

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**

(HANSARD)

**Second Session of the Fifty-First Parliament
(2007)**

Parliament, which adjourned on 29 March 2007, was prorogued by proclamation dated 5 April 2007. By proclamation dated 5 April, it was summoned to meet on Tuesday 24 April at 12 noon, and the Second Session began on that date.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 24 April 2007

The house met at 12 noon pursuant to proclamation, the Speaker (Hon. J.J. Snelling) presiding.

The Acting Clerk (Mr M.J. Lehman) read the proclamation summoning parliament.

After prayers read by the Speaker, honourable members, in compliance with summons, proceeded at 12.15 p.m. to the Legislative Council chamber to hear the speech of Her Excellency the Governor. They returned to the assembly chamber at 12.45 p.m. and the Speaker resumed the chair.

[Sitting suspended from 12.45 to 2.15 p.m.]

SENATE VACANCY

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, by message, informed the House of Assembly that the President of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia, in accordance with section 21 of the Commonwealth Constitution, has regretfully notified Her Excellency the Governor that, through the death on 2 April 2007 of Senator Jeannie Margaret Ferris, a vacancy has happened in the representation of this state in the Senate. The Governor's Deputy is advised that by such vacancy having happened, the place of the senator has become vacant before the expiration of her term within the meaning of section 15 of the constitution, and that such place must be filled by the houses of parliament sitting and voting together, choosing a person to hold it in accordance with the provisions of the said section.

The SPEAKER: I inform the house that I conferred with the President of the Legislative Council and arranged to call a joint meeting of the two houses for the purposes of complying with section 15 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act on Thursday 3 May 2007 at 10 a.m.

FERRIS, SENATOR J.M., DEATH

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I move:

That the House of Assembly expresses its deep regret at the death of Jeannie Ferris, a senator for South Australia, and places on record its appreciation of her long and meritorious service, and that as a mark of respect to her memory the sitting of the house be suspended until the ringing of the bells.

Early this month we were saddened to hear of the untimely death of Jeannie Ferris. As a South Australian senator of more than 10 years standing, Jeannie Ferris served her state with great energy and distinction. She was a friendly, compassionate and vivacious woman. She touched the lives of many people, and personally I, like all members, found her to be a very decent and honourable person in all my contacts with her. Jeannie's hard work, fairness, openness and ability to laugh earned her tremendous respect right across the political spectrum both in South Australia and nationally and, of course, in Canberra.

In recent times, she demonstrated extraordinary courage, resilience and determination in her fight against cancer, a fight that left a legacy in the form of increased federal government support for the battle against gynaecological disease. Jeannie passed away in Canberra on 2 April 2007.

Jeannie Margaret Ferris was born in Auckland, New Zealand, on 14 March 1941. Indeed, given that I was raised in Auckland, on many occasions she would tease me about the fact that her brother was my science teacher. He taught me physics and chemistry. He was an outstanding teacher and maybe in those particular subjects I was not his star pupil. My very last conversation with her was about that fact—with a message from her brother.

After arriving in Australia from New Zealand in 1963, she was employed as a journalist in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Canberra and Yass. She worked for organisations such as *The Canberra Times*, the ABC, the CSIRO and the National Farmers Federation, the latter during the federation's hey-day of the 1980s. She also earned a graduate diploma in agribusiness from Monash University.

Jeannie, of course, had a passion for politics, becoming involved in the Liberal Party and working for a number of state and federal parliamentarians, including the former defence minister, Ian McLachlan. It was in that capacity that I first met Jeannie, and then of course here, as an adviser to the former leader of the opposition and then minister, Dale Baker; the former minister for the arts and transport, Diana Laidlaw; and the former minister and premier and still the member for Frome, Rob Kerin. She was also a friend of the former minister and Liberal leader in the Legislative Council, Ren DeGaris, who passed away earlier this year and whom this house honoured in a condolence motion in February.

Jeannie was preselected as the Senate candidate for the Liberal Party in 1995, occupying the number three spot on the party's ticket. She entered the Senate in mid 1996 after the election of the Howard government, beginning a stellar decade-long career as a politician. The new Senator Ferris made a fine maiden speech in the Senate on 9 October 1996, one that was largely free of ideology and that evoked the history and great strengths of her adopted state, that hinted at the issues that concerned her and that would exercise her mind as a senator in the coming years. She began that speech by talking about the auspicious history of our state and about how she had reflected on the very first Senate when she wandered amongst the spectacular ruins of Rome in 1995. Those ancient pieces of marble and granite provided what she saw as 'an ongoing reminder of the fragility of democracy'.

Senator Ferris spoke of South Australia's beautiful and diverse landscape, and of the courageous and visionary men and women who pioneered our pastoral lands. Paying tribute to country families, she said:

We in the cities continue to enjoy the benefits that flow from their bountiful harvests and offer them support when the elements do not.

Jeannie also addressed the importance of mining and resources to the development of our state, especially South Australia's huge stores of oil and gas, our precious opals, and the reserves of copper, silver, gold and uranium at Olympic Dam. She touched on our state's wine industry, our manufacturing exports and our food producers. Jeannie expressed her great long-standing love for the city of Canberra, with its dust storms created by the newly-built suburbs in the 1960s, with its avenues of stately trees and sweeping vistas. She recalled how, in the early 1980s, she watched with awe as the new Parliament House was built in Canberra. She said:

With my two sons I came to the top of Capital Hill the day before the road closed to begin the construction of the new building. Two rabbits and a large red kangaroo, early inhabitants of the hill, scuttled across our pathway through the grass and scrub on that day, a reminder that this was once considered the bush capital.

She described how a little later she visited the Parliament House building site and how she had often 'picked my way carefully through the cavernous spaces lit only with occasional hanging light globes'.

She told the Senate: 'On one occasion I sat on some of the concrete shapes that have now become this great chamber.' Senator Ferris said the construction of the new Parliament House had offered her the chance 'to consider what kind of Australia these men and women elected to this place would frame for my children's grandchildren; to wonder what effect their decisions would have on future generations each time they passed, or failed to pass, the myriad of legislation crucial to the nation's future; and to consider whether, as teenagers, in another half a century my great grandchildren will face the future with optimism or despair'. She spoke, too, of having the privilege of long ago meeting Australia's first female

member of the federal parliament, Dame Enid Lyons, and the first South Australian woman to sit in any parliament, Dame Nancy Buttfield. In that maiden speech Senator Ferris acknowledged the efforts of South Australia's Catherine Helen Spence, whom she described as 'a courageous campaigner and social reformer of the late 1800s', and who, like herself, was a journalist by profession.

Towards the end of her address, Jeannie told her fellow senators that one of their tasks was to restore a 'sense of hope and optimism to all of our young people and to turn around the ever increasing rates of youth suicide'. She asked:

In this bountiful country of ours how could it be that on every day of every year one of our young men or young women is making that fateful decision? It is the responsibility of each one of us to uncover the reasons for this national tragedy.

She stated:

We simply must work together to make the policy changes that will restore hope to these young people and give them back the sense of optimism and purpose that they so desperately seek.

Jeannie threw herself into the job of representing South Australia in the Senate with her usual enthusiasm that we all saw when she was a staffer in this building. Her standing within her parliamentary party grew. She served on a wide range of Senate committees, including those dealing with employment, education and training, rural and regional affairs, information technology, and the National Crime Authority. She became Deputy Government Whip in the Senate in November 2001, and held the position of whip from August 2002 until her death.

Among her Senate colleagues, Jeannie was greatly respected across the entire political spectrum, and she was loved for her keen sense of humour. One former nominal opponent described her this week as 'unfailingly friendly', and as someone 'who smiled brightly at people when she met them in the long, often empty corridors of Parliament House'. She always thoughtfully sought to include her female Senate colleagues in events within Parliament House, never worrying about which party they came from or where they stood on issues that she felt most strongly about. She was trusted by her colleagues, and she was fair, friendly and straightforward in her dealings with them.

Jeannie was well known for her passionate interest in women's health, an issue that would become of great personal concern to her. In October 2006 she told a Senate inquiry into the support and resources available to those suffering from gynaecological cancers that she herself had undergone treatment for ovarian cancer. 'At this time last year,' she told the inquiry, 'I had just undergone surgery for ovarian cancer and had joined thousands of women in Australia who have been on this, until now, largely silent journey.' She said: 'It was a steep learning curve for me, and one which was at times quite frightening.' According to her South Australian Senate colleague Nick Minchin, Jeannie endured with typical fortitude her treatment for cancer in 2006. Her return to the Senate last year was courageous and warmly welcomed by all her parliamentary colleagues.

Jeannie sought to change the way Australia saw and dealt with gynaecological cancers and to improve the quality of diagnosis and ongoing treatment. She became widely respected for her efforts to change the law to allow women access to RU486 and for her strong support for stem-cell research. Jeannie's work on the Senate inquiry I just mentioned had a major impact on women in Australia, with the inquiry's findings (including 34 recommendations) leading to the federal government's providing \$1 million in seed

funding for a new centre for gynaecological cancers. Senator Ferris described the establishment of the centre as one of the highlights of her time in the Senate. It was a measure of her courage and resilience that, even after undergoing a very difficult course of chemotherapy, she managed to accompany the Deputy Prime Minister to Iraq in an effort to rescue Australia's wheat trade with that country. It was reported recently that Jeannie took great delight in telling friends that her biggest concern about the trip to Iraq was that her wig might fly off on the windy tarmac. That is a measure of the courage of Jeannie Ferris.

When she died early this month there were many expressions of grief at her passing; there were also tremendous tributes. The Prime Minister described Jeannie as a 'gutsy lady' and a 'two-fisted puncher, politically'. He said that despite the grim outlook for her health 'she displayed a remarkable optimism and courage that warmed and inspired her colleagues and friends.' Kevin Rudd described Jeannie as 'someone who entered public life for all the right reasons.' Another of her parliamentary colleagues, Natasha Stott-Despoja, was reported as saying that Jeannie's commitment to progressive policy on women's reproductive rights was 'unshakeable and an integral part of her legacy'. Indeed, as one newspaper report stated it was 'a fitting yet unplanned tribute' that the cervical cancer vaccine called Gardasil, a product Jeannie criticised the government for deciding initially not to fund, was launched by the government at a media event in Adelaide within hours of her death.

