will park when this facility is used—which will be the case throughout the year. We are now hearing from the South Australian Jockey Club that Cheltenham is not popular enough to keep, yet Victoria Park will have 30 race meetings a year. I cannot understand the logic. If horse racing is so popular, why do they want to get rid of Cheltenham?

I suspect that the reason the Jockey Club wants to use Victoria Park is because it gets it el cheapo. I have written and asked the Adelaide City Council to tell me how much it currently pays for the lease, and guess what? The city council cannot tell me on the grounds of privacy. It is public land leased by the Jockey Club, and the council cannot tell me how much it pays for the lease on the grounds of privacy. That should give an indication of what we are dealing with.

If one looks at the brochure, one will see that one of the ironies is that this area is called ‘bakkabakkandi’, which is meant to suggest (and I have not heard this from a linguist) to trot; a term applied to horses. I have studied a little Aboriginal culture, and I am not aware that they had horses. However, maybe someone specialising in fossil relics might be able to find some remains of horses that Aborigines used during the 60 000 years they have lived in this country. I have not come across any. I would be more interested in the Kaurna term for alienation of a parkland, but it is not in the brochure. However, I will keep looking.

The brochure is skilfully put together to make this huge building (which is three storeys high, or more) look like it is just a little green line in the heart of Victoria Park. It is skilfully presented—and, in fact, I would regard it as deceptive. One area in which they are honest in this brochure is where it states that temporary facilities will still need to be used. So, this facility will not get rid of the temporary facilities, other than to a very minor extent. The brochure states:

There will be continued and improved public accessibility.

That will not be the case with respect to the facility.

For example, the annual construction period for the Clipsal 500 will be reduced by four weeks to less than four months of the year and existing perimeter fencing facing Fullarton Road will be removed.

All of that ugly eyesore on Fullarton Road ought to be bulldozed forthwith. It should never have been built there: it is a terrible blight on the community. The argument used that the government, or the city council (because the city council is in this up to its neck), are returning parkland is a silly argument. They are returning some parkland, and then they will build a grandstand or a multipurpose facility on another part. That is the ‘lesser of two evils’ argument. It is like saying: be grateful that you were not murdered; you only had three legs broken and a couple of arms. It is a silly, nonsense argument. If something is wrong, it is wrong: it is not partially wrong or partially right. If members have not received one of these fancy brochures they should obtain one, because now there are a whole lot of colourful inserts to put into it whereby members can respond.

We have heard people (including a member from here) say that the Parklands are for everyone. Well, the Parklands are already for everyone. Schools use the facilities there, CBC has ovals, and there are also bowling clubs, croquet clubs, night cricket, cycleways, walkways and dog areas. It is currently for everyone, but this proposal being put forward by the government and the city council is not for everyone. It is a very elitist proposal. It has a Premier’s suite on the top

floor, it has corporate boxes, members' suites and, on the horse racing side, two modest public lounges and a betting area. The taxpayer will pay for it and, even through the Motor Sport Board and the Jockey Club and their \$20 million on top of the \$30 million, I bet that a lot of that ultimately trickles down from the government, anyway.

The point that really takes my breath away is why the city council and the Rann government are supporting a permanent structure in the Parklands when they have both been publicly saying, 'These are iconic Parklands and wonderful facilities,' and here they are going to do something worse than anything John Olsen did. He allowed the Wine Centre to be built, which was inappropriate, and he also allowed the fitness centre to be built in Memorial Drive and cunningly bypassed the planning provisions. But here we will have something that is more intrusive, more obvious and more outrageous than anything John Olsen did. I just cannot understand how this government and the Adelaide City Council could even contemplate doing this.

Does this government and the city council want to go down in history as the people who permanently alienated a key part of the Parklands? I would not want that written on my political tombstone. In fact, a person who has been in the Labor Party and who has been a Labor supporter for many years wrote to me this week and began the letter by saying: 'Bless you from the bottom of my heart.' I will not say who it is, but it is someone who is held in the highest regard as a strong supporter of Labor governments. They would have been a friend of Don Dunstan's. This person and many others are absolutely shocked that this proposal is even being contemplated.

A cynic might say that the government is putting this up in the hope that it will be shot down, and that it was announced just prior to Christmas, when a lot of people were distracted by other things, and many would think that Adelaide needs to be brightened up and made a little more exciting. I have not heard anyone object to the current Clipsal arrangements in the Parklands, or to the evening race meetings. However, I have heard from a lot of people, whom I would call thinking, caring people, who are concerned about the alienation of the Parklands for a permanent structure with a lease of at least 42 years. To say that part of the Parklands is being returned as an offset is so pathetic an argument it is barely worth even considering.

The Parklands have been bastardised for years; they have been used as a cheap way out for every group that wants to avoid paying the full cost for a sporting facility in the suburbs. The Parklands have become just the easy way out, so that, if you want to put a sporting facility somewhere, you put it in the Parklands; you do not pay the full economic cost of it by putting it where it should be, and where many of these facilities should have gone, and that is out in the suburbs. The Parklands have become the dumping ground, or the repository, for everyone's personal and group activities. I do not have a problem with the activities per se but in a way the Parklands' provision has actually backfired because they have been used as an easy way out for people to put in facilities that should have gone out into the suburbs. Instead of becoming the lungs of Adelaide, what we have is a series of buildings with a little open space in between.

We hear a lot of claptrap about our Parklands being the best in the world and all this sort of thing: they could be the best in the world but they are not. If you go to places like Dublin, have a look at their parklands; they would not dream of doing this to their parklands. Can anyone imagine someone

in London suggesting that a multipurpose facility of this kind should be located in one of their key parks? You would be run out of town, as you would in New York or anywhere else. I do not know who has originated this proposal. I suspect there is a bit of a smelly deal in relation to the Jockey Club and Cheltenham, with someone probably saying, 'We'll give you your way down at Cheltenham; we'll let you trade off Cheltenham but—wink, wink, nod, nod—we'll let you do something in the Parklands because we might get away with it.'

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: No; I feel there is something very smelly about this project. When you have had government ministers, the Lord Mayor and others saying, 'We want to protect the Parklands,' and then they come out with this, if it was not so serious you would have to laugh. It is a shame, and it is an example of pandering to a couple of interest groups—someone said 'the big end of town'—who want this facility.

Mr Koutsantonis: What are you doing? You are pandering to the Parklands ring; to East Terrace.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: No, it is not for the people of East Terrace; the Parklands belong to everyone. Many people drive there. I live 20 kilometres away, and I go to the Parklands for a walk; other people go there, cycling, taking their dogs. As I said before, some of the schools have sporting grounds; there is night cricket; people can go and use their little power boats. I conclude by saying that this development is outrageous, it is not necessary and it will permanently damage the reputation of this government and the city council which, if it goes ahead with this, will go down in history as the philistines who did greater damage to the Parklands than John Olsen did with his silly projects.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): The reason we are philistines, the reason we are breaking some great tradition, is that we want 300 000 people to enjoy the Parklands at a motor event. Oh, no, what a disgrace! We want ordinary South Australians, who do not get to use the Parklands because they do not live around East Terrace and North Adelaide, to actually use the Parklands for something they enjoy, rather than walking their show dogs.

An honourable member: It happens now.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It happens now. Well, can I just say that I find this the height of arrogance, the idea that ordinary South Australians are somehow not to be allowed to have permanent structures in the Parklands because a select few disagree. If you adopt that thought process, you could go back and say: let us not have Adelaide Oval, let us not have the Festival Theatre, let us not have the Botanic Gardens, let us not have Pavilion on the Park restaurant, let us not have basketball courts, let us not have soccer ovals; let us have nothing but walkways. What are the Parklands for? They are for the use of South Australians.

The stadium that will be put there will have a smaller footprint than the current buildings have, so there are actually more trees, more parklands for the enjoyment of the good eggs of East Terrace and Fullarton Road. The member for Fisher can drive down with his family, walk his show dog around the Parklands, talk to the other royalists who walk around the oval as well, and enjoy the Parklands when there is not a race on. My view on this is that motor racing is very popular; in fact, the Clipsal 500 is the most popular sporting event in the country. It has the highest attendance rate of any sporting event in Australia, yet the member for Fisher thinks

that this permanent stadium somehow is a blight on South Australia, and I just cannot believe it.

We have the greatest cricket ground in the world, the most beautiful cricket ground in the world, but, of course, the member for Fisher would have us demolish it because it is a blight on the Parklands, being a permanent structure.

The Hon. R.B. Such: You can't change that.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: We cannot change that; that is right. So, he is admitting that he does not like the cricket ground being there, he does not like the Festival Theatre being there, he does not like the boulevards or the restaurants constructed along the River Torrens; what he wants is parklands for the exclusive use of the few rather than the many. My constituents like going to the race; they like going along and watching the V8 supercars. I know it is an inconvenience for the people of East Terrace, I know they do not like watching us drive up there in our Toyotas and Commodores to have a look at the V8s going around the track; I know it is for one weekend when they cannot use the Parklands without buying a ticket; they are outraged, and I know that it hurts them. In fact, a little part of me dies every year when they cannot use the Parklands.

This government is about making sure that the Parklands are there for all South Australians, not just those who can walk across the road and use it like their private backyard; it is not their backyard. I was educated in the Parklands, at Adelaide High School. When the Bureau of Meteorology was first put there, there was debate about it being on Parklands but, of course, it was built because there was a need.

When that was moved and the building of Adelaide High School was proposed, the naysayers in North Adelaide said, 'You can't build a school on the Parklands. You can't have kids from the western suburbs going into the Parklands and playing football on the oval. They belong down in those industrial suburbs. We need the Parklands to run our dogs at the weekend. We can't have permanent structures on the Parklands.' Adelaide High School is our premier public school. It is a beacon to all South Australians demonstrating how good our public education system is, and it is a wonderful school. Where is it? In the Parklands. Who enjoys it? Ordinary South Australians, free of charge. Of course, the member for Fisher would have the bulldozers go through it and get rid of it so that he can drive from North Adelaide or to East Terrace to run his dogs. He could then walk through at the weekend with his little hat on saying, 'Isn't this lovely? Our own private backyard—no permanent structures'. 'Oh my God! There are goal posts in the ground. Get rid of them. They might play soccer here; they might play basketball. South Australians might actually get fit, go for a long run and get healthy! What an outrage!'

Why don't they just put a big fence around it and give the keys to the people around East Terrace? Would that make you happy? Let us just give them all a key; we could number them from one to 256, and that would be it. We could have 256 people using it every Sunday, and the rest of us could just drive around it until they close those roads as well because they want a green belt all the way around Adelaide, and we could dig tunnels underneath.

The Hon. R.B. Such: It'd have to be Parklands.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: They are Parklands and they will still be Parklands. The idea of a park is that all South Australians can use it. If we were sensible, we would build Football Park in the Parklands so that all South Australians could go along on a Friday night to watch a great game of football and actually enjoy the Parklands and use them.

Mrs Geraghty: I think that is personal opinion.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: That is my personal opinion anyway, yes. In Mile End, we have the ETSA Stadium where people can enjoy netball. Netball has the highest participation rate of any sport in South Australia. There are netball courts on West Terrace parklands, in the western suburbs and also off Morphett Street and on King William Street, and the member for Fisher is opposed to building any permanent structure in the Parklands. Dig them up and tell those thousands of South Australians where they should play their netball. I know: let us turn it into an industrial complex, because they cannot use the Parklands: 'I can't go there on a Saturday and wander about, because somebody is playing a game of netball.' Well, I am sorry. The Parklands are there for the use of all South Australians; they are there for our enjoyment, not just for a select few.

Think of the uses for this permanent stadium. I do not think that South Australians enjoy going to Morphettville or Cheltenham. I do not think they like using those racecourses. Imagine Magic Millions twilight racing in Victoria Park. How popular would that be? It would be very popular. After work you could walk down to the Parklands, watch a race, have a drink and enjoy a meal with your friends.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: No, the elites will not let us because the Parklands are theirs, not ours. If the member for Fisher were honest about this, he would move an amendment to the act to say that the Parklands are owned by the people of East Terrace and North Adelaide and the rest of us cannot use them. Imagine how popular it would be to have twilight racing at Victoria Park throughout the entire daylight saving period. We cannot currently do that because the stadiums cannot cope. Why not? Because they are dilapidated. Why? Because they are condemned. The member for Fisher does not care about the way the Parklands look; he just wants them empty. He is really upset about the 300 000 working-class South Australians who turn up to watch the race. How dare they build scaffolding on my pristine grass! How dare we let them enjoy a weekend of racing! The great Australian tradition! Why do you not go to Bathurst and tell them to tear down the track so that we do not have road pollution through the mountains at Bathurst which ruins the ambience of the area? I might want to drive my model T Ford around the area on that Sunday and ruin it for everyone. Bathurst is an Australian icon in the same way that the Clipsal 500 race is becoming an Australian icon. The Clipsal is the highest rating race in Australia. More Australians watch the Clipsal than watch Bathurst.

The Hon. R.B. Such: That's irrelevant to the argument.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: It is irrelevant to the argument, of course! It is our premier tourist and racing event, but it is irrelevant! Invest no infrastructure! This is not infrastructure that we use just once a year: we can use this over and over again.

Mr Goldsworthy: We use it for every horse race.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Exactly, and it will be fantastic. Twilight racing in the heat on a Friday night after work will be beautiful during daylight saving; we will enjoy it, and it will reinvigorate racing in this state. It will reinvigorate the idea that we can use the Parklands. I know we have those who are opposed to using the Parklands for events, so perhaps we should move WOMADelaide as well. Let us move that. Sit them in the parks? No, sorry; get out, we do not want you there either because you are using the Parklands. What about the Zoo? Out—it is a permanent structure! We want the Zoo

out—no good, move it out to Monarto. Get it out of there; it is a permanent structure! What else is in the Parklands? Parliament House—get rid of it; bulldoze it!

The Hon. R.B. Such: We've got a zoo here.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: We've got a zoo here, yes, and who is the chief monkey, member for Fisher? I believe that the Parklands are there for all South Australians, whether from Port Augusta, Whyalla, Ceduna, Mount Gambier, Port Adelaide, Torrensville, Thebarton, West Beach, Napier or Munno Para. They get to drive down and enjoy our race. Who uses those corporate boxes? Volunteers. They get free tickets to these corporate boxes from the state government every year just as children with disabilities do. The member for Fisher gets an invitation every year, and he uses it. We use this for volunteers and South Australians who need a bit of recreational activity, and we give them their tickets free. I will not be there on Sunday but you know who will be? Volunteers and children with disabilities. They will be enjoying the state government's hospitality, not I.

Time expired.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I commend the member for Fisher for moving this motion opposing the long multistorey building planned for Victoria Park. The member for Fisher has clearly expounded the reasons for concern about this structure. He has pointed out that it will have a permanent impact on a key part of the Parklands. It is out of character with the Parklands. The proposed facility will not obviate the need for temporary facilities and the general public will be excluded from most of the facility. I will speak briefly today to summarise the main issues. The starting point must be—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Mitchell. Please go outside to have your continuing discussions. The member for Mitchell has the call.

Mr HANNA: The starting point must be that the parklands have always been there for the people of South Australia, they are not for the exclusive use of a few, and the problem with this building is that it is primarily going to consist of corporate boxes and the Premier's suite. I want to commend the member for West Torrens for his very frank contribution today; illuminating, as he often is. When he made the admission that we are Philistines, I suppose he was talking about people on his side of the House of Assembly, but the member for Adelaide may well say that he should be speaking for himself. I know there are a number of people within the Labor Party who disagree with this scar to be placed on the parklands. The member for West Torrens suggests that the corporate boxes, which will fill up this 245-metre long building, will be there for the common people, the volunteers, the children with disabilities, etc. But the fact is that corporate boxes in my experience are full of Adelaide's elite, the very people that the member for West Torrens seeks to keep away from the Parklands.

There is another aspect to the public ownership of the Parklands, and that is the question surrounding the financing of this building. It should really be examined by the Economic and Finance Committee of the parliament. Has there been a secret deal between government ministers and the South Australian Jockey Club? What is the amount of money that is being paid by the Jockey Club to the Adelaide City Council? How has all this come to be agreed between state and local government and the Jockey Club to create a structure that is there for the select few, whether they be the elite of our political set or the elite of our corporate set?

Secondly, the problem with this permanent structure is that it is yet another nail in the coffin for the Parklands. Over time successive governments have found it convenient to place permanent structures on the Parklands and, if you take any particular one, you can point to the public benefit or the economic benefit of each particular item. But the problem is that over time you are filling up the Parklands more and more with buildings, and the open spaces of the Parklands will gradually diminish to the point where we will have Parklands not worthy of the name.

Thirdly, there is a question about building such a gross permanent structure on the Parklands when it is to cater for virtually fortnightly horse racing meetings and one or two car races a year at most, and even then how long are big car races going to be in fashion given the increasing consciousness of climate change among all South Australians. The fact is that this gross structure is being built for such a very limited period of use by either the horse racing or car racing fraternity. That is why we have been able to cope perfectly well with temporary structures up to this point for car racing. So there are a number of reasons why this grandstand is unnecessary and it raises more questions than it answers. The financing arrangements and the deal making behind the scenes are dubious. I would welcome a government inquiry and a frank disclosure of all the facts surrounding the arrangements.

In conclusion, I commend the member for Fisher once again for expressing opposition on behalf of hundreds of thousands of South Australians to the increasing number of built structures on the Parklands.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KENYON (Newland): I have to say that I have some concerns about this motion, and the main reason is that the two central tenets of the member for Fisher's argument are wrong. Firstly, the argument that this is wrong because it is going to be a cost burden on the taxpayers ignores the fact there is already a cost burden on the taxpayers because the temporary stands are set up every year, and I suspect that over time it will actually be cheaper to have a permanent structure there, one that is not being set up. That is my suspicion. I may be way off the mark, but I think that is a pretty good guess. The other argument is that this is an imposition on the Parklands. It is just not true. There will be a reduction in area covered by permanent structures. It will be less by 5.5-hectares, 55 000 square metres. One-third of the area of the Botanic Gardens is coming back to public land, with people being able to wander around around with their dogs, as the member for West Torrens suggested they like to do.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr KENYON: There is nothing wrong with dogs. I do not mind dogs, and if people want to walk them, that is fine. But there will be more land to do it on, and that is what I am saying. There will be more land: 5.5 hectares. If you are saying that somehow we are taking land away from the public domain, that somehow we are reducing the amount of public land available to the public, that is false. It is absolutely false because, as a matter of fact, there will be 5.5 hectares more. So if the member for Fisher is going to come in here and move these motions, I think he should think a little more clearly about it before he does because the whole underpinning of his arguments to these motions is incorrect, and that is why I have very grave issues with them.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I, too, have pleasure in making a contribution to this debate. Certainly, I do not support the motion moved by the member for Fisher in relation to building permanent infrastructure on the Parklands to assist with the running of the Clipsal 500 motor car race. The member for Fisher, for whatever reason, has chosen to ignore a few points in relation to this matter. The member for West Torrens covered some of them—for example, the fact that a high school has been built on the Parklands, and that the zoo and other buildings have been built on the Parklands. The University of Adelaide campus and the Royal Adelaide Hospital are both built on the Parklands—two crucially important institutions to the running of South Australia, and, if you take the argument of the member for Fisher, they should not be there. My father is an old scholar of Adelaide High School and I know that, every year, he and his remaining brotherhood attend the old scholars' dinner. As a school boy I played cricket on the ovals on the west Parklands behind Adelaide High School. It is a good cricket ground—nice turf pitches. I had real pleasure in getting a good score against Adelaide High, actually, but that is going back a few years.

Another issue the member for Fisher ignores is that not only will this infrastructure cater for an iconic sporting event, the motor car race, but also it will cater for horse racing. It is a joint facility. Not only will it assist with the running of the motor car race but it will also cater far more to the horse racing industry. The horse racing industry will use it far more often than the motor car race, which is pretty obvious because the motor car race occurs only on four days once a year. The horse racing industry will use it far more frequently. Look at what is there at the moment. There is that terrible, old, dilapidated grandstand—

The Hon. R.B. Such: It should never have been there.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: The member for Fisher says that it should never have been there. I mean, it is heritage listed. You cannot pull the thing down because it is heritage listed. You will have to spend a significant amount of money to restore it. That grandstand is actually part of these plans, if the member for Fisher focused on it instead of looking at all the negatives. Also, that shocking big, long, red brick wall on Fullarton Road is hideous. Anyone driving down Fullarton Road will, I think, appreciate the fact that the hideous old broken down thing that was built in 1950s and 1960s will be taken down and a far more modern and aesthetically pleasing structure, which will integrate into the Parklands, will be built.

That will be far more beneficial for the community in general. That is where the argument of the member for Fisher breaks down. Sure, it will be used for the motor car race. I happen to be a fan of motor car racing. I am not a tremendous follower of horse racing, but the horse racing industry will be using it far more often than the motor car race. Another aspect of this whole issue is that one should look at the significant time, effort and money that has contributed to building the temporary grandstand and facilities in the middle of the Parklands now to cater for the car race.

There has been debate in the media, and so on, interestingly between the member for West Torrens and the member for Adelaide. Certainly, we know the position of the member for Adelaide on this issue. She is a protected species within the government ranks with respect to her stance on this issue, which I know really rankles with some government members,

particularly those on the backbench. However, if one looks at the significant cost, time and all the issues that go into building the temporary infrastructure (the construct and deconstruct), it makes sense to any casual observer that you could build something on a permanent basis which fits in with the ambience of the precinct to be used for a car race but which is a multipurpose facility for the car race and for horse racing. The Deputy Premier has launched the project. A scale model has been built so that people can look at it. If you want to see motor car racing infrastructure, go to Bathurst and look at what is built there.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: That is an outstanding facility.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fisher will have an opportunity to respond. He does not need to give a running commentary on the member for Kavel's speech.

Members interjecting:

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: No, we don't need to name him yet. If members want to see some significant infrastructure for motor car racing they should go to Bathurst. Two years ago I went to the Bathurst 1000 because, as I said, I am a keen follower and supporter of motor car racing. Members should go there and look what they have built. What is there is pretty special stuff. The Bathurst 1000 is a car race that is run once a year. They might have other events during the year, but the main event is the race on the weekend in October. This proposed facility at Victoria Park pales into insignificance when we look at what has been built at Bathurst. All of New South Wales—the whole country—embraces the Bathurst 1000 race. I would encourage the member for Fisher to visit Bathurst and be part of that four-day weekend festival at Bathurst; he might get a greater appreciation of what motor car racing means to the country.

The Hon. R.B. Such: It's not in their parklands though.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: Well, it might not be on their parklands but it is built right on the very edge of the town, in what really is an extremely picturesque part of that district. If you go up to the top of that beautiful mountain and look to the south, you see an enormous expanse of plains country. It is exactly what they call it—Mount Panorama. You get an absolutely outstanding panoramic view of that whole area outside Bathurst. So, the member for Fisher should not come here saying that this facility will destroy part of the Adelaide environment and use the argument of Bathurst. The Bathurst track and infrastructure is built on a beautiful part of their district. So that blows a hole in the member for Fisher's argument. I do not support the member for Fisher's motion and I think the building of that facility is a very good initiative.

Time expired.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

UNIVERSITY OF SA, UNDERDALE CAMPUS

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

That this house condemns the council members and senior staff of the University of South Australia, who made the decision to sell and thus destroy millions of dollars worth of tertiary education facilities at Underdale, including a state of the art nursing laboratory, a modern multistorey library serving the western suburbs, a relatively new Aboriginal Studies Centre, the state's only purpose-built technical teacher and home economics teacher training centres, plus numerous other functional buildings built and maintained since 1976 at great cost to the taxpayers of this state.

I feel very strongly about what has happened at Underdale, although it is not in my electorate. I used to work for what is now the University of South Australia, and I know that there are many staff members, past and present, who are very angry at what happened at Underdale.

Part of the responsibility for this debacle must fall on the shoulders of the former minister, Malcolm Buckby. I like Malcolm as a person, but he was poorly advised on this issue because he allowed the University of South Australia to do what it wanted with land at Underdale for which it did not have to pay a cent. Not only did it destroy the buildings there but it tried to sell off the River Torrens, and the government had to get that back. The government also had to buy the preschool centre. It was part of the process of so-called consolidation, and followed the university's similar silly decision to destroy the facilities at Salisbury and sell them off (about which I understand there is still a legal battle), and the university is likely to get less than \$2 million for all the facilities and land at Salisbury.

In the process, the community out there has been deprived of a swimming pool and a lot of other facilities. We hear people say that the facility at Underdale had a bit of concrete cancer, but it was designed by the same people (Hassell and Partners) and was the same sort of construction as the Festival Centre. As the motion says, some of the buildings were very new. The nursing laboratory was the most modern in the state. It cost about \$12 million, and that is a bit over 10 years ago. I went down there the day the guys were dismantling the building, and they said they could not understand why they were destroying a building as good as that. It costs a lot of money to build nursing laboratories with all the medical facilities in them, but it was all levelled; there is not a bit left.

The Aboriginal Studies Centre was even more modern. That has been completely destroyed. The only purpose-built facility in the state for training technical teachers has been destroyed. Home economics facilities have all been destroyed. The school of art was purpose built: it had overhead cranes, reinforced concrete for doing heavy sculpture, and so on. All of it was destroyed. None of those buildings was replaced at anywhere near the same level. The argument of the university is that it did this to consolidate on North Terrace, to build more chicken cages on North Terrace. You can argue that of course they are not going to value the property at Underdale: they had it given to them, basically for nothing, by the state government, even though it was essentially funded from federal government funds.

I am pleased that the Catholic Church ended up getting the northern part, which still has the gymnasium on it, because that was all to be destroyed as well. Medallion Homes initially was going to put housing there, but now the Catholic Church has been able to purchase the northern part, which has magnificent gymnasium facilities with sprung floors, and so on. Hopefully, in its planning, the Catholic education system will protect and use those buildings in the education of children. It amazes me that the University of South Australia was able to get away with what it did down there at Underdale without any outcry from the community. The minister of the day made a classic mistake by giving it *carte blanche* approval to do what it liked, which is exactly what it did down there, and the big losers are the people of the western suburbs.

They had a library, much of which had just been refurbished, but that was bulldozed. Not one brick left. What is down there now is a distance education centre. That was even

more modern than what has been destroyed, but that is now left in amongst the houses in that subdivision. I am not criticising all the council members of the university, but those who made that decision and the senior staff who supported it have a lot to answer for. They claim that they had a cost benefit analysis done: I would like to see it. It has not ever surfaced to the extent that I have been able to have a look at it. I put this motion with a touch of sadness, not because I used to work there but because I think the community of South Australia has been cheated out of facilities that would have been able to serve it for a long time.

Now, in order to train home economics and technical teachers, they have to do theory at Mawson Lakes and practical in TAFE where they can, instead of in a purpose-built building that had beautiful parquet flooring and all the equipment, including dust extraction facilities. The home economics centres had all the kitchen equipment, which cost probably hundreds of thousands of dollars to install. That has all now been removed and dumped, and I think it is a scandal that will reflect badly on those people who made that decision for years to come. The big losers are the people of South Australia.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): I could not agree more with the member for Fisher. I think he is doing an excellent job in campaigning for the parks of the western suburbs. I think that the member for Fisher is a saint when it comes to his protection of our open spaces, and I could not agree with him more. What I admire about him most is his devotion to the permanent structures in the parklands of the western suburbs.

The Hon. R.B. Such: They were not parklands.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: In fact, they were: they were linear reserve. The indictment on the former Liberal government and former minister Malcolm Buckby is that they sold parts of the Linear Park reserve to developers: he sold the River Torrens.

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I think it was a dollar. He gave it away. Heroes such as the members for Fisher and Taylor reversed that decision and restored the parklands to be enjoyed by people of the western suburbs; and I congratulate them for the hard work they have done—and I mention the small role I played in restoring a bit of greenery to the western suburbs.

The Hon. S.W. Key: And Steve Georganas.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: And Steve Georganas, who fought tirelessly during the federal election campaign—which probably gave those extra 75 votes to defeat Simon Birmingham. I thank Malcolm Buckby for giving us Hindmarsh; and I thank the member for Taylor (the former minister) and the member for Fisher for their good work to ensure that the western suburbs are looked after.

The infrastructure that was spent on the nursing laboratory—the training school—was immense. If one goes through our public hospitals today, not through a lack of funding but, rather, a lack of available nurses, we cannot get enough nurses into those hospitals. One of the things the former Liberal government did was close an excellent training school—and I think that is a great shame. The western suburbs are often at the end of the food chain when it comes to conservative governments. When they look at what to close, for some reason the finger on a map always goes to the west first. It always points to the west. Which hospital should we close first? The answer would be the QEH. Which school

should we close first? The answer would be Netley Primary School. They close schools in the western suburbs first. They close police stations in the western suburbs first. They always punish the western suburbs first.