Jeannie Ferris was a great woman and an outstanding parliamentarian. Though she took her job very seriously, she had the endearing quality of not taking herself too seriously. With integrity, compassion, energy and a capacity for hard work, and with a wisdom and level of insight derived from a richly lived life, she did valuable and admirable things for her state and her nation. On behalf of all members on this side of the house (and, I believe, all members of parliament) and all South Australians, I extend my condolences to the family and friends of Jeannie Ferris, especially to her sons, Robbie and Jeremy, and my old science teacher, Colin.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Leader of the Opposition):

It is with a sense of honour, compassion and pride that I rise in the house for the first time as Leader of the Opposition to second the Premier's condolence motion on behalf of those on this side of the house. I thank him for his kind words and I express our regret at the passing of Jeannie Margaret Ferris, former Senator for South Australia. I, along with all members on this side, was truly saddened when I heard of Senator Ferris's passing, and the recent passing of her friend and former husband, Bob Ferris. I speak on behalf of the entire Liberal Party when I express my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Jeannie Ferris today. I put on the record our sincere appreciation of her distinguished service to this country and the state and people of South Australia.

Born Jeannie Margaret Whitlow on 14 March 1941 in Auckland, New Zealand, Jeannie migrated to Australia in 1963. She married Bob Ferris in Melbourne in 1964 and they had two sons, Robbie and Jeremy. She settled in Canberra in 1967 where she worked as a journalist on the *Canberra Times*, as the Premier has noted, and this ultimately paved the way for her career in politics. She was educated at Monash University where she graduated in agricultural economics. She entered the Australian Senate in 1996.

Before making a significant contribution to public life, Senator Ferris forged a distinguished career as a journalist.

In 1979 she was director of public affairs for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO); in 1984 she was public relations director for the National Farmers Federation; and in 1987 she was corporate affairs director for the South Australia's Farmers Federation. In 1989 she was campaign manager for Liberal Ian McLachlan, and in 1994 she was chief of staff for our state primary industries minister, Dale Baker, and later for his successor, the member for Frome, Rob Kerin.

In 1996 she was elected to the Senate to represent South Australia for the Liberal Party, and proud we were to have her carrying our standard. She was Deputy Government Whip in the Senate in 2001 and Government Whip in the Senate from 22 August 2002 until her death. She had decided not to contest the next election in late 2006. Jeannie is survived by her two sons. She was much loved and respected by all who knew her, and affectionately known as Jeannie around the corridors of both parliaments, in Canberra and in Adelaide. Prime Minister John Howard voiced the sentiments of many when he said that Jeannie had 'won affection across the political divide. There would be many Labor senators who would feel, as I feel, a real sense of loss.'

I know that she was particularly close to the former member for Morialta, Joan Hall, to former member Dale Baker and to the current member for Frome, Rob Kerin. I remember enjoying moments with Jeannie at her home in Unley in the company of others. She was a true spirit, a good mate and a great Liberal. She was a woman of courage, of principles and of decency, from which many can learn. In her maiden speech she said how, as a young journalist working for *The Canberra Times*, she 'soon became an enthusiastic spectator of the national political scene.' Isn't that true, and it ultimately led to a wonderful path in politics. Strongly committed to rural Australia, Jeannie fondly remembered working as a lobbyist in Canberra for the National Farmers Federation, describing 'Canberra's most successful political rally' as the day that 45 000 farmers and their families gathered on 1 July 1985 at Old Parliament House to make their own peaceful and well-mannered protest about the effect of interest rates and spiralling farm costs.

She was a real trooper for country South Australians. She championed women's health issues and was a key promoter of stem cell research, as we have heard, and for legislating for the abortion pill RU486. She established a Senate committee into gynaecological cancers, which ultimately produced a comprehensive, 34-long list of recommendations. In February this year, all 34 recommendations were adopted. One of the committee's main recommendations, a national centre for gynaecological cancers, has already been given \$1 million in funding by the federal government, I am sure with the full support of the Labor Party and all in the parliament. Senator Ferris described the establishment of the centre as 'one of the highlights of my time in the Senate', as I am sure it was.

Her advocacy on these issues won her bipartisan support and friends across the divide. Jeannie passed away, following a courageous battle with ovarian cancer, on 2 April 2007. I am sure that all members present will join me in seconding the Premier's motion and paying their respects to the late Senator Jeannie Ferris. We acknowledge the significant contribution she made to our state, to our country and to the good people of South Australia. We will miss her.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Deputy Premier): I wish to speak only briefly. Jeannie was known to me very well. I first met her back in the late 1980s when I was then a staffer for

Lynn Arnold who was, amongst other things, the then Minister for Agriculture. Jeannie, from memory, had just come from the NFF to the Farmers Federation in South Australia and we had a number of interactions over some time in matters relating to the farming lobby. Lynn Arnold had a very good relationship with the farming community, I would say, particularly with the then Farmers Federation; and Jeannie was an important part of that.

The time I probably best knew Jeannie was when she went to work for Dale Baker and we were early in opposition. Again I had quite a bit to do with Jeannie, who was an outstanding chief of staff, as she later became to the former Premier, the member for Frome, Rob Kerin. Jeannie did not play politics in that role. She was extremely straight, to the point, and an extremely effective officer who had an incredibly broad policy understanding.

She was one of those few people in the role of Chief of Staff who had a particular empathy for the rural community, and she was able to translate that empathy into sound policy. At times she was able to put the emotion to one side—which, unfortunately, in this business one often has to do, and no more so than in the primary industries sector when one is confronted with issues such as drought. From memory, we had to deal with issues such as the wheat price. We had to talk about whether or not a floor price would be put in by governments on the price of wheat as it tumbled back in the late 1980s—and in the early 1990s with wool.

She had to confront those issues when she worked with the Hon. Ian McLachlan. Certainly, in the time that I knew her, Jeannie was an outstanding staffer and a good friend. I enjoyed her company, and her record as a senator is well and truly on the public record. My last memory of Jeannie was when we were coming back from Brisbane about 18 months, two years ago. We sat together on the plane and had a good chat about all things politic—many of those secrets I will keep to myself. It was a good discussion about the dynamics of politics in which we all work.

As someone who was a former staffer and then a politician, I liked Jeannie. We travelled a similar road and she will be sadly missed. She was a good person, and the Liberal Party can be very proud of her contribution.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I, too, add my voice to the condolence motion moved by the Premier and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition. I cannot say that I knew Jeannie extremely well, although I came across her quite often through the Liberal Party and the work that she did with the Liberal Party. One thing always fascinated me about Jeannie. I would often read in the newspaper and hear in the media Jeannie being quoted as a champion of women's issues and particularly of women in politics. I think that was one of the great things that Jeannie did in her role as a senator for South Australia.

What I really remember about Jeannie Ferris is her contribution to rural communities, to rural South Australia, and her contribution to the Liberal Party. She epitomised what the Liberal Party stands for. She was all about the power of the individual, what the individual could achieve. She never shirked her responsibilities, her aims or her challenges: she took them on full frontal. Her work with the CSIRO, the National Farmers Federation, the South Australian Farmers Federation, Ian McLachlan, Dale Baker and then, more latterly, Rob Kerin, I guess, honed her skills for representing rural people.

Jeannie will be very sadly missed in rural South Australia. I know that many times in my electorate at Liberal Party fora Jeannie would not just take the party line or agree with the rural point of view; quite often, and quite articulately, she would tell the good country people whom she and I represented that they had got it wrong. She did not mind telling them why and how they had got it wrong. I do not think too many people who have represented the rural community have been more professional in their outlook or the way in which they went about their business.

I was always impressed with Jeannie's knowledge of the subject at hand and, as I said, of her professionalism. She will be sadly missed by all Liberals in South Australia, particularly those in rural South Australia and particularly those females whose cause she championed in many ways and in many fora throughout her political career. I add my personal condolences to those expressed by other members, particularly to her sons Robbie and Jeremy.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Minister for Consumer Affairs): With the passing of Senator Jeannie Ferris we have clearly lost a passionate advocate of women's rights, women's causes, and women's health in particular, and, as we have also heard, a very strong advocate for rural and regional South Australia. The reaction of Senator Ferris to her diagnosis of ovarian cancer, I think, is a very good indication of her strength of character, her commitment and her courage. To endure the necessary treatment she underwent and return to parliament to fight again for improvements in women's health and to have the Senate inquiry into gynaecological cancers established is really quite a tribute to her. The report of that inquiry, 'Breaking the silence: a national voice for gynaecological cancers', led to \$1 million in seed funding for a national centre for research into these cancers. She described her personal ordeal as having been 'a steep learning curve' which at times was quite frightening—one can only imagine how frightening.

However, in spite of her personal traumas, she continued to fight for improvements in women's health, and she played a vital role in securing federal government funding, as we know, for the cervical cancer vaccine, Gardasil, which will ensure that the majority of our young women will be protected from this dreadful disease. This is a great legacy left by Jeannie Ferris. The senator's work was vital in removing the ministerial veto power over RU486. I understand that the four women senators who were co-sponsors of the bill appreciated her very staunch support and able assistance through what was, at times, a very thorny political debate.

Jeannie Ferris understood that protecting women, particularly their health, was also about protecting our community, our mothers, our future mothers and our sisters. It was about our whole community and ensuring that our families remained intact. One of the things that stands out about the senator's work on all these issues was that she was willing to work with women from all political sides. She recognised that this was how the best outcomes would be achieved, and she worked tirelessly—even in the face of her illness—to ensure that this happened.

Although, regrettably, I never had the privilege of meeting her, Senator Ferris was greatly respected and loved by her parliamentary colleagues. As opposition leader, Kevin Rudd, pointed out shortly after her passing, Senator Ferris was someone who entered public life for all the right reasons, and it was clear that this view was uniformly reflected by her

parliamentary colleagues. I express my condolences to her family, South Australians and, in particular, South Australian women, who have lost a tenacious and passionate advocate.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Frome): I rise to support the motion and to put on record my condolences to the family, friends and staff of Jeannie Ferris and to express my gratitude for her contribution to both her state and her party. I think that it reflects very well on Jeannie that not only was she dedicated to the Liberal Party but that she also had an absolute passion for those particular causes for rural and regional people and women's issues. Certainly, hearing what has been said today, it is good that people appreciate that Jeannie Ferris well and truly put her passion for those interests well ahead of political interests.

I also express my personal gratitude to Jeannie. She was my first chief of staff as a young, green and inexperienced minister for primary industries. She was an enormous help, and I certainly saw first-hand her passion for anything regional and rural. Jeannie always had an opinion, but she knew the portfolio absolutely inside out. She had been a long and passionate fighter for a fair go for rural and regional people over a long period of time in a whole range of positions, which have been outlined today.

Some may have thought that it would be difficult to be chief of staff to a new minister who did not have a lot of political experience. However, Jeannie had been chief of staff to Dale Baker, and anyone who knew Dale would know that being his chief of staff was probably a pretty good grounding for being chief of staff to a new minister. Jeannie and Dale had fought battles before his parliamentary time, and they were great friends. What I really appreciated was that, when Dale had been moved on, Jeannie still saw that the issues were there and that a young guy might need help. She was only too happy to stay on and ensure a smooth transition; that does not always happen in politics, but I certainly appreciated it and benefited enormously from Jeannie's experience.

The Hon. K.O. Foley: She made you, Kero.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN: Absolutely. While Jeannie was working for Dale, she learnt to disagree with the minister, and sometimes for pretty good reason. She certainly carried on that practice in my first couple of years. For the benefit of all the ministers on the other side and their advisers, I point out that, quite often, if advisers or chiefs of staff disagree with their minister, they will shirk around the issue a little and suggest other ways of doing things, or whatever. One good thing about Jeannie was that she never bothered with that sort of thing. If you were wrong, she would tell you that you were wrong, and she would put a counter point of view, which I really appreciated. She was a terrific chief of staff. She ran the office incredibly well and was highly respected, not only by our staff but also by staff right across government. Her contribution in the first few years of the Liberal Party's term in office after 1993 cannot be underestimated: she was absolutely a key player.

Jeannie's time in the political game had given her the ambition to enter the Senate and, on signalling that intent, Jeannie left to successfully pursue that goal. She really saw an opportunity to contribute at the next level and to make her own personal contribution. She knew that, as a senator, she could pursue certain issues with the passion she had and, certainly, history records her success at doing just that. Certainly, her passion for rural, regional and women's issues went with her to Canberra.

Many times when federal issues arose—mainly as a minister but also as a local member—there was absolutely no doubt about who I would tell people to contact in Canberra. Jeannie was always only too willing to take on issues for rural industries here or individuals who were battling against federal issues or looking for some federal opportunities. Certainly, she helped us out with an enormous number of issues—whether they be international, trade or quarantine issues, funding opportunities or opportunities for regional communities.

I have no doubt that, while Jeannie's contribution is really seen by the people of South Australia as at a very high level, it exceeds what people probably identify Jeannie as having done, because behind those big issues that she was well known for pursuing she really had an ability and a passion to help individuals (most of which will never be publicly recorded), and she helped out individuals and business groups to pursue federal issues. Certainly, she was very energetic in following everything up, and quite often ended up with excellent results.

Jeannie was always energetic. She was dedicated to her country, her job and rural Australia, and she took up many issues with a determination that very few people in politics could ever match. I salute Jeannie's achievements. I pass on my condolences to her two sons, who must miss her very much. I also pass on our condolences to her staff, who were very dedicated to Jeannie and who, no doubt, miss her very much. Jeannie Ferris made a great contribution to this state, and I think that this house and this state should be eternally grateful to her.

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Senator Jeannie Ferris earlier this month. I had known Jeannie for more than 20 years, and I came to know her better, I suppose, when she was working for Dale Baker. Dale and I share a passion for football (he is of the Port Adelaide persuasion, and I follow Norwood). I used to invite him to the Norwood Oval when I was mayor, and we had some great times. I always found Jeannie to be lively and amusing, and we had lots of enjoyable conversations over the years. I found her to be a witty, generous and intelligent woman, who possessed a fantastic sense of humour. In fact, wherever you were, in the corridors of Parliament House or on the street, you always knew when Jeannie was approaching, because she was invariably preceded by her very loud and infectious laugh.

One of my staff who had worked closely with Jeannie and her office for many years in Canberra had been in the process since Christmas of trying to organise for us all to catch up and have a coffee on The Parade. Jeannie was very excited about this, and we had planned to have a good gossip session. After numerous postponements due to the fluctuating state of her health, we all thought that we had finally settled on a date for the following week, and then the shocking news came through. Although that coffee date never eventuated, I am delighted and honoured that I can share my thoughts about Jeannie with the house and pay tribute to a great South Australian.

Jeannie was a remarkable woman who pursued her passions and interests with vitality and steely determination, and I am proud (as are many of my state and federal colleagues) that the friendship we shared with Jeannie so easily and comfortably extended beyond the political divide. This is inevitably a sad time for us all, but I find that, as I reflect on a life well lived and remember some of the anecdotes

which were shared about Jeannie at her memorial service, it is easy to smile and in fact giggle at the absurdity of some of the experiences of a very eventful life—Jeannie would surely approve.

Jeannie was born on 14 March 1941 in Auckland New Zealand. Her path to politics began as a journalist on the *Rotorua Daily Post* working no less as the editor of the women's pages. It was during this employment that she met her first husband Bob who was the chief sub-editor. Jeannie and Bob moved to Australia in 1963 and married one year later in Melbourne. They both then worked as journalists in Melbourne, Perth, Canberra and Adelaide before settling in Canberra in 1967 where Jeannie worked on the *Canberra Times*. It was during this time that Jeannie in her own words became 'an enthusiastic spectator of the national political scene' which instilled in her a desire to become more involved in helping shape the future direction of her newly adopted country.

Following this, Jeannie moved on to edit the *Yass Post*, becoming—which I think is a little known fact about her illustrious career—the first female editor of that newspaper in 165 years. But, more importantly, this position instilled in her a deep understanding of rural communities and the issues which they faced on a daily basis. It inspired in her a lifelong interest and passion in helping them in any way she could. Combining her two loves—those of journalism and rural affairs—Jeannie then became the CSIRO's director of public affairs and from there she moved to the National Farmers Federation where her future political life was sealed, for it was there that she met the farmer who headed the federation from 1984 to 1988, Ian McLachlan, who would also become her political mentor and champion.

When Jeannie attended the job interview with Ian in 1984 and she was asked why they should hire her for the position, her response was, 'You need a smart journalist like me to soften up your right-wing views for public consumption'—a view which would underpin her future beliefs as a Liberal parliamentarian with a social conscience. Jeannie's time at the National Farmers Federation was a happy one, as she reminisced in her maiden speech when elected to the Senate. She said:

I was a member of a quite special team of people at the National Farmers Federation. A unique combination of commonsense and courage, together with great leadership, delivered us some very important outcomes.

One of those outcomes was the gathering of 45 000 farmers and their families on 1 July 1985 outside Old Parliament House to protest about spiralling farm costs. Jeannie was very proud that she played a pivotal role in what she thought must 'surely be Canberra's most successful political rally'.

Ian McLachlan said at the memorial service that on that occasion they had organised to have a meeting with then prime minister Bob Hawke, who kept them waiting for several hours, and the four people who were to have the meeting with Hawke then went on to enter federal politics. Perhaps that is a lesson to us all not to keep people waiting! Jeannie became an adviser to Ian McLachlan when he entered federal parliament in 1990. She then became chief of staff to the South Australian primary industry minister Dale Baker, who in 1996 was instrumental—well, I don't know whether we should go into politics now—in the coup which deposed then premier Dean Brown for John Olsen and exacerbated the factional differences which I think still exist to this day.

Jeannie then decided to take the big plunge into politics herself, but importantly she did it for all the right reasons. She

yearned to make a contribution to public life. She was passionate about helping rural Australia and she was determined to deliver for South Australia and the community she so loved. So, displaying her customary determination, she secured preselection for a South Australian Senate seat at the March 1996 election. However, her entry into politics was not as smooth as she would have hoped. I am quite sure that Jeannie, in her wildest dreams, did not think that her election would provoke a flurry of constitution debate and cement her position as the shortest serving senator in history.

Following the election and before Jeannie began her term on 1 July 1996, it was discovered—and this was through Senator Nick Bolkus—that Jeannie had been employed by Senator Minchin, who was then a parliamentary secretary, to advise on native title issues. This was a potential breaching of section 44(iv) of the Constitution, which states that any person who holds any office of profit under the Crown shall be incapable to be chosen or to sit as a senator or a member of the House of Representatives. The Senate agreed to a motion to refer the matter to the Court of Disputed Returns, but the motion was amended to provide that it would not take effect until after the commencement of Jeannie's term. Presumably, the intention of this amendment was to give Jeannie an opportunity to resign and to have her place filled as a casual vacancy, and this is indeed what happened.

Jeannie took her place on 1 July as a senator but resigned 11 days later creating a casual vacancy. She could have resigned earlier but I think she wanted to leave the record of the shortest serving member of parliament to Charles Howroyd who in 1917 died five days after being elected. I think the title of shortest serving senator would have been enough for her. Twelve days after her resignation however, the South Australian parliament appointed Jeannie to fill the vacancy which she had created by her own resignation.

This was undoubtedly a stressful time for Jeannie but, as Senator Minchin said at her memorial service in what can only be described as a masterly understatement, 'Jeannie was a bit unsure as to this strategy.' But it paid off and Jeannie subsequently took her place in the Senate as only the third South Australian female Liberal senator—behind Dame Nancy Buttfield and Amanda Vanstone. Senator Minchin did claim credit for having had the brilliant idea of proposing Jeannie for preselection for the Senate, but he was a bit concerned that if he took her away from Dale Baker as his chief of staff, that Dale would get into trouble and, indeed, Dale did get into some trouble after Jeannie left him. It is important to note that, although Nick Bolkus had caused her problems in entering the Senate, they later became good friends.

During her time in federal parliament, Jeannie was a tireless advocate for rural Australia. Much of her maiden speech was devoted to expounding the virtues of our farming pioneers and applauding the current efforts of the new generation. Jeannie talked at length about the contribution of our primary producers to Australia's economy and of the importance of supporting them through times of adversity. Her passion for rural Australia went undiminished throughout her Senate tenure and was best exemplified by her commitment to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee on which she served for much of her parliamentary life. Her deep knowledge of rural and regional affairs was undoubtedly the reason why the Prime Minister asked her to accompany the Minister for Trade, Mark Vaile, to Baghdad last year, to help rescue Australia's wheat exports.

Jeannie's other passion was women's issues. In her maiden speech she praised the involvement of women in Australian politics, noting that women had been given the vote and the right to stand for parliament in South Australia in 1894. Jeannie was a passionate supporter of those rights but, more importantly, she never let her position within the right faction of a morally conservative government dictate her view or vote on issues she felt strongly about. She was instrumental in working across party lines to overturn a ban on the abortion pill RU486 and she was influential in pressuring the government to promptly fund the cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil. She was pivotal in securing the passage of therapeutic cloning legislation through the Senate late last year, something that Jeannie nominated as one of the most significant milestones of her career. I remember the debate about this legislation very well and I certainly admired Jeannie for her stance within it, even though it brought her into considerable conflict with her colleagues.