I am glad that, independently, a member who has no affiliation with the western suburbs—who has observed and realised how the western suburbs were treated harshly—has moved a motion for no benefit to himself in order to show the utter hypocrisy of the poor decision-making processes of a former Liberal government—which is probably an indication of the decision-making process of a future Liberal government. Given what I have read in the paper today, I doubt very much there will be a future Liberal government. A president such as Christopher Moriarty is working secretly for us. He must be secretly working for us! I think this is part of a secret plot by the member for Bragg to unseat the Leader of the Opposition, because Moriarty is a member of the member for Bragg's faction.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I have a point of order, sir. The member for West Torrens is talking about Liberal Party internal matters which bear no relationship whatsoever to the motion. I ask you, sir, to request the member for West Torrens to come back to the substance of the motion.

The SPEAKER: I will listen to what the member for West Torrens has to say. He must speak to the motion.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Malcolm Buckby (who made this decision) was affiliated with one of the core factions of the Liberal Party—and they are now at war with each other. They are turning on each other. Some of the fallout from this fighting is the closure of infrastructure in the western suburbs! It is the internal turmoil within the Liberal Party. There have been public brawls. They have Greg Kelton on speed dial. They ring him from their state executive meetings. They ring him and say, 'You know when Malcolm Buckby closed Underdale Iain Evans supported it.' Moriarty has a new business plan to get them out of trouble and Iain Evans is ignoring it. They are fighting amongst themselves like a bunch of schoolchildren—yet they come in here and say they are an alternative government.

The SPEAKER: I think the member for West Torrens has made his point.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I fall to my knees before the wisdom of the chair; and I thank you, sir, for correcting me. I congratulate the member for Fisher—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The member for Bragg is a woman who has a great affiliation with the western suburbs. On her way to Paris she has to drive through the western suburbs to get to the airport. She does not like it but she has to do it! The windows are tinted so that she does not have to look out! However, I congratulate the member for Fisher.

Debate adjourned.

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

SCHOOLS, MORPHETT VALE HIGH

A petition signed by 344 residents of South Australia, requesting the house to recognise the impact the cancellation of subjects at Morphett Vale High School has had to senior students and urge the government to reinstate teachers numbers and subjects cancelled at the beginning of the year, was presented by Dr McPetridge.

Petition received.

AUSLINK

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: This afternoon, the government and some of the state's peak bodies signed a letter to the Hon. Mark Vaile, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services, highlighting the need for extensions to the AusLink network in South Australia and requesting an increase in the level of road maintenance funding provided to this state. Cosignatories to the letter are the state government, Business SA, the Committee for Adelaide Roads, the RAA, the South-East Local Government Association, the South Australian Farmers Federation, the South Australian Freight Council and the South Australian Road Transport Association. The letter calls for the Riddoch Highway, the Princes Highway and the broad gauge railway network in South Australia's Green Triangle region to be included in the AusLink national network. In metropolitan Adelaide, it calls for Cross Road and extensions on South Road to be added to the Adelaide urban corridor.

These extensions would deliver key AusLink objectives, such as increasing the capacity, efficiency and productivity of our network, while also enhancing safety for all users. The letter highlights the previous under-funding of road maintenance by the federal government over many years. Currently, South Australia is provided with only 6.4 per cent of AusLink road funding, even though we have 7.5 per cent of national vehicle kilometres and 9 per cent of tonne kilometres of national road freight, with predicted higher growth than the Australian average.

The signing of this letter represents an historic and unified position from organisations representing the key drivers of our economy—trucking companies, movers of freight, and local businesses, as well as the South-East, which is a region keenly affected by deficiencies in the current AusLink network. Many of these organisations have been actively involved in determining the AusLink priorities that the state government has asked the commonwealth to consider in AusLink 2, the next round of AusLink funding.

This is an historic occasion, because never before has such a powerful and respected collection of organisations unanimously agreed to present a unified position to the federal government regarding the road infrastructure and maintenance needs of South Australia. Collectively, we are speaking with one voice about the needs of the state for future economic growth and how the federal government can assist with funding this growth. I commend the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure for the work at officer level to negotiate this position, and I commend the organisations involved for their collaborative spirit and efforts. I call upon the South Australian Liberal Party to reaffirm its support for these crucial additions to the AusLink network—

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The member does not agree? He did the other day. I call upon the South Australian Liberal Party to reaffirm its support for these crucial additions to the AusLink network by also writing to the federal government.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is funny that the member agrees now, because on Saturday morning he did not agree about asking for the Riddoch Highway to be on there. Only when goaded consistently, with all the cameras there, did he agree to ask for it—

Mr WILLIAMS: Sir, I rise on a point of order.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: He has been to—

The SPEAKER: Order! I think I know what the member for MacKillop's point of order is, but I also remind members that it is disorderly to interject.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Gene Technology Act 2001 (SA)—Statutory Review
January 2007

Natural Resources Committee Report—Natural Resources
Management Boards: Levy Proposals—Government
Response.

QUESTION TIME

MENTAL HEALTH

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier, as the Minister for Social Inclusion. Will the Premier explain to the house why the number of mental health beds available in South Australia has been reduced by the government since it came to power? In 2002, there were 655 mental health beds in South Australia. In 2005, this was reduced to 494. According to the minister, the number in 2007 had dropped further to 430, some 255 fewer beds and, even with the recently announced 76 extra beds, the number is still around 150 fewer beds.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Minister for Social Inclusion): I want to start off by saying how much I deplore the personal attack on the Leader of the Opposition by the President of the Liberal Party. The job of a party president is to stand by the leader.

Ms CHAPMAN: On a point of order.

Members interjecting:

Ms CHAPMAN: This is clearly not going to the substance of the question, which is about mental health beds and what you are doing about it.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I always remember *The Goon Show*; Moriarty was always the fly in the ointment in *The Goon Show*.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier needs to turn to the substance of the question.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thank you, sir. I think that what irritates the Leader of the Opposition is that this government, in the last couple of years, has announced a massive change in mental health which has seen the construction of the Margaret Tobin Centre, which is being opened in the next couple of weeks, and also the construction of the new mental health facility at the Repatriation Hospital. What we are doing is realigning the mental health system by pumping in the money that your government failed to do. Not only did you cut and cut the police force, you also strangled the mental health system in this state. So, we are very proud to be putting record levels of funding into mental health. If you want to disagree with that, let me just say that it is time for statesmanship. That is why I want to take this opportunity of calling on the President of the Liberal Party to get behind the Leader of the Opposition, because we want to keep him there.

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think I know what the deputy leader's point of order is. The member for Bright.

ADELAIDE FILM FESTIVAL

Ms FOX (Bright): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the house about the 2007 Adelaide Film Festival, starting tonight?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): All eyes will be on the Adelaide Film Festival, which starts tonight, hypnotised by what is shaping up to be a sharp-edged, diverse and innovative program. The total package of 150 films from 44 countries being screened during the festival provides a diverse and challenging program. Of these films, an astonishing 21 are world premieres.

An honourable member: They all laughed at this.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes, I know. Tonight the festival opens with the world premiere screening of *Lucky Miles*, by Michael James Rowland, and a gala celebration at the Adelaide Town Hall. The Adelaide Film Festival has become the talk of the film community internationally, achieving positive commentary in both the national and international film media. We have led the way nationally with our film festival. It is one of only a few in the world and the only film festival that I am aware of in Australia currently to actually have invested in new films through the Adelaide Film Festival Investment Fund. So, rather than just passively screening films produced elsewhere, this film festival is quite unique in actually investing in films at every stage along the creative process.

The fund has helped make it possible, through its Film Festival Investment Fund, for 12 films in this year's festival to be created: *Lucky Miles*, *Boxing Day*, *Dr Plonk*, with an all-star cast, *The Home Song Stories*, *Forbidden Lies*, *Kalaupapa Heaven*, *Words from the City*, *Crocodile Dreaming*, *Spike Up*, *Sweet and Sour*, which of course is a joint production with Shanghai, and also *Swing* and *What the Future Sounded Like* have all benefited from this fund. Some people question the wisdom of a film festival actually investing in films. Our first baby was the film *Look Both Ways*, which made a virtual clean sweep of the 2005 AFI awards. Then our second baby, *Ten Canoes*, directed by Rolf De Heer, took a virtual clean sweep of the 2006 AFI Awards. So, not only have our first two feature films won virtually everything going in Australia, they have also featured to absolutely star billing at the Cannes Film Festival. I really enjoyed attending the Cannes Film Festival last year to be part of the launch of *Ten Canoes*.

This innovative trendsetting pace continues for our film festival in 2007 with the establishment of an international competition for feature films. This year a cash prize of \$25 000 will be presented to the winner of the Natuzzi International Film Award for best feature film. This will be the first film award of its kind in Australia and that places the Adelaide Film Festival alongside a small number of international film festivals offering substantial cash awards, including Berlin, the Pusan Film Festival in South Korea, the Tribeca Film Festival in New York, which is the brainchild of Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro, and the Tokyo Festival. Twelve narrative feature films from around the world have been invited into the competition, two of which are Australian made. This award helps contribute to the Adelaide Film Festival's reputation as an important event for producers to set their sights on. It will have a huge positive impact on the festival's experience and its position in the global film market.

In the wink of an eye, our film festival has achieved a remarkable reputation and it is making great gains in helping

to develop our local film industry. To date, the film festival's investment fund has contributed approximately \$1.8 million to Australian films. This investment has helped to secure further funding generating employment and growth in the industry. These broader impacts are critical to the festival's original intent to foster and nourish creative talent. The results of this investment by the festival fund and the tremendous support of the local film industry provided through the South Australian Film Corporation can be seen in the success we have had in producing films recently. This is very important: South Australia continues to defy the national trend in film production with a \$31 million spend in production last year in our state—almost 50 per cent above the state's five-year average of \$22 million. This contrasts markedly with a 33 per cent decrease in production spend at the national level. I want to emphasise that: 50 per cent up in South Australia and 33 per cent down nationally.

South Australia is indeed quickly becoming a real hub for Australian filmmaking, not seeking to become a kind of stage set or a faux New York for films that are overseas productions, but for producing, directing and investing in cutting edge, gritty films which tell the story of Australia. Our considerable success can also be seen in the success of SA films at the Australian Film Awards last year, namely *Ten Canoes*, 2:37, *The Caterpillar Wish*, *Opal Dream*, 9:13, *Carnivore Reflux* and *Gargoyle*, and even *Kenny*, which were all in significant part made in South Australia. I mentioned that *Ten Canoes* premiered at the Adelaide Festival of Arts in 2006; it also won the Special Jury Prize in the 'Un Certain Regard' section of the Cannes Film Festival. *Ten Canoes* then went on to take out six of the AFI Awards including Best Film and Best Director.

The South Australian film industry has been going from strength to strength and its future prospects look great. I look forward to seeing all members at the film festival over the next 10 days. The past six months have seen a buzz in the industry with many new films being produced at the SAFC and on location. I was very privileged to meet Jack Thompson late last year whilst he was here filming his latest film, *Ten Empty*, as well as the cast and crew of *Hey Hey It's Estherblueburger* starring Toni Collette and the star of *Whale Rider*. Of course, Rising Sun has completed the Making of Charlotte, for *Charlotte's Web*—Charlotte being the spider—which opened in cinemas late last year, and it has been massively successful and it is a great credit to Film Victoria and the fact that Rising Sun in South Australia is working in collaboration with Paramount in the United States.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Katrina Sedgwick and her great team for their hard work and brilliant efforts in creating a fantastic film festival. I would encourage all members to frequent the film festival for the next 11 days, and I challenge the member for West Torrens to go and see *Zidane*. I know that as a soccer player himself he has based many of his characteristics on Zidane, and also other films featuring the great Argentinian soccer player, Maradona.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Premier as Minister for Social Inclusion. What is the Premier's explanation for the discrepancy between the Social Inclusion Board's claim and the government's claim regarding the current number of mental health beds in South Australia? When releasing the Cappel report, 'Stepping Up', the Premier claimed there were

currently 430 mental health beds in South Australia. The report itself claims that the number of mental health beds has decreased to only 375—a 55-bed difference.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Minister for Social Inclusion): Earlier this week the state government released the Social Inclusion Board's mental health action plan stepping up a social inclusion action plan for mental health reform in 2007-08. I know that members of the opposition were delighted to have received, apparently, some kind of cabinet submission that fell off the back of a truck—or maybe even a Harley—and I know that they got very excited about that. But the government is committed to 33 of the 41 recommendations of the action plan even before the June budget, and I want to congratulate the Treasurer for his commitment to mental health in that regard. The remaining eight recommendations will be considered through the budget process. The government is committing \$43.6 million as the first step towards the cutting-edge reform of the state's mental health system.

Members of the Liberal Party have been speculating about the future of Glenside. Remember the predictions that Glenside was going to be closed? Well, we will settle that. The Glenside campus will continue to play an integral role in the delivery of specialist mental health services. Rural and remote—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Wait for it, breaking news: rural and remote mental health services will be retained on the Glenside site, and drug and alcohol inpatient services will be provided on the campus, recognising the importance of treating both conditions. A masterplan—and I went down to Glenside the other day—

Mrs REDMOND: Point of order, sir, as to relevance. The question was seeking an explanation as to why there are actually 55 fewer mental health beds in the state than the Premier had said, and he has gone nowhere near that in anything he has said so far.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Premier has the call.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is clearly the fact that they do not regard Glenside as being important to the future of mental health in this state. I went down to the Glenside campus the other day, had a look around, and I am going to invite other members of cabinet to do so. It is a fabulous campus. It has got some wonderful heritage buildings. We are looking at a masterplan and we will be making some major announcements about the future of Glenside later in the year. I can say this: Glenside will remain the hub for specialist services. Glenside will remain open, Glenside will not be closed down. Glenside is integral to the future of our mental health services; it will be very much the hub. So, the government is committed to the centrepiece of the mental health reform which is the new stepped care model. This model will have five levels of care which will include 24-hour supported accommodation, community rehabilitation centres, intermediate-care beds, acute-care beds and secure-care beds. This will provide mental health support for people when they need it most. I am pleased with the response to the government's announcement from mental health specialists and community groups.

We have heard what opposition members had to say about the fact that yet another massive amount of funding is committed to mental health. They said, 'No, it's not enough. It's too little too late.' They have got it almost by rote. Let us

hear what the experts say. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists has welcomed our response, and the South Australian Chair, Dr James Hundertmark, said:

[The college] strongly supports the strengthening of intermediate community care and the provision of supported accommodation for consumers.

Okay, so, if you do not believe the Royal Australian and New Zealand College, let us have a look at Jeff Kennett. The Chairman of beyondblue, the Hon. Jeff Kennett (a former Liberal premier of Victoria), also welcomed our commitment to implementing the Social Inclusion Board's recommendation. Jeff Kennett said:

It's encouraging to see the South Australian government stepping up to the plate.

He further said:

. . . more mental health staff, better access to emergency care, programs targeting the mental health needs of young people, older people and indigenous communities is an outstanding step in the right direction.

I did not see Jeff Kennett saying that about members opposite when they were running the mental health system of this state.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: That's right. No-one ever called Jeff gutless.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: No; no-one ever accused Jeff Kennett of being weak or gutless—no-one ever did.

The Hon. K.O. Foley: And he would have sacked the president who said that.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes. If it had been said about him he would have said today, 'The president has to stand down within 24 hours', because that's guts. We have the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and we have Jeff Kennett. Let us finish with SACOSS, because SACOSS has also welcomed our \$43.6 million investment, with Executive Director Karen Grogan saying:

The focus on restoring the balance of services from acute care to prevention, early intervention and recovery-based levels of care is a great step.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Florey.

ROTAVIRUS VACCINE

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): Does the Minister for Health advocate the wider distribution of the rotavirus vaccine and why?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I thank the member for Florey for raising this very important question, and I acknowledge not only her great interest in this issue but also the issue of the health of children. As members would know, rotavirus is the most common gastroenteritis infection in early childhood. It causes vomiting, diarrhoea and subsequent dehydration. One in 25 Australian children under the age of five will be admitted with rotavirus.

Members interjecting:

Ms BEDFORD: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. I cannot hear the response, and I am actually interested in it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Health will be heard in silence.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I was saying that one in 25 Australian children under the age of five will be admitted to hospital with rotavirus, so that is an extraordinarily large number of kids. Two vaccines were approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration last year. They are Rotarix (made by the company GSK) and Rotateq (made by Merck

and distributed by CSL). These vaccines are available only on a private script at a cost of approximately \$200 to \$400 for a course of treatment. Both vaccines require several oral doses to be given before six months of age. Research demonstrates that vaccines prevent severe rotavirus infection and reduce the need for hospitalisation by 85 per cent or more.

The federal government's advisory committee on medications, the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, has recommended to the federal government that it include the rotavirus vaccines in the National Immunisation Program, and this occurred in October last year. Including a rotavirus vaccine in the National Immunisation Program would mean that infants would be able to receive this vaccination at the same time as they receive their other usual childhood immunisations. Today I call on the federal government to ensure that rotavirus vaccine is included on the National Immunisation Program immediately, and I ask the Prime Minister to act in the same quick manner as he did when the government approved the cervical cancer vaccine some little time ago.

Nationally, rotavirus accounts for 10 000 hospital admissions per year, 115,000 GP visits per year and 22 000 emergency department visits per year. We do not have to be very good at maths to work out that, if we can reduce the incidence of this disease by 85 per cent, we can reduce the number of hospitalisations and the amount of effort that goes through the health system. I understand that the direct cost of hospital care alone is at least \$12 million a year Australia-wide. The rotavirus season coincides with our hospitals' busiest winter period, which is just around the corner. For every month that funding is delayed, not only do thousands of infants and their families suffer unnecessarily but we postpone the opportunity to save millions of dollars in healthcare costs.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Premier as Minister for Social Inclusion. Why has the government broken its promise to maintain the number of acute mental health beds? In October last year, the Minister for Mental Health stated on ABC Radio:

We've got adequate acute bed numbers and we're committed to retain those numbers. We're committed to the current level of acute mental health beds.

However, the government has announced it is cutting the number of beds by 48.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Minister for Social Inclusion): It seems that the Leader of the Opposition does not actually understand what this is about. They claim to have this leaked cabinet submission that fell off the back of a Harley, but what it is all about is a realignment from acute beds, where, I am told, we have considerably more than the national average. But where South Australia has been deficient over the decades under you and under previous governments has been in the area of intermediate care and also community care. That is what the mental health advocates have been asking for and that is what we are delivering. I have just looked at the newspaper and, when asked if he had full confidence in Mr Moriarty, what did the leader say? He said yes.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a point of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There are two people in this relationship, and that is one too many.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is out of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Napier.

SCHOOLS, INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): My question is directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What is the government doing to improve school infrastructure?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Napier. He has not only a keen interest in the quality of public education but a true understanding of the opportunities for new school buildings and the need for maintenance, as well as the opportunities to improve and alter the type of senior secondary education by changing facilities.

Investing in school infrastructure and reinvesting in public education has been a major priority of our government since the time of our election. Not only have we invested in one-off programs such as the \$17 million Better Schools program and our \$25 million School Pride program, but we have also increased by \$2 million a year the annual budget on school maintenance.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacKillop will come to order. The Minister for Education.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: The \$25 million School Pride initiative was one of the extraordinarily popular initiatives of this government because all school communities recognise the improved maintenance and the projects that were completed well ahead of the otherwise longer-term targets.

On top of the additional funding for maintenance and upgrades to school infrastructure, we have also invested in our solar power program and a whole range of sustainability measures, as well as increased funds for school security initiatives. In addition, last year we announced our \$216 million Education Works package, which has to be the most significant reform package within our education system over the last 30 years.

On top of that, we have invested \$24.8 million in 10 high-tech trade schools for the future, with \$23.3 million committed to bringing to 20 the number of integrated children's centres around the state. We have a true long-term vision about improving school infrastructure with ongoing capital works investments. Schools and preschools across the state are undergoing major improvements to their facilities outside the Education Works agenda. These are works carrying on as well as and not being replaced by our new program. The things that are occurring around the state include halls or gymnasiums being built in 15 schools.

There are major works currently taking place in 37 schools and preschools. For instance, the member for Napier will note that \$4.42 million is being invested in Craigmore High School for its redevelopment. That is one of the schools in the honourable member's electorate, and one that he visits regularly. In addition, we are working on feasibility projects in 15 schools and preschools to target the next round of major infrastructure investment. Our solar schools program, our maintenance program—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Sorry to interrupt the minister, but there is too much conversation and yelling out across the chamber. The Minister for Education.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: Since being elected, we have invested \$550 million in our school infrastructure, and that is because we want to be proud of our public schools and to make sure that the appearance of the schools is as good as the high quality education within them. That is one of the driving forces behind the revolutionary change that is being undergone in our Education Works strategy, which certainly involves the member for Napier's electorate, where there will be new schools, high-tech, with all the environmental installations and opportunities to offer young people good outcomes by giving them more choices.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier as Minister for Social Inclusion. Why is the government closing the 129-bed extended rehabilitation service at Glenside when the Coroner has indicated that the lack of this type of service has contributed to patients' deaths? The coronial inquest into the death of Renato Dooma, tabled on 21 December 2006, determined that, because of his condition, he was in need of an extended stay in a secure rehabilitation facility. The only place where this service was available was at Glenside, but Mr Dooma's psychiatrist was told by Glenside that the government had closed this service.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Minister for Social Inclusion): This was dealt with in my statement to the parliament, and I do not like being verbally by the Leader of the Opposition. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to prove that he has the guts and also the backing to lead his party, then he will demand that Mr Moriarty stand down. This is a test of his leadership. It is either the president or the leader. One of them will have to go.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr KENYON (Newland): My question is to the Minister for Science and Information Economy. What support is the government providing for local initiatives in the areas of scientific research and innovation?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Science and Information Economy): I am pleased to inform all members that the South Australian government remains a staunch supporter of scientific research and innovation in this state. In doing so, I recognise the strong leadership provided by the Premier in this important field.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: Have a listen, Ivan: this is a good news story. I know that you don't like good news. Just listen and you will learn something.

The Premier's Science and Research Fund, initiated through the Premier's Science and Research Council, provides ongoing support for the local development of scientific research and innovative initiatives, in particular, initiatives that encourage partnerships between researchers and people and organisations who will apply the research outcomes in the implementation of these specific projects.

Through the fund the South Australian government will support research and development projects aimed at building strategic skills, knowledge, capabilities and science infrastructure. The fund supports projects which are undertaken

primarily in our state and which are aligned with the South Australian Strategic Plan and the 10-year vision for science, technology and innovation. I congratulate the proponents of the successful projects who will receive support from the government in this year's funding round. They are:

- Professor Sakkie Pretorius and his team at the Australian Wine Research Institute—and I know Ivan understands a lot about it and would congratulate them on receiving this funding. They will receive \$533 745 over the next three years for the development of wine yeast strains to value add to Australian wine in order to help our product to compete more favourably in the fiercely competitive international market.
- Dr Peter Murphy and his team at the Ian Wark Research Institute will receive \$376 000 over three years for its research project—a materials research and engineering facility for conducting polymers which will investigate an innovative technology using conducting polymers in order to prove manufacturing viability. Potential end uses include self-dimming auto mirrors and side glazing, self-dimming architectural glass and spectacle lenses, and possible marine, aviation and defence applications.
- Dr Anton van den Hengel and his team at the Australian Centre for Visual Technologies—

Ms Fox: A former Blackwood High School student.

The Hon. P. CAICA: A former Blackwood High School student, I am told; again another great example from a state school.

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: A school in your electorate; so I am sure you are a great supporter of that school. The Australian Centre for Visual Technologies will receive \$750 000 over three years for its visual technologies project for the production and analysis of visual digital media in South Australia. I continue:

- Associate Professor Graham Nathan and his team will receive \$800 000 over three years for the establishment of a large-scale world-class wind tunnel to support South Australia's defence, aerospace and wind turbine sectors. This initiative—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P. CAICA: Sir, I do not think they should talk down the defence industry or, indeed, these technologies which will help the defence industry. This initiative has the potential to significantly enhance the competitiveness of local bids for major contracts in relation to unmanned aerial vehicles, naval projects, micro wind turbines and building design.

State government investment of \$2.46 million over three years for these projects is expected to result in some \$11.3 million worth of research projects being undertaken in South Australia. This year's award-winning projects will join others from previous funding rounds as verification of this government's ongoing commitment to building the state's strategic research capability.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Leader of the Opposition): Why has the Premier failed to commit to increased funding to non-government organisations in the South Australian mental health system when the Cappo report emphasises the important role of this sector? South Australian government funding for non-government mental health providers is the

lowest in the nation at 2.1 per cent of expenditure compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. The opposition has been advised that this level of funding means that these service providers are unable to guarantee their services will remain available to current clients; unable to provide any services to new clients in need of help; and unable to guarantee employment to their staff.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I know why you had deficits every year you were in government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I understand the Liberal Party's slogan for the next election is 'Follow the leader'. The question is: will the real leader of the Liberal Party please stand up?

The Hon. K.O. Foley: She will in a minute to take a point of order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I was hoping for two points of order from the front bench. When I released the report on Tuesday I said—

Ms Chapman: Did you even read it?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes, I did. What you normally do is announce major funding initiatives in the budget—which is what we did when we announced the Margaret Tobin Centre, funding for the repatriation hospital and a range of other things; they were big announcements in the budget. Of course, we have already announced that we are backing our election commitments in our first budget in terms of the forward estimates. But what we decided to do in this area, because it is so pivotally important, is ask David Cappo to prepare a report on the future of mental health in this state. He came forward with, I think, 41 recommendations, and outside of the budget cycle we have committed to funding 33 of them. The remaining few are being dealt with through the budget process.

You cannot have it both ways. We have released this report, which you said had been deliberately held up, and then announced that we were backing, with more than \$40 million, 33 of the 41 recommendations. The remaining recommendations, which also require a great deal of money, will be dealt with through the budget process, which is the responsible thing to do. That is the difference between the fact that they had deficit after deficit and we, of course, have had surplus after surplus and got our AAA credit rating back, rather than the announcements by various front benchers, who just announce anything they want to. They do not even, I am told, inform the Leader of the Opposition—unless he wants to confirm that he does support the \$2 billion nuclear power plant that is going to increase wholesale electricity prices by 100 per cent. Get yourself organised. If you cannot manage your own party, how can you expect to manage a government?

Mr PEDERICK: Sir, I rise on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier has finished his answer.

HOSPITALS, PSYCHIATRISTS

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister for Health. How many psychiatrists at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre on this day are refusing to take on further patients because of case overloads? The opposition has been informed that, at present, psychiatrists at both hospitals are refusing to admit any new patients, because their concerns

about caseloads still have not been addressed. This dispute, as the minister knows, has already been to the Industrial Relations Commission, where they are seeking assistance to restore normal work practices.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): Of course, this is really a question for my colleague the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, and I will certainly put it to her to obtain a detailed answer for the member. As I said two days ago, with respect to an issue in relation to staffing in another hospital, there are enormous pressures in the health system on salaries and conditions and the attraction and retention of clinicians. In the broad, many states are trying to employ the same people. There are too few clinicians in Australia, and that means that the price of clinicians has increased. So, we are all competing, one with the other, to get them. If you are in that position, I guess it makes it a fairly strong position, in terms of industrial bargaining. However, it makes it very difficult to manage the health industrial relations issues. The Minister for Industrial Relations, the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse and I are working through these issues on a case-by-case basis trying to resolve them. As the deputy leader said, this matter is currently before the Industrial Relations Commission.

Ms CHAPMAN: My question is again to the Minister for Health. Can the minister advise the house how many psychiatrists at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and Flinders Medical Centre are currently on stress leave?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I do not have that information. As I said, this is a matter that I will refer to my colleague the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

MENTAL HEALTH

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Minister for Health. Can the minister confirm the current operational practice that mental health beds are closed as patients are discharged from public mental health wards? The opposition has been advised that, at present, mental health beds are being closed as each patient is discharged and, as a result, beds in the mental health wards are remaining empty and patients are forced to wait for treatment.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): The Deputy Leader of the Opposition can persist in asking me questions outside of my portfolio responsibilities and I will do what I have done with the other questions and refer them to the Minister for Mental Health. There is a dispute which is before the Industrial Relations Commission; it is having an impact on the management of our hospitals. It is unfortunate that psychiatrists have chosen to do this, but we are working through the issues with them.

Ms CHAPMAN: My question again is to the Minister for Health. How many beds, then, in the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Flinders Medical Centre, in particular the Margaret Tobin Centre or anywhere else in the hospitals of which you have jurisdiction, have been closed? The opposition has been advised that, as a result of the bed closure policy currently operating, the new Margaret Tobin Centre at Flinders Medical Centre has up to 20 beds currently empty, and that the whole of one psychiatric ward at the Royal Adelaide Hospital has been closed.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I hate to repeat myself but, as I have said before, this is a matter for the Minister for Mental Health and I will happily pass the question on to her.

Ms CHAPMAN: My further question is to the Minister for Health. How many psychiatric patients are now waiting in your emergency departments in the public hospitals of which you have jurisdiction, and what action are you taking to ensure that they receive appropriate treatment?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Once again, I thank the member. I am always thankful to the member for paying attention to these issues and I know she is doing this out of a really deep caring and understanding of the hospital system and wanting to do the best for the citizens of this state. That is a position that we share; we are bipartisan in relation to that. There are issues with the psychiatrists, who are taking some industrial action. That has been on the public record; it is being worked through through the industrial relations process. We hope to resolve it. There are some consequences in our hospitals which are causing some problems in dealing with other patients, as the member said. As to the numbers and so on, I obviously do not have that kind of information with me. We are working through the issues and we are using the industrial relations process, which is appropriate to deal with these issues.