Jeannie believed very strongly that some interest groups and some of her own colleagues, in particular the health minister, were letting their religious beliefs overshadow their political roles in objectively scrutinising the issue. She refused to bow to their demands or concerns. I know that privately she was scathing of those who opposed this legislation for religious reasons yet, at the same time, embraced and supported the concept of in vitro fertilisation to have their own children. Anyone who knew Jeannie would have expected nothing less. Hypocrisy and Jeannie were not two words that ever went together.

Working tirelessly as a senator and advocate for South Australia, Jeannie eventually rose to the important position of Deputy Government Whip in the Senate in 2001 and then to Government Whip in the Senate the following year. But positions and titles meant nothing to Jeannie. If they helped her achieve a policy position or deliver an outcome she was passionate about, then all well and good, but to everyone involved with her socially and professionally, she was simply Jeannie. Approachable, friendly and often working across party lines to achieve positive outcomes, Jeannie was regarded with enormous respect and affection. One only has to look at the outpouring of grief and the flood of tributes from all sides of politics, industry and the general public which followed her death to realise what an enormous impact she made upon everyone with whom she came in contact.

Jeannie was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in October 2005 and took some time off work to endure numerous bouts of harrowing chemotherapy. Never one to sit still, Jeannie returned to work only four months later—her first job—as has already been stated by the Premier—being to go to Baghdad with the Deputy Prime Minister. It was only a week after a chemotherapy session and, despite everything she was going through, Jeannie simply shrugged and joked and, as has already been reported, she was only worried that her wig might fly off on the windy tarmac. We were able to see a lot of the photographs of Jeannie's trip which were shown at the memorial service.

Following her trip to Iraq, Jeannie returned in seemingly good health to the Senate and embarked on what would become her enduring legacy. In May 2006 she formed a parliamentary inquiry into gynaecological cancers with Australian Democrats Senator Lyn Allison and Labor Senator Claire Moore. This led to a cross-party report entitled 'Breaking the silence: a national voice for gynaecological cancers' that contained 34 recommendations calling for increased research and awareness of gynaecological cancer

in Australia. The government's response to the report was very supportive, and it agreed to the recommendation of the establishment of the Centre for Gynaecological Cancer with seed funding of \$1 million for establishment and operational costs. Jeannie was naturally delighted when the government announced the seed funding for the centre five weeks before her death, and she fervently hoped that this would allow other women across Australia to avoid the ignorance and delays which she had experienced in relation to her own disease.

Jeannie announced late in 2006 that she would not be seeking further preselection after her term expired in June 2008. She believed and publicly stated that it was time to make way for a new generation of female senators, and that she had many plans that she still had to accomplish away from the Senate. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, the Liberal Party—or should I say its moderate wing—ignored Jeannie's explicit wishes and did not appoint a female to assume her place in the Senate. Whatever the reasons, all I can say is that Simon Birmingham has some very big shoes to fill.

Jeannie's death was a shock to us all. I attended her memorial service in Hahndorf on 13 April and was touched by the tributes paid to her and the genuine affection in which she was so obviously held by so many. The Hon. Carmel Zollo and I represented the Labor Party at the service and Senator Natasha Stott Despoja was also there. Senator Minchin acknowledged in his tribute that this was a testament to Jeannie's ability to transcend political boundaries and differences and establish friendships based on mutual respect and a desire to make Australia a better place for us all. This ethos, which so distinguished Jeannie, can best be summed up by the words she delivered in her last speech to federal parliament on 27 February this year when noting the government response to her pioneering Breaking the Silence report:

Right at the start I would like to say that this is a very clear example of Senate women coming to work on an issue. All of us saw this issue as being above party politics, an issue important to all women in Australia and their families, including their husbands, their brothers, their fathers and their children.

I could not have said it better myself. You will be sadly missed, Jeannie, and I offer my sincere condolences to your family and your two children, Robbie and Jeremy. I would also like to acknowledge Jeannie's devoted staff members, Bronte, Simon, Vicky and Angela, who are present today in the gallery. I am sure that Jeannie is hovering over us and wishing you all well for the future. Whilst we did not have that coffee with her, I am sure that we could enjoy a coffee together and reminisce about Jeannie and her contribution to Australia.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I rise very briefly to extend my sincere condolences to the family, friends and staff of the late Senator Jeannie Ferris. Jeannie was known to me for many years, particularly before I came to this place. She was a member of the marvellous Torrens Valley branch of the Liberal Party, and she was a key person in that area. She was also a very good friend of friends of mine, Warren and Elizabeth Starrick, of egg-producing fame, as the minister would know. Jeannie was a very hands-on person in every way. She never lost sight of where she came from; she never lost sight of whom she represented.

It is great to realise that we had a journalist of the capacity of Jeannie Ferris who actually thought about right of centre politics because so many of them are the other way around. She was extremely active on our side of politics, and she never let the opportunity go by. She gave me much advice,

particularly when I was chairman of the rural council in South Australia for the Liberal Party. She was often the first phone call you got, asking, 'Now, what are you on about, Ivan?' She became worse when she was chief of staff to Dale Baker, and she held the camp together. What teamwork we had! She was a pivotal person in relation to teamwork. It was during some of these years that we were at our most successful. Then she went to Ian McLachlan's office and, again, it was the same there. It goes to show that, when you go to an upper house you do not have to lose your profile or your person. She was very much an upfront member of parliament and, as I said, upper house members can be proactive and they can have a personal profile. Let it be a lesson to all of them.

She was very active in relation to the investigation into the Australian Wheat Board. Isn't this prophetic, Mr Speaker, when you consider what she said in relation to the wheat export authority and what then happened with the subsequent Cole inquiry? Members should read it. If only Jeannie Ferris had done this work two or three years before, maybe we would not have had the Cole inquiry, but that is history now. I only wish that she had done it much earlier.

It is also sad to note the passing of her former husband, Bob Ferris, who remained her friend. What a double whammy that was for the family! To Jeannie's family, her staff and her friends, who go right across all states, I extend our sincere condolences. All members of parliament, I believe, deserve a reasonable retirement. In Jeannie's case it was not to be. Vale Jeannie Ferris.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): I rise today to make a contribution on the sad loss of Senator Jeannie Ferris. She was certainly a great help in my campaign to get into this place and, as everyone knows, Jeannie does not say anything in grey: it is in black and white. If she does not think you are going down the path you should be, she certainly lets you know, and I took great solace that she let me know when I needed it.

An honourable member: That's true.

Mr PEDERICK: That's true. I want to briefly acknowledge all the work she did through regional Australia and her work supporting rural industries. It is interesting to note what was related to us at the memorial service in Canberra about Jeannie receiving the initial diagnosis of ovarian cancer when she was feeling so ill. The doctor said, 'No, just go home. It's a minor complaint.' It was something along those lines. Jeannie said that she wanted to have a CT scan. The doctor said, 'They are very expensive.' Jeannie, true to her nature, said, 'But I'm very valuable.' I extend by condolences to the staff and her family. Jeannie certainly did make a valuable contribution to this country.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): I rise in support of the motion in memory of Jeannie Ferris. I support the comments made by the Premier and others on the government side of the house and I also support the comments made by the leader and those on this side of the house. As members know, I was present at Jeannie's memorial service in Canberra. Jeannie was passionate, as members have mentioned, about women's issues, regional communities and their issues, and the Liberal Party. I would describe Jeannie as loyal, decent, hard working and honest. Because she entered politics for the right reasons, she will be remembered for the right reasons. Because she entered politics for the right reasons, she will be remembered as an outstanding senator who showed the true value of the Senate and, indeed, upper

houses in general. Because she entered politics for the right reasons, it was interesting to note that all sides of politics were present in large numbers at the memorial service to acknowledge her outstanding service to Australia and the state. I extend my condolences to family and staff. She will certainly be missed.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: I also extend by condolences to the family of Senator Ferris. I will forward to Senator Ferris's family an extract from *Hansard* of today's proceedings. I ask members in support of the motion to please rise in their places.

Motion carried by members standing in their places in silence.

[Sitting suspended from 3.14 to 3.25 p.m.]

PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, SESQUICENTENARY

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): By leave, I move:

That the House of Assembly notes the historic occasion of the 150th anniversary of responsible government here in South Australia.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Among the many honoured guests joining us today are descendants of our first parliamentarians. I both welcome them and acknowledge the contribution of their forefathers in establishing our self-governing democracy that we gather here to mark. Uniquely among the Australian colonies, from its very founding the colonists of South Australia were determined that this would be a place where responsible and democratic government would flourish. It was to take more than two decades to achieve that goal, but it was clear from the beginning of the colony that the system of administration in South Australia would be different from that of the other colonies.

In most other colonies the Governor had sole authority but, in the free colony of South Australia, Governor John Hindmarsh had to share that power with the resident Commissioner, James Hurtle Fisher. That was designed to ensure that the Governor could not interfere with the business affairs of the colonists or their freedom of religion. Our foundation incorporated ideas of social and political freedom, born out of the reform movement that had swept British political life in the 1820s and 1830s.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: Before Gladstone.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes, before him, but whose spirit he continued. Crown land was not given away to the fortunate few but sold and the money raised to bring out the respectable poor to provide labourers, craftsmen and yeomen farmers. Under the original South Australia Colonisation Act, the colony was promised a representative government when its population reached 50 000. This was a promise that was lost when the act was repealed in 1842. However, by then the seeds of democratic change were sown. It is fair to say that these two men, Hindmarsh and Fisher, did not get on. Both were recalled to London within two years, to be replaced by Governor Gawler.

He administered the colony with the powers of a representative of the Crown and was assisted by his Legislative Council of paid officials, which was expanded in 1842 to include four prominent and wealthy members of the colony.

The Governor continued to wield most of the power. He was the only official who could introduce legislation. Also, he appointed all government officials, including the members of the Legislative Council, who nominally presided over the colony with him. It was said of the Legislative Council in the *South Australian Register* of 1 May 1850 that:

If the Legislative Council represents anything of itself it represents the moneyed class. Not one of them represents the industrial class, the shop men, carters or farmers.

The article went on to say:

The colony is represented by an irresponsible oligarchy which has little or no sympathy with the mass of the colonists.

Well, Mr Speaker, 150 years on those concerns seem to be allayed. Among the many elected members to this parliament have been representatives of the industrial class, shop men and women, carters and farmers, along with journalists, teachers, doctors and a range of other vocations representing the spectrum of political opinion. Through the 1840s and into the 1850s Adelaide newspapers maintained the pressure to keep that early promise made in the original South Australia Constitution Act that the colony become a self-governing democracy.

Fiery editorials were penned and passionate letters about representation were published demanding an end to the absolute, unelected power of this group. The campaign began to pay dividends. Along with the other Australian colonies, in 1851 South Australia was granted its own partially elected Legislative Council. It was this newly constituted Legislative Council that gave us our constitution, much of which South Australia still operates under today. The South Australia Constitution Act established both an elected Legislative Council and a House of Assembly as the new legislature.

For the House of Assembly the franchise was given to all adult males over the age of 21—a principle that even the member for Stuart came to accept in 1973. For the Legislative Council, males owning property worth £50 or more, or leasing property worth £20 or more, or occupying property worth £25 a year or more could vote. Voting was to be conducted by secret ballot. This was a new idea at the time. In fact, South Australia along with Victoria were the first places in the world to use the secret ballot. So, the South Australian parliament was to be at the vanguard of political and social change right from its beginning.

The newspapers of the day—and South Australia in 1857 was able to boast more than one newspaper—gave their readers detailed information about how the new system would work and urged—in those days before a Liberal government had introduced compulsory voting—electors to go out and fulfil their responsibilities. In stark contrast to the campaigns of today, campaigning was an orderly and sedate affair. Candidates were not allowed to attend political meetings in the districts they were contesting. There were no political parties and no published policy platforms.

Quite how the electors were able to decide on who would make their best representative is a mystery, although there may be some today who wished they knew a little less about those seeking their votes. On election day, 9 March 1857, the *South Australian Register* urged that the colonists should ‘weigh the merits of the various candidates and then scratch out the bad names with a good, bold hand’. It went on to say:

The inhabitants of South Australia are called upon to do more than elect a parliament. It rests with them this day to inaugurate a new constitution to initiate a new era.

The day itself passed off quietly and without incident, the major disappointment being the low turnout. In spite of the words of encouragement from their newspapers, fewer than a quarter of the eligible voters actually submitted their ballot. For the House of Assembly, 57 candidates stood for the 36 places spread across 17 multimember electorates. In seven seats, there was no contest, with exactly the right number of candidates nominating for election.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I agree with the member for Stuart and, in the 1973 general election, I think that is what might have occurred in my constituency (then called Spence), although it is possible that the Labor Party put up a dummy candidate to make sure that the voters turned out for the Legislative Council.

Mr Pengilly: That is the one who won. Is that what you said?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: No—alas, it was not that one. It is true that, since the war, my constituency has often not been contested by the Liberal Party; alas, that has not occurred while I have been there.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Did they? Well, the Bible says that it is a good thing when men dwell in unity, and I cannot think of more unity than an unopposed election. Those successful candidates who sat in that very first parliament are remembered today in the many suburbs, towns, streets, electoral districts and geographical points that continue to take their name in South Australia and in the Northern Territory: Angas, Ayers, Freeling, Fisher, O’Halloran, Stirling, Younghusband, Torrens, Finnis, Bonney, and Kingston, to name but a few.

Mr Williams: MacKillop.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: No, not MacKillop, although Catholics were allowed to run in that election. On 22 April 1857, a crowd of about a thousand spectators gathered along what is now North Terrace to see Governor MacDonnell arrive at Old Parliament House next door. It was officially opened at 1 p.m. by the acting chief justice, Benjamin Boothby. The Legislative Council then elected its first president and the House of Assembly its first speaker. Governor MacDonnell addressed both houses of parliament, outlining the planned legislative program of the new ministry. South Australians began to exercise their right to self-government.

Unlike the orderly and sedate way in which the members were elected, the early days of the South Australian parliament proved to be most unstable. No political parties existed for 36 years and, instead, influential individuals would gather a group of their colleagues about them to form a government; when they fell out, the government fell. Indeed, Sir Henry Ayers was premier five times but premier for fewer than five years. Some South Australians today may bemoan the growth of major political parties, but it is worth taking this lesson from our own history. In those years before political parties were established, South Australia had 47 governments—almost as many as a political party, the name of which escapes me just at the moment. As political maturity developed in South Australia, so gradually did real differences in political opinion develop. Liberals sought social and political change; conservatives became more organised. I am pleased to be able to stand here today as Attorney-General in a Labor government, for it was the United Labor Party that in 1891 became the first formal political party in South Australia,

with four candidates entering parliament in that year—the first endorsed Labor members of any Australian parliament.

In response to the formation of the United Labour Party, concerned men from the conservative side of politics formed the forerunner of the Liberal Party, the National Defence League. Welsh born Tom Price was elected to the House of Assembly in 1893. In the 1890s, he supported the Kingston government in its social legislation, but felt that only a Labor government could bring about the sort of change necessary to improve the conditions of South Australia's workers and small farmers. Tom Price became leader of the United Labour Party in 1899 and, despite a disastrous showing in the 1902 election, led the party to government in the 1905 election. He became—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: What was he like, Gunnie—Tom Price?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The member for Stuart is free to talk about former parliamentary colleagues.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Contemporaries. He became South Australia's first Labor premier. Tom Price was responsible for the introduction of free state secondary school education and legislation to improve working conditions.

On such an occasion, it is right to honour our great parliamentarians. However, to name a few is to do a disservice to the others: all have in some way contributed to making this parliament one of the most forward thinking democratic institutions in the world—and that is no hollow boast. Let me just list our achievements, starting with the original South Australian constitution, one of the most democratic in the world, ahead of the other Australian colonies, the United Kingdom and most European countries. In 1856, it guaranteed:

- adult male suffrage, including for Aboriginal men—although there is no record of any Aboriginal men taking up the opportunity;
- a secret ballot;
- no plural voting;
- no property qualification for members of the House of Assembly; and
- a relatively low property qualification for members of the Legislative Council.

In 1858, one of the new parliament's most significant early acts, the Real Property Act, was passed. This simple, cheap method for checking property titles has been widely adopted around the world. The system is commonly known as Torrens Title, after the MP who pioneered it here and then promoted the system around Australia and in other parts of the world.

In 1876, we became the first part of the British empire to legalise trade unions (the member for MacKillop is still getting over that). In 1885, we became the first state to levy income and land taxes. In 1894, the Constitutional Amendment Act was passed to make South Australia the first colony in Australia, and just the fourth in the world, to grant adult women the right to vote, and the first to grant them the right to stand for parliament. When the vote was granted to women, Aboriginal women were included. At the Ngarrindjeri mission at Point McLeay, Aboriginal women insisted on enrolling and voting in the 1896 election, even though they were actively discouraged by the white manager of the mission. There were more than 100 on the electoral roll that year, and more than 70 voted at that election. By the late 19th century, Aboriginal people had the vote in all the

colonies, apart from Western Australia and Queensland, but it was only in South Australia that some Aboriginal people actually enrolled and voted.

In 1895, Catherine Helen Spence was appointed to the government's Commission of Enquiry into the Adelaide Hospital—the first woman to participate in an official commission. In 1895, she became Australia's first woman political candidate when she stood for election to the Constitutional Convention on Federation. In 1896, women had the chance to vote for the first time at an Australian election, and just the second time anywhere in the world. In 1910, Premier John Verran led the first majority Labor government anywhere in the world—a tremendous fellow, a prohibitionist. In 1936, Sir Richard Butler's government established the first public housing authority in Australia: the South Australian Housing Trust. In 1966, South Australia became the first state to pass an Aboriginal affairs act repealing many regulations that restricted the civil liberties of Aboriginal people, including the right to mix with non-Aboriginal people.

Members and honoured guests, this is an impressive list of firsts for the past 150 years of this South Australian parliament. We have much to celebrate. However, we as the parliamentarians of today carry the responsibility for continuing this tradition for future generations. It has been an honour to stand before you on this historic day as a member of this parliament representing the electorate of Croydon and as Attorney-General to reflect on how this parliament has contributed to making South Australia the dynamic, tolerant, inclusive, multicultural state in which we live today. I commend the motion to the house.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Leader of the Opposition):

This is indeed an historic occasion. Today we celebrate the 150th anniversary of responsible government in the state of South Australia. On behalf of the opposition, can I welcome in particular the descendants of our parliamentary ancestors to whom we owe so much. We do so on the lands of the Kurna people, whose home we share and whom we remember as the first custodians of the hills and plains, the rivers and beaches. We also celebrate this moment on the eve of Anzac Day when we commemorate the suffering and sacrifice of so many South Australian families who built this great state.

From 1834 to 1851, a period of colonial government, the circumstances prevailing in the colony of South Australia when it was established were desperate. Famines, droughts and religious persecution led to the flow of people here. These were tough times and our ancestors were tough. South Australia was a grand experiment in what could be. It still is, if we wish it to be so. The founders of South Australia had a vision of a colony with greater political and religious freedom. It was to be a utopia of its day: a place to try the new way of things—perhaps all things to all people.

The South Australia Act passed by the British government in 1834 (which established the colony and its government) was the starting point. The act also included a promise of representative government when the population reached 50 000. It was a time of the adventurer; a time of the survivor. One only needs to travel to the outback of South Australia to see the crumbling ruins of former homesteads—some family's dream. Backbreaking months of heavy lifting, perhaps followed by reward, perhaps followed by despair. People were married; children were born; people died. Some found great wealth, others despair. In 1836, the first European

settlers arrived in South Australia and Adelaide was founded and the first government established, a colonial government under Governor Hindmarsh.

South Australia was a lifeboat: a lifeboat for starving Irishmen; an escape for Scots denied their lands; a safe haven for Germans subject to religious persecution. Many did not want to be governed. It is perhaps a miracle that we created a government at all. That rebellious 'govern but don't get too big for your shoes' approach that South Australians and Australians have at their heart is very much part of our national personality.

Until 1851, the Governor ruled South Australia with the assistance of an appointed executive council of paid officials. British governments from 1840 onwards encouraged the development of representative government in the Australian colonies; and they passed legislation setting up elected municipal councils and then a partially elected Legislative Council for each of the colonies.