HOSPITALS, FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Has the minister received any report, or even called for a report, from the Flinders Medical Centre as to the overload of patients currently sitting in the emergency department?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I have had many conversations with department officials about the impact of this particular issue. As I have said to you, it is being dealt with by the Industrial Relations Commission. It has been before the commission now, I think, two or three times and, from memory—I will correct the record if it is not true—I believe there is another meeting later on today. We are monitoring this in the best way we possibly can. This is a factor of a shortage of supply in Australia of a whole range of clinicians. That shortage has been brought on by a whole range of factors, one of which was the reduction some 10 years or so ago in the number of trainee positions in our universities. As a result of that reduction in training, there is a shortage of clinicians. That is having an impact right through the health system, not only in this state but right around Australia. As a result of that, of course, we are having to bring in people from overseas to fill the jobs that South Australians and other Australians are perfectly capable of doing if they could get the training.

PROCUREMENT REFORM

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): My question is to the Minister for Finance. Could the minister please provide an update on the progress of the government's Procurement Reform Program?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Finance): I thank the member for West Torrens for his question. The government provides significant support to the South Australian economy through its procurement activities. I take this opportunity to draw to the attention of the house information published in the 2005-06 annual report of the State Procurement Board. Approximately 80 per cent of the

number of contracts were awarded to suppliers based in Adelaide and regional South Australia, and this is great news for all South Australians. The government has ensured that there are more efficient processes for procurement, together with increased accountability mechanisms.

The government has also identified the reduction of red tape as a key outcome, and the State Procurement Board has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at reducing red tape in procurement. These initiatives include the establishment of a streamlined approvals process, the publishing of a simplified procurement guide and a significant increase in strategic contracts for use across government. The government is committed to working in consultation with suppliers and customers to further improve the procurement process and it will ensure that the procurement process works effectively for business and government and provides the best value for money for taxpayers.

HOUSING TRUST, GLENSIDE HOSPITAL

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Housing still proceed with a three-storey, 21-unit Housing Trust development on the heritage garden site at Glenside Hospital? The heritage garden site at Glenside is currently owned by the Land Management Corporation and its redevelopment as Housing Trust units has been the subject of action in the Supreme Court. In addition, the Cappo report 'Stepping Up' now recommends several alternate uses for the Glenside site. Recommendation 33 states that the government should build on its commitment to retain Glenside and it suggests expansion of the site as a stand-alone centre for statewide specialist mental health services. Recommendation 35 states that the specialist mental health services for Aboriginals, including drug and alcohol and early psychosis treatment, should also be located at Glenside.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): I am always very pleased when the honourable member rises to talk about the question of housing and, in particular, affordable housing. I am very keen to ensure that I can place as much affordable housing in her electorate as I can muster. I think it is appropriate that all parts of the Adelaide community share the responsibility of ensuring that there is affordable housing—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: In fact, the honourable member might be able to assist me in reminding some of her constituents that this is a shared responsibility. We should ensure that all suburbs take seriously their responsibility to ensure that there is an amount of affordable housing in each of those areas. As to the site in question, it would have been obvious in the announcements about this exciting new mental health plan for South Australia that there is a further instalment on the way, namely the Glenside Master Plan, and all will be revealed in due course.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): Is the Minister for Volunteers able to advise the house of any recent advances in the management of volunteers in times of emergency?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Minister for Volunteers): We are very lucky here in South Australia. Our research indicates that we have the highest participation rate of any state in our nation in relation to people willing to put their

hand up to be involved in our community. I think that it is a real indication of the true spirit of our community. I know that the member for Norwood is very actively involved in supporting many volunteer organisations in her electorate. I think we see the very best of people when disaster strikes and there are many examples of that. Certainly, last week I travelled with the cabinet over to Port Lincoln for community cabinet where disaster has struck that community. I was able to see the way that they rallied together after that, and the enormous contribution of volunteers over there in helping that community was quite astounding. I think it is a real testament to the heart of that community, their commitment and determination and, particularly, their care for one another. It was wonderful to be at the community forum to see the appreciation that was expressed for the state government, the Premier and minister Conlon, in particular, and the way they helped that community recover.

As a result of that disaster over there, we learnt many lessons. We learnt that people want to help out in times of disaster but we also learnt that it needs very much to be organised and managed in order to maximise the effort of our volunteers because we need to be able to direct volunteers appropriately to areas where they are needed. We also want to make sure that volunteers do not go into areas that are going to put them in danger.

As a result, the Office for Volunteers, in conjunction with the State Recovery Office—and that is really code for 'they did the work and minister Weatherill funded it'—developed an Australian-first volunteer management system, VERIS (Volunteer Emergency Recovery Information). This system allows people who wish to do so to register on a website the details of the skills and expertise that they can offer when an emergency arises. Their skills, their resources and the time they are available can then be matched appropriately with the work that needs to be done. It is a very impressive system, and last year it was the winner of the Emergency Management Australia 2006 Post-Disaster Federal/State Australian Safer Communities Award.

Training was conducted late last year right across government. Over a hundred public servants across our state were trained and are now part of the VERIS operators network. The system and training were in place when those terrible storms hit the Riverland which caused such distress to many families already struggling with the drought. I understand that, on its debut, the system functioned extraordinarily well, with over 200 people registering their offer of help, their time and their equipment, and they came from as far away as Willunga and Mount Compass. I understand that even some people from interstate registered on the database. Importantly, it was a mechanism for those nearby who wanted to help out and who understood the urgency of tending to the vines, in particular. They were able to be matched very quickly with tasks that needed to be undertaken. I went up there and it was quite heartwrenching to see the devastation that struck so many families, so I thank those people. I know that the efforts they put in to help that recovery effort were greatly appreciated.

It is also important to acknowledge the work undertaken by the Office for Volunteers and the State Recovery Office in ensuring that we are now able to maximise the generosity of our volunteers in times of disaster, and that those affected get the help and assistance they need as soon as possible. In doing that, I particularly acknowledge the work of the manager of the Office for Volunteers, Andrew Hamilton, and Mike Krakowski, who spent the last few months prior to his

retirement in the Office for Volunteers creating this system. He was so committed to it that he came in for several weeks after his retirement to make sure the system was operating appropriately and could do the job he knew we needed it to do.

TEACHERS, ALLEGED SEXUAL OFFENCES

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): Is the Minister for Education and Children's Services aware of any current investigations into alleged serious sex offences by teachers in state schools and, if so, how many cases are being investigated? The opposition has been made aware that, since 2004, 18 teachers have been dismissed for reasons such as sexual relationships with students, child sex convictions and possession of child pornography.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Morphett for his question. From time to time undoubtedly there are occasions when teachers do behave improperly, and occasionally they are dismissed. Occasionally their teaching registration is rescinded and they are taken off the list of those who can teach in our state and around the country. It would be quite proper for that to occur. It is also true that, when that occurs, sometimes they are in the non-government sector and those investigations are carried out appropriately.

HOUSING, FLEURIEU PENINSULA

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson): My question is to the Minister for Housing. How is the government increasing housing opportunities for low-income people on the Fleurieu Peninsula?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Housing): I thank the honourable member for his question. On 31 January, I was delighted that my colleague in another place the Hon. Ian Hunter had the opportunity to open two new community houses in Port Elliot to be managed by Endeavour Housing Cooperative—just another of our commitments to putting more affordable housing in the constituencies of those opposite. Those new homes were completed as part of my department's community housing program and will provide affordable accommodation for families and older people on low incomes.

The building of social housing in regional areas is important as it allows members of the local community to remain living in an area where their existing networks and supports are in place; and by being managed by a community housing organisation, tenants are assured of affordable, appropriate and supported housing options. The new houses in Port Elliot were built to adaptable standards and are wheelchair accessible to suit the needs of people with limited mobility. The Endeavour Housing Cooperative, which provides affordable housing for low-income people in the South Coast area, currently manages seven community housing projects from Encounter Bay through to Goolwa.

Endeavour Housing Cooperative is able to draw on the close community relationship it has developed over the years to work with tenants of these Port Elliot houses to connect them with the services they need. This partnership is a great example of how the state government is working together with non-government organisations to increase the supply of affordable housing in this state.

The SPEAKER: Order! The cameraman in the gallery is allowed to photograph only those members on their feet. The member for Morphett.

TEACHERS, ALLEGED SEXUAL OFFENCES

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What process or policy does the department have in place to deal with the continued employment of teachers against whom an allegation of sexual abuse is made? Whilst the maintenance of the presumption of innocence for an accused is well understood, the opposition was surprised to learn that a teacher accused of sexual abuse against a 14 year old girl was not moved to alternative duties as soon as the allegation was made.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): We inherited on coming to government a disgraceful state of affairs in terms of all child protection issues, and it took this government—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left will come to order. The Minister for Education.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: We inherited a scandalous state of neglect when we came into government. We had a Keeping Them Safe strategy, we had an inquiry and we have implemented a range of strategies to keep children safe. Most particularly, I point to the shameful record of those opposite who allowed people to teach in our schools who had never had a police check, because they introduced a system that allowed for police checks only for—wait for it—new teachers.

So, we had teachers within the system—and I talk about the public and the private systems—who had been registered for many decades and who had never been subjected to any kind of rigorous police checks or any scrutiny. It took this government to check retrospectively—

Dr McFETRIDGE: I rise on point of order, Mr Speaker. I point to the relevance of the question. My question is: what process or policies did the department have in place to deal with the continued employment of teachers?

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the minister is answering the substance of the question. The Minister for Education.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: It took this government to check retrospectively the details from every teacher working at every school; and, incidentally, pay for teachers' registration and police checks (even in the private sector) and, having done that, we have investigation units. We are the first government in this state to have interstate police checks working through CrimTrac across the whole education sector in Australia, as well as a renewed Teachers Registration Board which seriously takes into account and investigates these details from the past and which has on the books records of every practising and registered teacher in this state.

Our processes have reformed significantly since we came into government, and no child is put at risk. In fact, I have been criticised for putting the rights of children first. I have been criticised by the teachers' union and individual teachers for always saying that our paramount duty of care is to the child first. If there is less respect for an individual, I will take it on the chin because I want to protect children first.

HOSPITALS, PSYCHIATRISTS

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: During question time the deputy leader asked me a series of questions about the dispute involving psychiatrists in South Australia. I have had some advice from my office, which may be of interest to the member—obviously not. Well, it may be of interest to someone in the house. I am told that the psychiatrists are returning to work. They agreed to lift the bans yesterday, so the industrial relations component of it has been dealt with. The department is obviously still working with them. I am also told that the Margaret Tobin Centre is fully occupied and there are about 12 mental health patients in the emergency department of the Flinders Medical Centre.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

WELLINGTON WEIR

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): As many in this house would be well aware, Sunday's rally against the Wellington weir was a great success. Despite the weather forecast and the fact that many of the protest's core supporters live well out of the city, it was pleasing to see over 500 people from all parts of the city and state taking part. The words of the speakers flowed across the state through radio and TV, and the river of yellow flowed from Victoria Square along King William Street and down to the steps of Parliament House.

Many of my Liberal parliamentary colleagues, as well as members of the Democrats and Greens, were there on the day and were pleased to be part of such a well organised group. Even the police were heard to comment that it was a well disciplined rally, underlining the point that these people are not your average serial protesters. They are a clear-thinking, well informed organisation with two very clear objectives: stop the weir, and correct the over-allocation of the Murray-Darling's water.

It was curious to see Premier Rann announce on Monday that the odds of this weir happening are now down to less than 5 per cent. Of course, he is still referring to it being completed. The massive obstruction blocking 80 per cent of the river at that point may well still proceed, with all its permanent consequences. This is undoubtedly why the Minister for the Environment (a contradiction of expression if ever I have heard one) is making application to the federal government to bypass the federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, much to the horror of all Australians. This would put Premier Rann, ministers Maywald and Gago, and the whole of South Australia, dead centre of the international conservation spotlight, distinguishing itself by asking to break its own country's rules to go back on an internationally recognised promise. Will this government then look to circumvent its own laws to relentlessly pursue what it has admitted is not a long-term solution?

I draw the house's attention to the definition of the word 'reservoir', described in the *Macquarie Dictionary* as 'an artificial place where water is collected and stored to supply a community or irrigate land'. If this weir is completed, it would be defined as a reservoir, and many of the everyday activities and industries that make it so valuable would be prohibited under South Australian law.

It is time the state government came to grips with the fact that putting another weir anywhere below Lock 1 is a bad idea. They should listen to the people who know the river and lakes. If what I suspect is true, they should also listen to some of their own advisers, who must be personally horrified by this proposed act of vandalism. Let us put our time, effort and resources into developing other ideas to get through this drought—ideas that have long-term benefits, not long-term consequences.

We should be looking for ways to capture and reuse stormwater now, treating and reusing effluent, encouraging and assisting urban industries to reduce their water needs, investing in pump technology and encouraging installation of rainwater tanks and systems that can contribute water to the system, as is now the case with power. Instead of wringing the last drop of water (or is it blood, or money?) out of the Murray, we should be pursuing ways to improve its flow and capacity in such a way that it does not impact on the neighbouring environment.

One suggestion on this matter has come from an organisation that collectively has over 2 000 years of knowledge and experience on the Murray. The Murray Skippers' Association advises me that the original river bed is covered with an average of 11 metres of silt and mud, which would usually be moved downstream by normal flows. If this were to be dredged out, it would greatly increase the river's natural holding capacity without affecting anything on land. The extra water stored would be cooler which would further minimise evaporation, and the added bonus is that the by-product (rich alluvial soil gathered by natural flows) is a saleable item.

Even the river bed's natural plant life would regenerate, greatly assisting the recovery of indigenous insect, fish and bird species and, therefore, water quality. This idea from the Murray Skippers' Association has great merit. They are incensed that, despite several offers of advice and assistance to the government on this and other river management suggestions, they have been ignored, like so many others up and down the river. A weir would greatly increase salinity in the Lower Murray, a fact that the government has conceded in a DWLBC 'Frequently asked questions' document released last Friday. This would impact on tourism in many ways. One of the obvious ones comes from the same association.

The skipper of the *PS Marion* has advised that he is unable to sail the paddle wheeler from Mannum to Goolwa as planned because excessive salinity levels in the lake will cause extensive damage to the ship's boilers.

Time expired.

SCHOOLS, ENERGY AWARDS

Ms PORTOLESI (Hartley): Today I would like to draw to the attention of this place the positive and active steps taken by a group of young people in my community to tackle climate change. In fact, I would like to highlight the efforts of all primary and secondary students throughout the state who participated in the Origin Energy Awards 2006. This awards program is a commendable initiative from Origin Energy, which encourages students to show their community how to save energy, money and, of course, the environment. I offer my congratulations to all students who participated in this project but, in particular, a delightful school in my electorate, St Joseph's Tranmere, which received a special merit for its efforts.

The students and teachers of St Joseph's, who are so capably led by principal Paul Murphy, have done a fantastic job in their efforts to spread a positive environmental message, and they are prepared to put their money where their mouth is. The students undertook multiple projects in their community to demonstrate the ways in which we can all do our bit for the environment, and I would like to highlight some of those activities. Under the direction of their teacher Matt Pasto, the year 6 students established a stall at a local supermarket complex, showing shoppers the many ways to create an energy-efficient home. Their display included models and reports on energy-efficient households. They demonstrated how we can make a difference to energy use and costs by the placement of items such as windows and awnings, and by using particular floor materials, low-watt lighting and solar energy.

They also demonstrated the energy savings that can be made from simply running airconditioners at higher temperatures or switching off appliances instead of leaving them in standby mode. The students of St Joseph's Tranmere showed that we can all easily reduce our household energy use with simple alterations. The installation of four compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of normal incandescent light bulbs, if used eight hours a day, can save residents over \$160 a year. The students also participated in planting trees and shrubs as part of the Our Patch project, a joint initiative of the Patawalonga and Torrens Catchment Water Management Boards, where the students look after an area of their local environment, in this case a section of Fourth Creek.

The students also adopted a less conventional method of spreading their message by adapting the fairy tale *The Three Little Pigs*, in which they modified the pigs' house to suit an energy-efficient housing theme. I would like to commend these students for teaching us in the wider community some very important lessons about sustainable energy-efficient practices. I would also like to offer them my sincere congratulations on their recent 80th birthday. I am so proud to represent in this place such an outstanding school, and look forward to their next 80 years of leadership in and contribution to the community.

SCHOOLS, AQUATICS PROGRAMS

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder): I wish to briefly discuss the 2006-07 budget as it relates to the aquatics programs available to South Australian school students. As I understand, there is a proposal to cut \$2 million from that budget. The minister and the government might think that this is a responsible decision, but I believe that it is financial management gone mad and it makes me question whether the government has decided to target our youth, all in the name of contributing to the retention of the AAA rating. Via the aquatics programs, students are able to try board surfing, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, rowing, sailing, small boat handling, snorkelling, surf swimming, swimming, water skiing and wind surfing. While the opinions of those in this house might vary somewhat, the fact is that South Australia has the lowest rate of drownings in Australia.

In support of that is a letter that I received from the Outdoor Educators Association of South Australia, which enforces the positives that are attached to this program. In particular:

- it develops lifelong recreational pursuits;
- it educates about sustainable practices;

- it educates about appropriate use of our fragile natural environments;
- it promotes safety in the outdoors, especially in water-based activities;
- it develops a sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and wellbeing;
- it develops leadership and team work;
- it develops self-reliance;
- it develops problem-solving skills;
- it improves and develops fitness;
- it promotes healthy behaviours;
- it develops risk processes and appropriate risk-taking processes;
- importantly, it develops future education, offering career paths and employment options for young people.

My argument would be that the fact the aquatic program exists contributes significantly to the fact that we have fewer drownings in South Australia than in the rest of the nation. The program is provided at 11 locations across the state—Ceduna, Coffin Bay, Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, Barmera, Port Augusta, Port Noarlunga, Port Pirie, Victor Harbor, West Lakes and Port Vincent. It is quite probable that eight of the 11 centres are at risk of closure, with the distinct possibility that only three will remain in the metropolitan or near metropolitan area. What will be the result of these closures? My understanding is that up to 200 people will lose their job as a result of these closures, and while the indirect job losses through the domino effect on reduced spending within local economies is hard to estimate, presumably it could be in the vicinity of 25 per cent; so another 50 people are at risk.

Today I wish to focus on the Port Vincent aquatic centre, which I am proud to say is in the Goyder electorate. Port Vincent is at risk of losing about 26 jobs. Some 20 of those jobs relate to the aquatic centre, where 5 000 students each year go through the program, and two jobs are at risk involving accommodation at the hostel, which will struggle to survive. It is quite probable that that land, which is owned by a girl guides group, will have to be sold. The caravan park will suffer a drop in revenue, as will the caravan parks at Point Turton and Corny Point. Visitation to Innes National Park might be reduced. The caterers who supply meals for these students will have to close their business, as will the butcher, the general store, the kiosk, the deli, the sailing club, the garages which maintain the vehicles, the bus companies and, importantly, the primary school.

Mr Venning: Will that close?

Mr GRIFFITHS: It is not at risk of closure, but it will be affected because the primary school is closely linked to the aquatic centre, and it has national recognition for its aquatics program and what it does in the study of the marine environment. All these people are good people who contribute to the community in many ways. Importantly, they need the support of the government to keep their good work going—not the threat of closure of a facility that has been running for 30 years. Clearly, the South Australian community is outraged by this proposal, and it has strongly indicated to the minister that it wants the program to continue at previous funding levels. Yesterday the house received a petition signed by 9 620 people, requesting that the government recognise aquatics as a legitimate and important part of the school curriculum and maintain funding to school swimming and aquatics programs. In addition, nearly 17 000 South Australians have expressed an opinion that the aquatics program must remain in its current state. Earlier this week the

President of the Australian Education Union was quoted on radio as saying:

Swimming and aquatics is a heartfelt issue amongst the community. People understand the important role that the program plays in the lives of their children and appreciate the importance that it has for safety in the water. But not only that, it's an important part of the school curriculum which provides students with an opportunity to experience a wide range of aquatic activities. . . I've also heard in the last couple of days of the real concerns from people in towns where these programs are running—concerned about the loss of business, concerned about the impact it will have on the town to lose those sorts of programs. So I think that's something which is emerging as an impact that we hadn't considered initially, but is certainly being feared.

I urge the government to reconsider its position.

Time expired.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I would like to speak about climate change and the Howard government's blatant indifference to both its reality and its effect upon future generations. Despite continued warnings on the deteriorating health of our planet and countless studies and reports which highlight the effects of climate change and the actions we must now take to mitigate its effects, the Howard government has done absolutely nothing. It has presided over 10 years of complete inaction on climate change. It has repeatedly said:

- No to the Kyoto Protocol;
- No to a national emissions trading scheme;
- No to long-term greenhouse gas emission targets beyond 2012;
- No to incorporating a greenhouse trigger in federal legislation; and
- No to the appointment of a climate change minister in its recent cabinet reshuffle.

Even now, when confronted with the most damning and conclusive report ever, it remains sceptical, divided and hopelessly unable to deal with the issues. Two weeks ago, the world received another wake-up call with the release of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest assessment of the environmental threat posed by global warming. It was a chilling report which, in my opinion, leaves no room for doubt. The key findings of the report were that:

- warming of the climate system is unequivocal;
- the cause is very likely man-made, with 'very likely' being a probability of 90 per cent or more;
- man-made emissions of greenhouse gases are already to blame for variations in our climate; and
- climate change would continue for centuries, no matter what we did, due to the time scales involved in reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

The panel's outlook for the end of this century were:

- temperature rises of between 1.1 and 6.4 degrees celsius;
- sea level increases of between 18 and 59 centimetres;
- increases in the frequency and intensity of droughts, cyclones and flooding; and
- sea ice shrinking in both the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Yet what did the federal government do in the face of this report—a document produced by 600 authors, with some 620 expert reviewers and unanimous agreement from 113 governments? The answer is hardly surprising: nothing. Rather than acknowledging the reality of climate change and acting decisively and swiftly to address it, the Howard government has tried to remain true to its 'triple D' agenda

on climate change: downplay, deny and do nothing. After all, why ruin a decade-long streak of complacency and denial?

But even in sticking to the agenda, the government has come hopelessly unstuck. Let us just take a look at what senior members of the government have been saying over the last three weeks. The Prime Minister dismissed the report and stated that his government will continue with its environmental policies and take no action that could prove harmful to the Australian economy. The new environment minister, Malcolm Turnbull, took a different tack and said that whatever Australia did it would make no difference, unless the major greenhouse gas emitters did likewise, and that 'while meeting Kyoto targets was virtuous, it would not stop global warming'. I particularly like Mr Turnbull's comment that 'The science in this report is important, but hardly new,' which, in Howard government speak, means: why change our stance on climate change now?

I would urge both men to read the Nicholas Stern review, which clearly demonstrates that the costs to the world economy would far exceed the costs of any measures taken now to address the problem. I also would urge both of them to stop using the Kyoto excuse; that is, if the major players do not play then neither will we. This is not only an illogical argument but it is also highly irresponsible. However, in recent days we have really seen the cracks appear, when the Howard government cannot even agree as to whether climate change exists, let alone what to do about it. I was surprised to read in *The Age* that a senior South Australian Liberal—the Minister for Finance, no less—had stated that it should not be seen as a sin to be cautious about the science of global warming. He then, quite extraordinarily, went on to say that there was an ongoing debate over the extent of climate change and the extent of the role of human activity with respect to global warming. A day later we heard the Treasurer come out and state:

I think the scientific evidence is now accepted and that is that climate change is occurring, that human activity is leading to carbon emissions, which is slowly leading to an increase in temperature. I don't think that's in dispute any more.

So, what do members of the government believe? Even when talking about one basic measure to combat climate change (and that is assuming they can eventually agree that it exists), they fall apart. We have seen in recent times the Prime Minister undergo a sudden conversion and talk about a national emissions trading scheme. But then the Treasurer comes out and says that the Prime Minister is wrong and that we need to have an international, not a domestic, emissions trading scheme. Then we have the finance minister coming along and saying that both are wrong, and that no emissions trading scheme will work. It is an absolute shambles. The Howard government has no policy, no commitment and no long-term answer on climate change. A federal government whose finance minister publicly states that he is a sceptic cannot possibly be a part of the solution.

By contrast, South Australia is a national leader in the supply of renewable energy. We have introduced many energy and water-saving measures. We have contracted the CSIRO twice to advise us of the implications of climate change upon our state, and we are following through with our commitment at the last election to enshrine greenhouse gas emission targets in legislation. The Labor government has always been of the firm view that we all have a part to play in combating this global problem, no matter how big or small that part may be. History will judge the federal government's

attitude towards climate change, and I have no doubt that it will be found guilty.

Time expired.

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Mr VENNING (Schubert): At last the people of South Australia are realising that they have a government that is not performing as well as they are continually being told it is. Madam, the spin is wearing thin. Even members of the media (bless their souls) are coming around to the realisation that all in this state is not rosy, and the most important realisation of all: the rhetoric does not stack up against the realisation of the actualities that are out there. You do not have to drive very far to see what is there.

Last weekend's comment columns in all the local papers and on television gave a strong hint that there were seeds of doubt. Almost everything that this government does or touches turns to dust. It does not have the ministers with the expertise or confidence to make the right decisions on time.

There are two or three ministers who do have my support, and they know who they are. I have to say that the others are absolutely hopeless. They do not even answer your correspondence; all they do when you ask them a relevant question—and they do this in the house—is totally avoid the issue, even on a personal basis. They allow the bureaucrats to completely control them, and therefore the bureaucrats control the government's agenda. I am very disappointed that the committees of this house have all been wound down.

Ms Ciccarello interjecting:

Mr VENNING: You do not have to be Einstein. I note that the chair of the Public Works Committee (the committee I came from) is here, but I know the workload of all these committees. It hurts me to say it, because I enjoy my committee work, but these committees have now been in place for almost a year, since the election. You have a look at the annual reports of these committees and see what they have done in the last 12 months. The minister was a previous chair of Public Works and I was on that committee and, yes, the Public Works Committee always appears busy; it is like a work machine, with the work continually coming. It is force-fed, but if it were not for that, if you left it to do anything of its own volition, it would just starve.

This is a government of lost opportunities. We have had four years of great success in this country. The Australian economy has been through an unprecedented boom period, led by a massive mineral resources boom in uranium, copper, iron ore, lead—all experiencing huge world demand and massive prices. Because of this, Australians have been paying huge amounts of tax: income tax, property taxes, GST, gambling taxes, speeding fine revenue, huge increases in all government charges, and the list goes on and on. The building boom alone in South Australia has returned huge windfalls to state government coffers. As well as increased speeding fine revenues, there have been charges of a massive \$160 million over what was budgeted.

So, why the lost opportunity? What has the Rann Labor government done with our money? What do we have to show for these huge cash flows in our state and in the government coffers during this boom time? Remember, these booms are cyclic. What do we have to show? The silence is deafening. What do we have to show for it? Nothing. We have trams, lifting bridges and a burgeoning Public Service. What can you say we have got that is real and tangible for these times? We can play politics about this now but when we are no

longer here and look back to this period of time, will we be able to say collectively as a government and as an opposition, 'Look at what we did'? Have a look out there; it is an absolute disgrace.

We all, in the end, collectively wear it. Members opposite sit silently there on the back bench and allow their front bench *carte blanche*, managing the worst situations the state can imagine. Well, it is high time you members on the back bench had more to say. You have one or two ministers who are reasonable performers, and you ought to be pushing them.

Ms PORTOLESI: I object to the member's reference to me as a backbencher; I am a middle bencher. I am joking.

Mr VENNING: A frivolous point of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Schubert will wind up. The member for Morialta.

DENTAL HEALTH

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta): Last week I was privileged to attend the opening of the first aged care dental room at the Ridleyton Greek Home for the Aged. Some three years ago I was a member of a steering group looking at the problems associated with the oral health of older people. The establishment of a designated dental health chair within an aged care facility was one of the key recommendations from the South Australian Dental Service Committee, and I was delighted to see that important project come to fruition.

The link between poor oral health and poor health overall is nowhere better demonstrated than among older people. The disabling effect of oral disease on older people's ability to maintain their levels of social and physical independence is a well-researched area and the focus of international approaches to improving older people's general health. Older people in residential aged care facilities are especially vulnerable to oral diseases as their ability to maintain oral hygiene, and therefore their oral health, lessens.

The National Oral Health Plan 2004 acknowledges that, by the time older people reach residential aged care facilities, many are already suffering from poor oral health. This deterioration often accelerates after older people are admitted, with many residents now in poor condition as a result of dental pain and discomfort, which compromises their ability to eat and function normally. I think we all know that, when we have a sore mouth, it is really hard to both communicate and socialise with other people around us. This is a really important part of the social integration of older people. Without that ability, they really do struggle to have a good quality of life. The need to develop early oral health assessment and dental care strategies which reduce risk is one of the keys to assisting people to maintain their oral health and, therefore, their quality of life.