South Australia's Legislative Council prepared a constitution that was adopted in 1856. Elections were held in March and April 1857. The first sitting of the parliament was on 22 April 1857. That was the inauguration of responsible government. At around this time my own family ancestors set sail from Plymouth, England in a barque called the *Rajastan*. Imagine the many months our forefathers endured on rough seas on what must have seemed like a voyage to the moon, with no safety plan for rescue, no communications and an uncertain future.

The new Constitution Bill was laid upon the table of both houses in the imperial parliament in England on 19 May 1856 and was assented to by Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace on 24 June 1856. On 24 October 1856, the bill was proclaimed in South Australia by the Governor, Sir Richard Graves MacDonnell. Voting at parliamentary elections was from the outset by secret ballot. All adult males were entitled to vote at House of Assembly elections, but the franchise of the Legislative Council was based on a property qualification. A man who possessed freehold of the value of £50, leasehold of the annual value of £20 having three years to run or a right of pre-emption, or occupation of a house of the annual value of £25 were all eligible to vote in the Legislative Council. In 1896 women voted for the first time in a general election, one of the first places in the world. In 1971 the age of voting was lowered from 21 to 18. South Australia joined the other colonies in the federation in 1901 and so became a state of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act was passed by the British parliament in 1900 and became operative on 1 January 1901. As Leader of the Opposition, can I remind the house—though it needs no reminding—that the commonwealth parliament and its members should remember that we in the states came first. Here in this parliament, we were producing landmark legislation and pioneering the settlement of the country long before the very idea of a city called Canberra was conceived. In fact, the founding fathers of our national parliament met in this very chamber in the late 1890s to give life to our nationhood through its national parliament. The federal model was pioneered by the states. I for one enjoy reminding my federal parliamentary colleagues of all parliamentary and political persuasions that they are relative newcomers who have much to learn from us. Regardless of political affiliation, they should take notes, be attentive and duly respectful.

Although the Parliament of South Australia began in 1857, no political parties emerged until the 1890s. Back then, for

36 years, governments were formed by influential individuals who could gather a group of colleagues around them. It must have been chaos! Imagine a parliament full of Independents with no major parties to berate or position themselves between. One can only imagine how orderly or disorderly the house must have been without the good sense and wisdom of the major parties to bring meaningful choices and alternatives to the people in an understandable and organised way of doing business. By the time of the 1912 election, South Australia had a well-established two-party system dominated by the United Labour Party and the Liberal Union. One of the most important was the coalition between the Liberal Union and the Country Party Association in 1932—the Liberal and Country League (LCL). This governed South Australia for 27 years between 1938 and 1965 under Sir Thomas Playford.

The first council of government held its meeting in a sitting room of Government House from 1836 to 1843. The new council chamber next door to where we are today was opened on 10 October 1843, with a two-storey stone extension of the first chamber being completed in July 1855 at a total cost of £17 000. In 1874, a commission was appointed by the Governor to inquire into and report on the designs submitted in competition for the new parliament houses and a successful design was chosen. It was decided to use local material for the building—marble from Kapunda and granite from West Island near Victor Harbor. Work began on the current site immediately east of the existing house and was completed in 1889. The total cost of the new House of Assembly chamber, including furniture and fittings, amounted to £165 404.

In 1913, sketch plans were prepared by the architect-in-chief's department for the east wing of Parliament House, and although work was delayed following the outbreak of World War II, it was completed in 1939. The total cost for the new wing was £241 887. The project also functioned to provide hundreds of people with work during the Depression. Towards the end, the Hon. Sir J. Langdon Bonython KCMG, one of the state's greatest benefactors, made a gift of £100 000. Plans for the completion of the building were drawn up in 1934.

We need no reminding, other than from our grandparents, that the Great Depression of 1929–32 was a time of extreme hardship for the people of Australia, particularly South Australia. Following the Great War of 1914–18, the impact of the 1930s Depression on South Australian society was devastating. Without work and a steady income, many people lost their homes and were forced to live in makeshift dwellings with poor heating and sanitation.

Nevertheless, we pioneered education for children in South Australia. In November 1836 a school was opened in Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, first under a tree then in a tent. That was followed by the opening of a school in Adelaide by Mrs Hillier in 1837. In 1892 education was made free to the compulsory age of 13. In 1859 the first ferry across the River Murray commenced operations at Wellington. In 1975 we received our first colour television transmission. In 1980, a bushfire destroyed 35 houses in the Adelaide Hills, causing millions of dollars of damage. In 1982, following amendments to the Licensing Act, some hotels in 'tourist areas' began trading on Sundays for one or two hour periods.

In February 1983 large bushfires claimed 28 lives of South Australians. Damage was estimated at over \$200 million. Fires at nine separate locations including Clare, Adelaide Hills and the South-East devastated the state. In 1984 the Maralinga Land Rights Bill passed by state parliament

returned 76 000 square kilometres of South Australia's Far North to its traditional Aboriginal owners. In 1986 we celebrated the 150th anniversary of European settlement, and had the pleasure of a royal visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. On 7 August 1998, workers excavated the last metre of earth to break through to daylight on the Crafers freeway tunnel—the first tunnel built anywhere on Australia's 18 700 kilometres of national highway. In 2004 the first freight train used the Adelaide to Darwin railway. In October 2006 we had the official opening of Adelaide's international airport. Now, in 2007, we are experiencing one of the worst droughts that this country has ever seen. The struggle continues.

The South Australian story is amazing. Unlike the French, the Russians and the Americans, to name just a few, we did not have to fight a bloody war of independence or protect our democracy with an equally bloody civil war or pay the price in blood for our freedom. It was given to us by our ancestors as a gift. So I ask: do we value it any less because of that? If we do, it is at our peril, for, if we wish to keep our freedom and what we have built, we must strive to keep our democracy alive and healthy. We must take an interest in it. The Westminster system that we have inherited has proved to be one of the most resilient democratic models that man has conceived. Of the oldest surviving democracies in the world, Westminster models, including Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, feature strongly, whilst many others have crumbled time and time again. I urge the children of South Australia and their parents to come to the parliament, as we have just seen this weekend, and to value what we have built, otherwise our grandchildren may lose it. Sir Winston Churchill once remarked:

Every day you may make progress. Every step may be fruitful. Yet there will stretch out before you an ever-lengthening, ever-ascending, ever-improving path. You know you will never get to the end of the journey. But this, so far from discouraging, only adds to the joy and glory of the climb.

When we all go home this evening we will reflect on today. We may watch the world news and see how others spent their day. We might ask ourselves before we retire where else in the world would be a better place to live, to love, to raise your family than South Australia. What we have created here through our democracy, all of us, is not perfect but it will do me. We are indeed a lucky people. Thanks be to God.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Today we celebrate the 150th anniversary of this parliament reached last Sunday 22 April. It marks the 150th anniversary of the opening of South Australia's first parliament under responsible government. It is time to be proud and reflective. *Hansard* reported on the first day of parliament under the heading 'Opening of Parliament. Under the Act No 2 of 1855-56 to establish a constitution for South Australia. Wednesday, April 22nd 1857' as follows:

This being the day appointed for the opening of Parliament, consisting of two houses, a Legislative Council, and a House of Assembly, elected under the provisions of the new Constitution Act, No 2 of 1855-56, the proceedings connected with its inauguration excited much public interest. The time appointed for both Houses to meet was 1 o'clock; but for some time previously a large number of persons had assembled in front of the Parliament House, anxious to gain admission to the galleries; and at 3 o'clock the number of spectators assembled on North Terrace could not have been less than 1 000. His Excellency arrived on horseback, at twenty minutes past 3 o'clock, accompanied by Major Nelson, the Commandant of the Troops, and various other officers and gentlemen, and was received

with cheering by the citizens, assembled on the terrace, which he acknowledged, with affability and courteous politeness.

We tend to take our parliamentary democracy for granted, even though it has come at a great cost in terms of effort, energy and lives. It is not perfect but, as Churchill said in 1947, 'Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.' Our parliamentary system has evolved over hundreds of years and it should not be taken for granted. It is timely that tomorrow is Anzac Day because we should reflect on the sacrifice of 100 000 young Australians who gave their lives to make our system of parliamentary democracy possible. We should also remember the pioneering families who made enormous sacrifices to develop this state. We should also remember the indigenous people whose culture could have gone on forever in genuine sustainability.

It was a privilege today to have Kurna elder Lewis O'Brien here as part of the commemoration and celebration. Our parliament, whilst largely dominated by the government of the day, allows for an official opposition and alternative government, something not found in all countries; for example, China, where the opposition is often in prison or, worse, in the cemetery. In theory, parliament has a central role to play in our responsible system of government, with the ministry kept accountable to the people despite the governing party being a powerful force in the House of Assembly and, to a lesser extent, in the upper house. I say 'in theory', because the reality is not quite as it should be.

Global warming may be an inconvenient truth: parliament often seems, in truth, an inconvenience for executive government. The people's house, that is the lower house—that is us—still upholds the hard-won tradition that the people rather than the monarch make the laws, therefore we prohibit the monarch or her representative from entering our chamber. That is why, of course, the official opening today was in the Legislative Council. As we know, parliament not only makes statute law but allows the questioning of the government of the day as well as providing an arena for airing grievances. The parliament can act as a court but rarely does, the last time being in 1968 when a Mr Klæbe was summonsed to the bar of the Legislative Council for contempt for questioning committee member Mr Murray Hill MLC's impartiality.

In August 1870, Sergeant Major R.A. McBride was gaoled by the Legislative Council for seven days after forwarding a letter containing 'the most insulting description that could possibly be.' *Hansard* was very polite: it does not tell us what was actually in the letter, but they were the words used. We in South Australia have much to be proud of, because we have been leaders in democratic initiatives including, as has been pointed out by the Attorney and others, allowing adult Aboriginal men to vote in elections, 1856—sadly taken from them in the move towards Federation or as a result of Federation. We pioneered the vote for Aboriginal men and subsequently for Aboriginal women, also taken from them as a result of federation. The secret ballot was introduced here in 1856 and, as has been stated, we allowed women to vote in 1894 and were the first parliament in the world to allow women to stand for parliament.

The parliament legalised trade unions in 1876, removed regulations restricting the activities of Aboriginal people in 1966, and banned discrimination on the grounds of race, colour and country of origin in 1966. In the same year, the Aboriginal Lands Trust was established. South Australia became the first state, in 1971, to decriminalise abortion in

certain circumstances. In 1975 the Sex Discrimination Act was passed, making discrimination on the ground of gender, marital status or sexuality unlawful in the provision of goods, services, employment, education and accommodation. This was extended in 1991 to cover age discrimination. These are but a few of the legislative changes that have helped give South Australia the reputation of being a leader in social reform.

Whilst the South Australian parliament has led in respect of many social changes, we have been slow to introduce reforms to our own day-to-day workings. We are looking this very day at creating family-friendly sitting hours and offering citizens the right of reply in this house. However, more reform is needed to make the parliament a central player in what should be a system of genuine responsible government. Parliament has question time but does not have answer time. There are other even more fundamental issues to be addressed, including deciding what role a state parliament can and should play in a system increasingly dominated by Executive Government and the major political parties, and in an economic arena where the commonwealth government holds most of the purse strings.

Parties do bring political stability but at a price. I ask: how significant are our parliamentary committees, dealing with, at best, today's issues rather than tomorrow's issues—and on a shoestring, at that. We need at least one committee that can look at issues in advance and maybe avoid some of the problems we are now encountering in relation to water supply, global warming and the ageing of our population. Do we need a parliament in its current form or could we move to a system of regional parliaments combining the role of state and local governments? We need to ask ourselves: how relevant are we? Can we use new electronic technology to make parliament more relevant to the people and more responsive? We need to explore the concept of electronic democracy.

Even our seating arrangements are combative and confrontational. Perhaps we should all face the Speaker. Then there is the question of general accommodation, because the current facilities are inadequate, with no meeting area for visiting school children and inadequate space for staff, ministers, backbenchers and the media. It is time parliament had proper accommodation for its occupants. I ask the question: where are our Aboriginal MPs? I ask the further question: how will our parliament fit in if Australia becomes a republic, which I believe it will within 20 years?

Can we be leaders in reform not for the sake of it but because it would help make South Australia a more decent, just society? As MPs we are now hybrids—a cross between social workers and ombudsmen. However, importantly, we still need to lead and to legislate. It is to the credit of MPs in this parliament that we have been devoid of major scandals, with only a small number of MPs engaging in illegal behaviour. There has been no SA Inc! Instances of contempt charges brought against serving members are rare. I will not list them because they are few in number and, if you list one, you really need to list all of them.

Likewise, criminal charges are rare. The only instance that could be provided to me was that of Bert Edwards who, in 1931, was a serving member for the electorate of Adelaide when he was convicted of sodomy. His seat was vacated through absence without leave on 23 June 1931 while he was serving his prison term. Mr Edwards was released after almost two years from Yatala Labour Prison. I am advised that there has never been a case of a member of the public

being brought before the House of Assembly on a charge of contempt of parliament; but, as I indicated earlier, there have been some in the Legislative Council.

Parliament was meant to have a St Paul's-style tower but there was not enough money for that. Indeed, the government of the day did not have enough money to build the current Legislative Council and, as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, was helped out in 1936 by *The Advertiser's* proprietor, Sir Langdon Bonython, who provided £100 000. Whilst generous benefactors willing to spend money on parliament are no doubt rare today (and it is unlikely we will see a repeat of the huge crowd that gathered at 3 p.m. on 22 April 1857 ready for the first day's opening of the new parliament), nevertheless, one would hope that all South Australians and current MPs can take pride in the achievements of their parliament and its contribution over 150 years, and help ensure that it continues to play an important and relevant role in our evolving and less than perfect democratic system based as it is on the concept of representative democracy and responsible government.

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): As a sixth generation South Australian, I am proud to support this motion. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for accommodating the celebrations on this important and historic day for the parliament of South Australia. Also, I wish to recognise the descendants of our first parliamentarians in South Australia who have attended today. It is a tribute to them and a recognition of this historic day. On the eve of Anzac Day (which is, of course, a time that we do recognise the service and sacrifice of Australians), I would like the house to spare a thought for those who had to fight for the right to have a vote in this state.

Much has been said about the history of women, their right to vote and their right to stand for parliament. I think this very chamber must take credit for being the first in the world to pass legislation in 1894 to give women the right to vote—a very important occasion. Much could be said, of course, about the circumstances prevailing in the colony at that time, the least of which was the shocking state of drunkenness that was a major factor in developing, supporting and passing the legislation.

Of course, the amendment moved to grant women the right to stand for parliament was actually an attempt to sabotage the bill because, at the time, some thought that was so ridiculous that the bill would never pass, that it would fail. However, we got our way. It may have taken 65 years for us to get here but I can tell members that we are here to stay. I particularly wish to recognise Joyce Steele who is resplendent here in Versace blue and who was the member for Burnside. She entered this house as the first female member of parliament in South Australia in this assembly chamber in 1959.

She had to fight a battle with Frank Chapman (no relative, I might say), along with Mrs Jessie Cooper, who in the same year—again fighting the battle in the Supreme Court—was allowed to sit in the chamber in the Legislative Council. It is very disappointing (and this is no reflection on you, Mr Speaker), but I have written to three speakers of this house to ask that, on this sesquicentenary occasion, we acknowledge women in this chamber, that we recognise Mrs Cooper and that her portrait be hung in the adjacent chamber to us. I regret to say that, whilst I had a response from you, Mr Speaker, there is still not a word from the other place. I think that that is a shame on the occasion we are celebrating this historic time.

I recognise Agnes Goode, the first woman to stand as a candidate for a political party, and the many other women who have been recognised—more recently, Jennifer Cashmore, Di Laidlaw and people who have served in this house—and many Labor women also join that queue. However, let us spare a thought for women in this context. Our Aboriginal South Australians, in fact, had the vote in 1857 as long as they were male, over the age of 21 years and, like white men, of sound mind, not bankrupt and not in prison, which I think was the other qualifying feature at that stage. They got the right to vote, and it is an interesting twist that, in South Australian history, whilst we pioneered votes for women, to put it briefly, black men in South Australia had the vote nearly 20 years before black and white women.

We know the history that, when we joined the federation in 1901, all Aboriginals who were not on the electoral roll were no longer allowed to vote. Notwithstanding the constitutional amendments, that did not occur until some years later. It is interesting that male Aboriginals who had been on the roll previous to 1901 were kept on the roll and were allowed to continue to vote. So, it was quite an unusual situation. I place on record the importance of recognising that, in 1962, the Menzies Liberal government passed legislation to ensure that Aboriginal people in Australia had the opportunity to vote, and they were fully enfranchised at that point. Some recognise the 1967 referendum as the time of the recognition of Aboriginals but, in fact, whilst it placed them on the census and gave the commonwealth the right to make laws for Aboriginals, it was the Menzies legislation that introduced it. For the record, I mention and applaud the contribution of Neville Bonner, who was the first Aboriginal to stand for parliament. Of course, he was a Liberal and a very significant one.

So, the history is there. As women, along with our Aboriginal South Australians, we had to fight for the vote and the right to stand for parliament. It has been a long fight, but we now celebrate the equality of opportunity.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I speak in relation to the motion noting the sesquicentenary of the South Australian parliament. We have as much democracy as is allowed by those people who exist in society where there is the greatest concentration of wealth. That has been true throughout history. We were fortunate in South Australia that much of the disparity of wealth in the class system of England of the 1830s was left behind when free settlers came here. The system we ended up with for the first parliament in 1857 was based on the interests of those lawyers, graziers, stockbrokers and businesspeople who formed the middle to upper class ranks of society. As I say, there was more equivalence between them than the great range of rich and poor as existed in England, whence they came.

I am grateful, as we all are in South Australia, that we had one of the most democratic systems in the world in the 1850s. We can no longer claim that mantle, of course. I will specifically mention one of the first members of the 1857 parliament—Major O'Halloran. He lived in Lizard Lodge, which is now situated on the Glenthorne site in the electorate of Mitchell. I inspected the ruins of his old home, and there are still significant traces of his homestead. He was a very notable figure in South Australian society at that time and is known probably more for his controversial role as a police officer than his time in parliament.

I studied the early parliamentary sessions of South Australia, particularly in reference to the welfare of Abori-

ginal people. I found that, under the governors in the first 20 years of the colony, Aboriginal welfare was actually more favourably treated than it was under the parliament. There was a select committee into Aboriginal welfare in the 1850s, and the recommendations were to have less Aboriginal welfare and to exclude them more from the precincts of Adelaide than had previously been the case. So, parliament does not always get it right.

It was interesting to look at the early parliamentary debates: the issues come up again and again. We are still dealing with those 19th century issues: public transport; the economy and the export potential of South Australia; what to do with Victoria Square; how to cope with Aboriginal issues; and what to do about law and order. In the 19th century, the law and order debate tended to revolve around whether floggings were sufficient and whether there should be a stay of execution when a criminal was ordered to be hanged. Of course, the system has evolved.

We had Catherine Helen Spence, who was a notable figure, not only for her promotion of the right of women to vote (which was successful in 1894), but who was also an advocate for proportional representation (indeed, the Hare-Clark system should probably be called the Hare-Spence system). It was adopted in Tasmania but, unfortunately, not in South Australia.

My commitment to constitutional reform, I hope, will be a sign of things to come. In 1998, I gave a speech suggesting that this house should be significantly reformed to allow members who were elected by proportional representation to be in this chamber, along with the single member constituency members. In the last parliament, I moved legislation for multimember electorates for this chamber. I am glad to note that I succeeded in my proposal for fixed four-year terms for the parliament of South Australia.

Of course, a notable feature of the political development of South Australia through this 150 years has been the development of political parties. Gradually, they have conglomerated, until we have reached the point where there are two very strong parties, which we call the major parties and which might be called the older parties, Liberal and Labor. We may have already passed the apogee of a Liberal/Labor stranglehold on South Australian politics. Now a third of South Australian voters prefer to vote first preference for non-Liberal or non-Labor candidates, particularly in the Legislative Council elections. It is my belief that a hung parliament is a better parliament, and there are specific examples, when we look at the Olsen government or the previous Rann government, to demonstrate that we are better off when neither Liberal nor Labor has an absolute majority in this chamber.

One thing that we need to retain is a commitment to the history and traditions of this place. It is only with an appreciation of the legal and democratic principles upon which this state was founded that we can serve the best interests of South Australians. The alternative is a descent into 'might is right' politics, where winning becomes an end in itself, not a means to controlling the vehicle for social reform. It also leads to manipulation of voters through emotionalist populism that is not in the long-term interests of South Australia.