As a state government initiative in 2002, the South Australian Dental Service, led by the dynamic Dr Martin Dooland, formed a working group tasked with the development of action plans to address the problems facing older people in reaching and maintaining good levels of oral health. As a result, two pilot projects were developed and conducted under the direction of a multisector steering committee including the SA Dental Service, Southern Division of General Practice (representing the private medical practitioners), Council on the Ageing, Aged and Community Services SA, Aged Care Association Australia (formerly ANHECA), Australian Dental Association, Department of Health and the University of Adelaide.

However, special mention must go to the drive and organisation of Anne Pak-Poy and Anne Fricker who ensured that we all stayed focused and on task to deliver these projects. These projects are known as the Nursing Home Care Program and the Southern Aged Community Care Program and they are funded for the next four years until 2010. I have been talking about the Nursing Home Care Program, which opened at Ridleyton. It has funded private dental teams to care for over 1 200 older people in residential aged care facilities. The SA Dental Service has provided portable dental equipment and coordination between the teams in the aged care facilities.

Early data shows most of the treatment required by residents was simple and straightforward. Examples are removal of fragments of old teeth, smoothing and adjusting dentures, and cleaning. The difficulty is that the dentists are working away from their usual clinic and it is not easy for them to work in a mobile manner. The feedback from both dental and nursing home staff cites improvements in residents' function in both their eating and speaking and also in their behaviour as relief from ongoing pain reduces residents' behavioural problems, especially those with Alzheimer's syndrome.

A special commendation must go to Dr Lukas Tsakalos, who heads a private dental team which has been visiting the Greek Home for the Aged to deliver dental care through the Nursing Home Care Program. Without his passion and dedication, I doubt whether this pilot would have come to fruition so quickly. Having heard Lukas speak on several occasions, I cannot emphasise enough the impact he has had on this project. The board of the Greek Home for the Aged was very keen to support the provision of dental services in the facility and funded the construction of a dental clinic within the facility. Chaired by Mr Theo Maras, a well-known Adelaide visionary, this is another example of their leadership.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BILL

Consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendments.

(Continued from 21 February. Page 1861.)

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

All but one of the amendments were actually suggested in debate in the lower house. The shadow minister asked that the matter be considered between houses. We refined the bill and have taken into consideration a number of valid points he made, particularly around cell security. All of those amendments are captured now in what has come back to us from the Legislative Council. The only other matter over and above the amendments that we said we would consider at the suggestion of the shadow minister is one further amendment setting up a process which actually chooses the Fisheries Management Council, and, again, we are quite happy to accept that. I believe there is some merit in that. It is appropriate, I think, that there be some external process as part of selecting that Fisheries Management Council; that it is not left entirely with the minister of the day. I like that mechanism. I was a little bit surprised at the final membership of the group. That

notwithstanding, there is merit in the amendment and we are delighted to accept it, and we thank those in the other place who added that further value to the bill.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: The opposition supports the amendments as they have come back. I think it has been a good process. This bill has been around now for a long time. It was about five years in the making, so it has had a lot of work and a lot of industry input over a long time. I join with the minister in thanking everyone who has had an input to it. There was some good work done in the other house to pick up and make sure that we are able to deliver to the fishery stakeholders a bill which will actually serve them very, very well into the future. I think it has been a good process, and I support the amendments.

Motion carried.

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (EXTENSION OF TERMS OF OFFICE) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 8 February. Page 1756.)

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder): I rise on behalf of the opposition to make some brief comments about this bill, while also indicating from the outset that the opposition will be supporting what is only really a small administrative bill. My understanding of the current provision of the act is that members are appointed to the NRM Council, and the boards, and were so in April 2005, under staggered terms of two and three years, so as to ensure that the terms of all members did not expire at the one time.

Those members appointed for a period of two years are now nearing the end of their term, with a number of the boards and regions still deliberating and yet to complete their NRM plans. It is predicted that these plans will be finalised in the middle of 2007. The implementation of these NRM boards and regional plans is a critical phase; and, so, from the point of view of the opposition, it is appropriate that we support the government's proposal to allow for the extension of the terms of the people appointed for two-year terms initially to be pushed out to the maximum three-year period.

This position, however, does not alter the fact that the people appointed to the NRM Council and the regional NRM boards cannot serve as a member for more than six consecutive years. For appointments that will commence in 2008, the staggered-term policy will be reinstated. It is important, also, that the terms are staggered so that, at any one time, we do not have all new personnel involved at the NRM board level. Anyone who has worked within local government or on committees recognises the fact that it would be very hard to operate if the sum total of the historical knowledge of that group were lost at once. The use of the staggered system continuing therefore seems appropriate.

At this time it would be remiss of me during this contribution not to mention the real concerns being raised by local government within the Goyder electorate and other areas about the substantial increases proposed by the NRM levy in 2007-08 by the Northern and Yorke NRM board. I have received letters from every council within the Goyder electorate and spoken to the chief executive officers and mayors, and they are all very concerned about the proposed increases. In some cases we are talking of up to 400 per cent increases on the levies of individual property owners, because it is all based on the capital value of their land.

My understanding is that the Northern and Yorke board was proposing an increase in the total levy collected from \$750 000 to \$3 million. When we consider the real effects of the drought, this is a burden upon property owners that they would find very hard to bear. No doubt, though, these matters will be discussed when we have a full review of the NRM act. I can respect the difficulties that are involved in developing regional plans from the NRM perspective, but I want to reinforce the fact that the people who have spoken to me from local government are very concerned about the lack of consultation of the boards, especially relating to the fees and levy structure.

Their request is that debate occur far more openly, as well as the opportunity to be involved as early as possible in what are significant increases for property owners because, if that does not occur, at the end of the day that will not help anyone. It is very important that the resources are there and used appropriately. We do not want people to have arguments about how much is to be collected. The important part is using the money appropriately. With those few words, I confirm the support of the opposition for the bill.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): This is a very disappointing time for me. I find it very disappointing to stand in the house today and talk about my concerns—which are starting to appear—with respect to NRM. As members would know, I have been involved with this issue probably for 30 years—a long time before I came into this place. I was involved in the initial work that was done by, first, the previous government in relation to bringing about these amalgamations; and, secondly, during the period of this government. The first two lines of the minister's second reading explanation in the other place state:

The Natural Resources Management Act 2004 has effectively been in full operation since July 2005, and has led to significant improvements in the way South Australia's natural resources are viewed and managed.

Nothing could be further from the truth. For many years I pursued this issue pushing for a part amalgamation. At the time I was the chairman of the Animal and Plant Control Board, and I was convinced—

The Hon. R.J. McEwen: Is this a griever?

Mr VENNING: This is all about the subject. The government is asking for a delay and I am explaining about that delay. I was convinced by the then minister (Hon. John Hill) that a total amalgamation was the best and most feasible option. We all agreed that it was to make things more efficient, and it was all encompassing. I spent 30 years pursuing this. However, when I look back now and when I consider the current position of the NRM, I do not believe we should ever have gone down this track, because the system is failing. If we had only done what I wanted to do, we would not be in this position now.

The Hon. R.J. McEwen interjecting:

Mr VENNING: It is relevant. It is all about the delay. Why are we here asking for a delay? It is all about the NRM and why the delay should occur.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Schubert.

Mr VENNING: Well, bring the minister to order. How about a bit of impartiality from the chair!

An honourable member interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Schubert, please remember *Hansard* and direct your remarks to the chair.

Mr VENNING: Madam Deputy Speaker, I was directing my remarks to you. I believe that what has happened is a disgrace because the system is failing and the government has gone back on its word to me—and those are my words. I worked with Minister Hill, I worked with Mr Roger Wicks, the then CEO. We spent hours and hours working through this whole system and what has transpired is a total disgrace. Everybody in this house who had anything to do with it would know. The minister sitting here would know because he has a country electorate. He would be getting the feedback that I am getting. He would have councils contacting him and telling him what a huge cost shift it has been from the state government to local government. As I said before, the bureaucrats have taken charge.

The Hon. R.J. McEwen: Neither of us agree with that; totally wrong.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Minister, please cease interjecting. The member for Schubert.

Mr VENNING: The bureaucrats really have taken charge of this, and the level of salary and administration in middle management of the new NRM situation is totally out of control. They have cut their contributions to the scheme along with the state government, leaving most of the scheme to be picked up by councils, and it is pretty tough for them. They now have to find extra money to cover the state government's old contributions and, at the end of the day, these extra costs are going to be passed on to every-day people through rates notices.

The old system was funded jointly by the federal government, state government and local government. The average ratepayer was paying to his or her council that council's rates, and part of the contribution to the council was a small contribution toward the local animal and plant control board, pest and soil boards, and the list goes on. That worked very well. At the time I was concerned about how we would quarantine those salaries into a new system. All I can say is that I raised those fears and my fears were founded 100 per cent, because the state government walked away from its contribution. I presume the federal one is still intact, and local government has come along and picked up the whole thing.

There is no doubt that the increase in the NRM levy will add to the already strained financial pressure on many community members across South Australia. One must not forget the repercussions that flow on from this rise for councils. They are required to make the payment regardless of whether or not the ratepayers actually pay. If the ratepayers say they cannot pay and it becomes a bad debt to council, the council still has to find the money. This is a huge shift of responsibility in resources from state to local government.

In retrospect, and as a member of parliament, I deeply regret that I ever supported this decision. I feel let down by Minister Hill and by my old friend, ex-CEO Roger Wicks. I should have learned my lesson and never trusted this government or its word. It is a simple case of another huge, burgeoning bureaucracy. What was in principle a good idea (and still is) is now a political disgrace. However, the situation is much worse. I am led to believe that the NRM boards have been told by the government that they must purchase their vehicles from State Fleet. Previously they purchased their vehicles at an annual charge of approximately \$2 000 a year. They did it individually, on a one-to-one basis. The same vehicle will now cost \$15 000 through State

Fleet—yet another disgrace, particularly when you consider how many vehicles the one NRM board has. The extra cost of these vehicles alone, with the government's cost shifting, will mean that the community will once again have to cough up the extra cash.

In the old days, the management of the animal and plant control board and soil board was very local and it was all done in the local community. As soon as you shift that to Adelaide, to North Terrace, we know what happens; and it has happened—government bureaucracy at its finest! My office has been inundated with letters from local councils expressing their disappointment in the government's decision to withdraw funding. I am sure many of my colleagues have also been inundated with letters from councils, particularly around Yorke Peninsula, as the shadow minister just said. It is most important that we properly fund councils because, as the minister would be aware—and I thought he would comment today because we have had a bit of a break—a lot is happening out there which is causing much concern, and one of those concerns is about rabbits.

We are seeing a huge increase in rabbits. I do not know why this has happened, because the calicivirus does not seem to be picking up and the myxomatosis virus seems not to be affecting them. It is not a smiling matter because, once the rabbits breed to a level, they will totally devour all the feed that will come when the drought eventually breaks. The breeding of rabbits is a serious situation. No doubt the minister would know about it, although nothing has been raised about it in here. Again, it comes back to the responsibility of these NRM boards and the councils to fix. This government has shown its true colours and expressed the level of regard it has for rural Australia.

The minister is in a unique position of being an Independent in a Labor government, as well as being the Minister for Primary Industries and living in a country electorate. I think he is in a most unique position to assess the situation here. The minister is from local government himself, so I wonder what he is going to have to tell these councils who are asking what has happened with all the extra costs. I am happy for feedback on this, because no doubt my friend Minister Hill will read this. What happened?

I was told back then that the whole thing would be revenue neutral, but \$40 per rate notice is not revenue neutral, and a lot of farmers are going to be paying \$400 or \$500 extra every year because of what we have done with NRM. Members wonder why I am ashamed of what I have done. I am ashamed, and the government ought to be bloody well ashamed.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I declare my interest: I am a—

Mr Koutsantonis: Two men of humble means!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I am.

Mr Koutsantonis: Two men of very humble means complaining about \$40 per rate notice.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: If you want to take 20 minutes, I am happy to do it.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I thought it was one of my better efforts. Some of your members didn't enjoy it.

Mr Koutsantonis: Didn't they?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No. I do not know why. Nevertheless, there is more of that. That is another day. Wait for the committee stage.

An honourable member: Relevance!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It is very relevant. I am just passing observation. I was not enthusiastic about this process from the outcome, and my worst fears have come to fruition. I am looking forward to when these boards come before the parliamentary committee, because I have some questions to ask them, and the questions are simple. I do not have any problem about extending their time. We are lumbered with them at this stage. However, there is a series of questions. What have they achieved? What projects have they put in place? How many people have they employed?

Mr Venning: Where has the money gone?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I have not finished yet. What have they actually achieved? There have been some glossy reports, but what actual projects on the ground have we seen and why are they going to drastically increase the fees? I for one will not be voting to increase the fees. They will have to have a good argument. In the north of South Australia we had a water catchment board that did very good work and who were very good people. Not one of those people got on this new NRM board. Not one of them. They found a person in the Adelaide Hills to sit on the northern board. What a nonsense! When I raised it and complained in here, Minister Hill jumped up and down and got really excited, because this woman must have been one of his greenie, trendy mates. I think it is an outrage.

An honourable member: They got her in under a quota.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: And it is an outrage.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: We do not need one. People should be put in these positions purely on merit and they should be local. They should not need a road map to get where they are going. I personally believe that they should be elected. If you are going to pay taxes, you should have the right to say who is going to spend them. If you are unhappy, you cannot get rid of appointed people. I know that Sir Humphrey and those people do not like elected people. They do not like backbenchers because they have the audacity to ask questions and say no. That is what democracy is about.

An honourable member: Is that government backbenchers?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Anyone; any member of parliament. That is democracy. This whole process has become, in my view, less than effective. I went to a function in my electorate some time ago where a number of people were present with some glossy papers. I still do not know why I went there. The federal member was there with great gusto and largesse handing out a considerable amount of money, but I do not know what we achieved while we were there. We had a nice lunch.

The Hon. R.J. McEwen: That is why you were there.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I suppose so. At the end of the day when it was finished, I thought it was a nice meal at the yacht club and it was a nice view over the sea; it was very pleasant. I looked outside and saw the blue numberplates and thought it was a good show.

Mr Pisoni: They had to eat.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is right. A lot of photos were taken. We all had our photographs taken—and I would say that my photograph will not appear after what I have said today; but that's all right. At the end of the day, I am really concerned that we have set up another structure and another set of bureaucracy. I wonder where it will end up. When you get a situation where you railroad people from the outside to sit in judgment on people in the north, I think it is appalling—and I do not care who knows it. I will continue to say it.

When members of these boards come before the parliamentary committee, I will ask the question. I forewarn every person that I want to know why they are there. I want to know on whose recommendation they were put there. We are entitled to know that. I have come to understand there are certain groups of people that one could describe as being professional meeting attenders. With all due respect, I do not think I need to say more on those people.

I think the administration of these groups should be under the minister for primary industries: it should not be under the other umbrella. It should be under primary industries, as should a number of other things. The pastoral board should be under the minister for primary industries, as should the dog fence board. They should not be in this other organisation. I am happy for someone to explain to me at some length what has been achieved. I do not think it would take long, actually. I have letters from councils expressing grave concern. I cannot understand it. We had councils with elected local people running them. They ought to be the ones running it. At the end of the day, the ratepayers can get rid of them if they are unhappy with them, but they do not have any mechanism to get rid of these people. It is not right or proper and it is not in the interests of the people of South Australia.

I am looking forward to these people appearing before the committee. I am pleased the chairman has come in. I have some experience in relation to water catchment boards, and the minister and I got into considerable trouble with the former minister when we disallowed a certain proposal. Former minister Kotz nearly did cartwheels down the corridor. She got very aggressive towards the minister. It was very difficult to keep a straight face. Of course, we then had the famous decision when the former minister overrode the recommendations of her premier on a water catchment plan. I do not think that did a lot for the tenure of the minister but, nevertheless, that is another story. I am going to take particular interest in this exercise. Of course we have to extend the term. I do not have a problem with that. However, I have a problem with many other aspects of it, and I intend to pursue them at length.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I had not intended to say anything about this matter, but when I heard the member for Stuart—and he has made two fantastic contributions that I know of, at least; there may have been more in the last 24 hours, and I think we are—

The Hon. R.J. McEwen: We're blessed.

Mr RAU: We are blessed, indeed. The minister has hit the bullseye.

Mr Bignell: It's like watching Bradman bat.

Mr RAU: It is; it is like the Don at the crease. I read with great interest the honourable member's speech yesterday, and I am only disappointed that the Attorney-General offered so much interference that the honourable member was not able to make as forcefully as I know he would have all the rest of his points.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mr RAU: I am grateful to the honourable member, because I will make sure that I am tuned in. In fact, I will ask some of my friends to sit in the visitors' gallery. The other point I want to make is that, apart from being a great admirer of the member for Stuart, I also have the privilege of serving with him on the Natural Resources Committee of the parliament. That committee has the obligation, by statute, to look at the natural resource management boards. They do many things (at least, that is what we are hearing about), and

we receive reports from them every year. I know that the member for Stuart and other members of the committee are very interested in having a good look at what these reports have to say. The member for MacKillop, for example, has raised with me, as recently as this morning—and I hope he does not mind me mentioning this broadly—

Mr Williams: Not at all, because I'm just going to repeat it in a minute.

Mr RAU:—that he is very concerned about the impost on people who live in his constituency as a result of proposed increases in the charges to be levied by these organisations. These are matters that are of great concern.

I just wanted to make the point that, in my capacity on that committee (and, indeed, during the last parliament, in my capacity as a member of the Economic and Finance Committee) I was shocked to find that, in the panoply of heroes and villains that one gets to meet as a member of parliament, there is only one group that seems to always be the villains. That surprises me, because in this job one meets a lot of people who have many opinions. There are those who support one thing and those who oppose the same thing, and that is normal: people have different views.

However, the one almost totally unanimous view that I have heard in the various capacities in which I have served this parliament is an adverse opinion about the native vegetation councils. It is a concern to me (and I know that the member for Stuart also is concerned about this) that there is this almost total lack of support from the people who are on the ground working with these people for what is going on. There may be a perfectly good explanation for that, and I will not prejudice the situation. However, it concerns me (as I think it does the member for Stuart) that there is this single sort of approach coming from members of the public. Whether that is in the context of bushfires or land management or cemeteries, for goodness sake—

Mr Williams: Even on Kangaroo Island.

Mr RAU:—that is something at which the committee will be looking—it is of concern to me that that is the case. In the recent report of the Natural Resources Committee into the mining industry in South Australia, the committee recommended a number of things about the way in which the Native Vegetation Council should improve the way it goes about its business. I do not think that I need to say any more, and I look forward to the member for Stuart's further contribution, as he promised, when next we meet.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I will take this opportunity to express my opinion of the Natural Resources Management Board structure and the benefit, or disbenefit, that the fine people of South Australia achieve because of what has been foisted upon them by this parliament. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have been here for a reasonable time now—indeed, I think it is the same time as you; a little over nine years. In that time, I have had the pleasure of seeing the parliament do some wise things from time to time and I have had the displeasure of seeing the parliament doing some most unwise things from time to time.

I think I could say that the most unwise thing this parliament has done in my time here is to develop the fourth level of government in South Australia. Most Australians on a reasonably regular basis complain that we are over-governed and that we should do away with at least one level of government. Generally they aim at this level of government—state government—and say that we should have

expanded regional bodies and maintain the federal government.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: I hear the word 'shame' echoing around the chamber. Hear, hear! I have never argued that we are over-governed. I think that there is certainly an opportunity for structural reform across the board between the levels of federal government, state government and local government, and the demarcation should be made such that the decision making process is always as close as possible to the people that it affects. It would be pointless to have local government run the Australian Navy or Air Force, and it would be just as pointless to have Canberra-based bureaucrats running the local garbage collection service in country towns in South Australia. I think that the three levels of governance we have had in Australia for a long time (106 or 107 years) gives us a nice mix. It gives us the ability to have the decision-making process made at the right place.

Unfortunately, in South Australia we have now introduced a very strange, fourth level of governance. We have created this animal that has taxing powers, yet I think it is the only organisation, or level of organisation, that has those taxing powers and yet has no—I repeat, no—accountability whatsoever. It is a fully appointed body. As my friend and colleague, the member for Stuart, has pointed out, there is no accountability. If they are going to have taxing powers they should be elected. I remember arguing that point at the time the original bill that set up the principal act went through this place.

The American people fought a war of independence over that very point—an incredible principle that underpins our democratic system. We have ignored that here in South Australia and we have built a whole system of governance where there is no accountability. I had personal experience of that, when I argued with one of the previous ministers in this portfolio over a part of the levy system in the South-East, in my electorate. I know full well what happened. The local board had a particular policy position, which was minuted, and the minister sent his bureaucrats down there. I will be fair to the minister, because I doubt that the minister sent them down there. I think they went down there of their own volition. That is how bad this is. I think the bureaucrats went down there of their own volition, overrode the board decision and told the board what they were going to do. They wrote out a press release and had the minister put it out, and then they spent the next couple of months covering their tracks. That is what happened. The local board, which is supposed to be an autonomous decision-making body, had a policy position minuted, and then it was overridden by the minister.

When I questioned that same minister about different policy issues with regard to natural resource management—it was the catchment water management board in those days—the minister looked me in the eye and said, 'No; it is your local board that has made that decision.' The reality is that it was the minister who appointed every member of that board.

Another thing the member for Stuart said, which is important to note, is that some of these people are professional meeting attenders, and they get paid quite well. I was on a government board before I came into this place and I can attest that the pay is not too bad. Given the history of the catchment boards, now the NRM boards, some of the people in the South-East have turned it into a three-day a week job, and I am sure it has happened in other parts of the state. They have turned it into a two, three and four-day a week job because the board needs to be represented here, there and

everywhere—as the member for Stuart said: nice lunch but he could not understand why else people were there. At a very good level of remuneration, many of these people would have been paid by the board, in my opinion, far in excess of their worth, far in excess of what they would have got in their normal weekly work, their normal occupation.

We have created a fourth level of government which flies in the face of every democratic principle that we work by. We have given untold power to the bureaucrats because they are the ones who still turn up at the meetings of the boards. I get reports back from members of various boards, saying, 'We sat there and we were deliberating on such and such a matter,' and next thing, the bureaucrat sitting in the back corner of the room who is supposed to be observing, says, 'Excuse me, Mr Chairman, but the minister won't accept that. If that is what you do, the minister won't accept that.' 'Oh,' the chairman will say, who is on a sizeable retainer, 'What will the minister find acceptable?' The bureaucrat then explains to the board members what the minister will find acceptable, down goes the rubber stamp and on we move.

We are being asked to extend the term of these people, who I would argue in a lot of cases are rubber stamps. In case I might offend some people, let me say that there are some very fine people and there have been some very fine people who have tried to do the right thing on these boards, historically. I talk to a number of these people from time to time.

Mr Piccolo interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: They know who I am talking about. I talk to these people from time to time and they tell me what is going on. I have pleaded with a number of members of these boards over the years not to resign and to stay there and fight the good fight. In most cases that has fallen on deaf ears, and they are the people who should be running these boards, who would not mind doing it, and facing regular elections. They would be making correct decisions and would not be bowing to the pressure of the bureaucrat sent down there from the department here in Adelaide. They tell me what is happening, and it is still happening.

We have seen no improvement and I do not expect that we ever will see an improvement. This is just a sham for the minister to walk away from his or her responsibility and accountability to the people of South Australia. As I have said, the minister will look you in the eye and say, 'No, that was your local board that made that decision.' The reality is that every member of the local board was appointed by the minister, and every member of it owes the little remuneration that they get to that appointment.

What has encouraged me to contribute to this debate is that on 12 February I received in my office a letter from our local catchment board, signed by the general manager of the catchment board, sending me a copy of the South-East Natural Resource Management Board Annual Review. It contains a couple of information sheets. It reports on the work program, the highlights and further improvement. The section in these information sheets which caught my attention more than anything was the part headed 'NRM Levy'. This is the most important thing about these boards: they collect large sums of money on behalf of this level of government and it is expended on works that this level of government does not have the guts to put its hand up for or to be accountable for. That is why this whole system has been set up. I will read from Annual Review Information Sheet 2 pertaining to the South-East Natural Resource Management Board. The important parts are—

Mr Rau: Refer it to the committee.

Mr WILLIAMS: I will refer it to the committee, I say to the chairman of the committee, and I think the committee should take this up. The information sheet states:

The Board is not proposing to change the structure of the levy, however, in order to deliver an extensive and balanced work program, the Board is proposing a slight levy increase in addition to CPI in 2007-08.

So, it is proposing a slight levy increase in addition to CPI.

On average, this is an increase of less than \$5 per rateable assessment and less than 31 cents per ML of water.

That sounds very good. The average punter out there in my electorate and the member for Mount Gambier's electorate who will be receiving this to ponder, would be thinking that is not too bad—\$5 is slight. I had this conversation with the minister but the minister might care to say what his reaction was to that. I will not do him in. I do not think it is slight because, when you do the sums, you work out that it is 16 per cent.

This board is running an annual budget of \$6.2 million. When I came into this place a little over nine years ago the total expenditure on this function would have been a mere fraction of that. I know that, in the area of water, the department was spending about \$400 000 in the South-East. Then we had the local councils running their animal invertebrate pest control boards and their weed boards. I do not have the figure with me but my office is doing some research to try to come up with those figures. I would imagine that would have been well under \$1 million; in fact, I reckon it would be lucky to have gone over \$200 000 nine years ago. Notwithstanding that, we now have a board that is costing the good people of the South-East, through their annual levies, \$2.97 million in levies, and there are other grants, largely from the federal government, which take the total budget of this board to \$6.2 million. Extrapolate that out across the state and we are talking very serious money.

I ask members, particularly members of the government, to exercise their mind on this question because most of my colleagues on this side of the house have active roles within their communities and they are impacted greatly by these boards. I think we probably have a better understanding of their daily work. What are we getting from these boards? In reality, we are getting very little. We are getting lots of glossy publications. This annual review is an example. In my office I would have a couple of metres of bookshelves filled with publications and reports that have been generated by these sorts of boards. I think it is an absolute travesty. If we were getting something worthwhile from it, I would not mind but my constituents are getting not a hell of a lot more than frustration.

Earlier in the debate I heard the member for Schubert talk about the problem of rabbits. A number of constituents have complained to me in recent times that the effort to control rabbits and weeds across the South-East region is nowhere near what it should be. The emphasis on that work seems to have been somewhat lost since we took that function away from local councils and bundled it up with this organisation. When those functions were with the local councils, subordinate boards underneath the councils ran that function. When those functions were held by and accountable through the councils, if a landholder had a problem with his neighbours not attending to his weeds or his rabbits, he or she knew what to do about it and who was accountable for it, and they would contact the local council and the local authorised officer. They would ring up their local councillor and, by and large, they would get some action.

Today, we have established this fourth level of government which is rather removed. In the case of the South-East NRM board, it is based in Mount Gambier and it is rather removed from my constituents right out across the South-East. It has become quite anonymous. That is one of the reasons I believe the effort to control these feral animals and pest plants has fallen to the extent that it has.

To give one more example of a problem that is emerging in the South-East, I regularly drive up and down the Coorong, usually late at night in the dark, and I now see more feral deer on the road than kangaroos. A lot of the farming community in the South-East, and the travelling public, have been complaining about this for a considerable length of time and I do not believe the NRM board has done anything actively to address the problem.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries): I thank the shadow minister and member for Goyder for his support for what he accurately described as a minor amendment. Equally, can I compliment him not only on the job he does in terms of representing his electorate, but the way he has, as a shadow minister, eased into state parliament. I think in the shadow minister we see an extraordinary young man who will make a significant contribution to politics in this state in future years.

The members for Schubert, Stuart, Enfield and MacKillop did range well beyond the narrow nature of the bill before us—surprise, surprise—and in most cases just reflected a personal opinion which I do believe ought to be passed on to Mervyn Lewis, Chris Reed, Yvonne Sneddon and David Geddes in terms of the boards that they relate to, and Dennis Mutton, and equally I am sure that Claus Schonfeldt will see that others are aware of their comments. Most of them are personal opinions. A couple of them were quite inaccurate, and there are probably just one or two things I ought to put on the record in closing. The member for Schubert seemed to be suggesting that state contribution to the boards had decreased, when obviously there has been a very significant increase, so I think it is important that that is corrected. Equally, he talked about cost shifting, and again I think he might wish to come back into the house and correct some of the things he said, just to ensure that the record is accurate.

Equally, if the minister feels inclined, on reading some of the contributions—I was tempted to say diatribes, but I should say contributions—then on her behalf I would offer a ministerial statement to actually correct the record. However, I do not want to do much more than that this afternoon other than to thank the shadow minister for his support, and others for expressing opinions—not only bagging boards, bagging officers, bagging budgets—and I will ensure that the appropriate people within boards at least have the opportunity to reflect on their comments and perhaps respond directly to them. Other than that, thank you for contributing to the debate, and with that I do not believe we need to go into committee; I think the matter has now been dealt with.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.29 p.m. the house adjourned until Tuesday 6 March at 2 p.m.