What is the future? What will the next 150 years bring? Of course, one of the questions that will be resolved will be the continuation of the upper house. I suppose it probably will be there in 150 years' time but, no doubt, there will be continuing calls for its abolition. One thing that we might have achieved in the next 150 years is improved standing

orders and, perhaps, the adoption of ideas that I have put forward, such as having a completely independent speaker, supported by two-thirds of the members of this house, and yet not of this chamber. Of course, reforms such as this will only occur if more Independents are voted into parliament. The people of South Australia have shown an inclination to support this notion. The future, of course, lies in our hands and in the hands of the people themselves as they vote.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): I came into this place in the 39th parliament, and I intend to leave at the end of the 51st parliament. So, I have been here for about 440 of the 1 800 months that this parliament has sat. I regard it as a privilege and a pleasure to have been the first member of my family (who came out here on the *Utopia* from the Highlands of Scotland—and I think that was a wise decision) to be elected and serve in this august chamber. I have always valued the opportunity to represent people in the rural and remote parts of South Australia, and I believe my role has been to stand up for their rights and their privileges. The first thing we should remember is that this institution belongs to the people of South Australia and we should preserve, protect and uphold the rights and privileges of members of parliament.

The role of members of parliament is to supervise and to observe how the laws that are passed from time to time are affecting people. The greatest threat to this particular institution is unbridled bureaucracy. That is the greatest threat to democracy. It is not the role of members of parliament to in any way downgrade the powers or functions. I believe that those people who come after us should respect and value this institution and not let any one person think that they are bigger or more important, because this institution is there as a safety valve to protect the long-term interests of the people of this state. I am privileged to have been here for 37 years and I have three or four more to go.

The SPEAKER: Members have eloquently reflected on the achievements of the parliament over 150 years, and I thank them. We are one of the oldest continuing democracies in the world and this is something to celebrate. I thank the descendants of the members of the first parliament for joining us for today's proceedings. May I especially thank all those associated with Sunday's open day.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I remind members that the Speaker is on his feet. Over 2 300 people came through this magnificent building. I thank those members who gave up their Sunday to make their time available. I especially thank the father of the house, the member for Stuart. His knowledge of the history of this place is without peer, mainly because he has been a member for so much of it—and I did have to reassure several members of the public that he was not an exhibit. I thank all those members who made their time available to speak to and answer questions from our visitors. I especially thank the staff of the parliament who also volunteered their time to be here. Without them, Sunday would not have been possible.

Motion carried.

PARLIAMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA, STATISTICAL RECORD

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the Parliament of South Australia statistical record of the legislature 1836-2007.

I advise that this paper is a result of the many months of work by Ms Noeleen Ryan and Ms Margaret Hodgins of the Legislative Council, and their efforts are to be commended. All members will receive a commemorative copy to mark the 150th anniversary of responsible government in South Australia.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

- By the Treasurer (Hon. K.O. Foley)—
Regulations under the following Act—
Southern State Superannuation—Death Insurance Benefits
- By the Minister for Transport (Hon. P.F. Conlon)—
Architects Board of South Australia—Report 2006
- By the Minister for Energy (Hon. P.F. Conlon)—
Regulations under the following Act—
Electricity—
Installations
Vegetation Clearance
- By the Attorney-General (Hon. M.J. Atkinson)—
Regulations under the following Act—
Evidence—Prescribed Courts
Rules of Court—
District Court—Search Orders
- By the Minister for Health (Hon. J.D. Hill)—
Southern Adelaide Health Service—Report 2005-06
Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Act 2002—Quarterly Report 1 January—31 March 2007
Regulations under the following Acts—
Environment Protection—Environment Protection Fund
Native Vegetation—Clearance Exemptions
Natural Resources Management—Levy Exemption
- By the Minister for Industrial Relations (Hon. M.J. Wright)—
Regulations under the following Acts—
Statutes Amendment (Public Sector Employment)—
Awards
Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation—
Thoroughbred Riding
- By the Minister for Consumer Affairs (Hon. J.M. Rankine)—
Regulations under the following Act—
Liquor Licensing—
Bordertown
Henley Beach
Millicent
Murray Bridge.

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): Just by way of clarification in relation to notices of motion, I notice that standing orders might change private members' time. In the event that that happens, I assume that notice given for a particular day will not prejudice the giver of that notice.

The SPEAKER: I confirm with the member for Fisher that if there are any changes to sessional orders then motions will be rearranged to accommodate that.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

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

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the restoration and introduction of government bills before the Address in Reply is adopted.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood): I bring up the 266th report of the committee on the Norwood Primary School Redevelopment.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Ms CICCARELLO: I bring up the 267th report of the committee on the Techport Australia Common User Facility. Report received and ordered to be published.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

The SPEAKER: I have to report that the house has this day, in compliance with a summons from His Excellency the Governor's Deputy, attended in the Legislative Council chamber, where His Excellency has been pleased to make a speech to both houses of parliament of which speech I, as Speaker, have obtained a copy, which I now lay on the table.

Ordered to be published.

QUESTION TIME

SCHOOL BUSES

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. Why is the government penalising country people, particularly children, with its decision to remove school buses from small, hard-pressed rural communities? I seek your leave, Mr Speaker, and that of the house to briefly explain my question. The house would probably not be aware of an arbitrary decision the government has made to take away the school bus from the small community of Spalding, putting pressure on the people at Brinkworth. It has \$31 million to put a tramline down North Terrace for the yuppies of North Adelaide, yet it has no money for hard-pressed rural communities.

The SPEAKER: Order! Leave is withdrawn.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I am honoured to have the member for Stuart ask me the first question in this sesquicentenary sitting, and I am delighted that he should talk about his constituency because, after all, democracy is about local issues. The honourable member knows a lot about school buses and the country—I do not think anyone here would doubt that—but he also knows that the school bus policy is as it was implemented during the last Liberal government; in fact, the system in place has not changed: it is about equity and fairness. He, more than anyone else, knows the history of rural schools and the tribulations that occur when populations rise and fall.

One of the buses to which the honourable member refers has fallen well below the number of children for which a bus service would have been provided during the Liberal government's time, but we have held onto it for a year because we understand that another family may move into the district this term. Whilst I understand that in one of those schools there are only four students currently riding on that bus, if more people move into the neighbourhood of course we would reinstitute those buses. The honourable member knows that the system there now is fair, equitable, transparent—and it has been there since the days of the last Liberal government.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Ms BEDFORD (Florey): My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the government now successfully negotiated the return of the Modbury Hospital to the public system?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I acknowledge the honourable member's great interest in the Modbury Hospital, which is within her electorate, and I also acknowledge the great interest of other members in the northern suburbs in this hospital. I am delighted to inform the house that, as of 1 July this year, Modbury Hospital will be returned to the public health system of South Australia. A deal has been brokered with the private Melbourne-based company Healthscope to end the contract to run the hospital as of 1 July. The former (Liberal) government privatised Modbury Hospital management in 1995 as the first of many hospitals it planned to privatise. This announcement today is the fulfilment of one of the Rann government's key election promises. It is also a significant step in the reform process that is continuing across our public hospitals.

Modbury will now be able to collaborate more closely with our network of hospitals across Adelaide to provide the best possible care and treatment for South Australians. Staff at Modbury will be reassured that the state government aims to make the transition process as smooth as possible. Today there will be two briefings for all Modbury staff members, and today we launch a staff hotline to answer questions from employees about their transition. Many South Australians will remember that, when the Liberals put the hospital in private hands, staff lost their public sector entitlements. That will not happen again. I want to reinforce that Modbury staff are very important to us. We value their work and their contribution, and we want them to come across to the public system.

Employees who transfer will be covered by the relevant public sector awards and enterprise agreements and will have secure employment and access to salary sacrifice and generous leave provisions. Annual leave and long service leave entitlements can be transferred to CNAHS, the central northern management association, or paid out by Healthscope as part of the agreement. The state government will also honour the sick leave entitlements of those employees who transfer to the public system. Quality of care at Modbury will be a major focus for the state government. We have already started improving facilities at the hospital with the installation of a \$1.7 million high-tech computer patient record system.

The SPEAKER: The cameraman in the gallery is only allowed to film members on their feet.

NAIRNE PRIMARY SCHOOL CROSSING

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): Will the Minister for Transport explain why the government has expended funds on the redlight speed camera installed at the freeway interchange on Adelaide Road at Mount Barker when funding is urgently needed for works at the Nairne Primary School crossing to protect the children who attend that school from unsafe conditions at the school crossing and the adjacent intersection? The minister is well aware of this ongoing matter as I have raised it numerous times in this place and through letters to the officers of the various ministers for transport.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I am happy to take this on board for the Minister for Road Safety, who is of course a minister in the Legislative Council. I have to say that I am somewhat confused by this. We saw in the national

newspapers today 'Libs to come out swinging with new leadership team'. I guess the question is: where is the beef? There has been this big build-up of all these issues. There is to be a televised debate—

Mr PISONI: On a point of order, the Premier has answered the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! I was conferring with the Opposition Whip. I have not heard what the Premier has said.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am confused. 'Bring it on', says Hamilton-Smith in *The Advertiser*; 'Libs to come out swinging', says *The Australian*. We have all the television cameras. We are talking about a big televised debate.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: We are prepared to make time available.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will take his seat.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the Premier has made his point.

ANZAC SPIRIT

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta): My question is directed to the Premier. What is the government doing to keep the Anzac spirit alive among younger people in our South Australian schools?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I thank the honourable member for her question. Of course, tomorrow is Anzac Day, the most sacred and solemn day in our calendar. I must say that, having attended, I think, every dawn service for more than two decades, one great thing has been to see increasing numbers over those years—indeed, to see increasing numbers of young people coming along, including schoolchildren wanting to learn about their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents and about their heritage and their history. In 1934, Turkey's first president, Ataturk, paid tribute to the fallen soldiers on the Gallipoli Peninsula. He said:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives, you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace.

He went on to say:

There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side. Here in this country of ours. . . you, the mothers who sent their sons from far-away countries, wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

On Anzac Day every year we, too, pay tribute to those who fell at Gallipoli 92 years ago. Of the 50 000 Australians who landed on the beaches, 8 709 were killed and 18 235 were wounded. On Anzac Day we remember them and all those who have sacrificed so much during war—those who fought for our liberty, those who made sacrifices for our way of life. Since the 1990s, as I mentioned, there has been a resurgence of interest in Anzac Day. Indeed, young people now often outnumber marching veterans, while more young people are making the annual pilgrimage to the Gallipoli Peninsula to attend the dawn service. My own son did so two years ago.

Our government is encouraging this recognition amongst young people of the enormous sacrifice so many have made. From the Australian War Memorial in London to a youth vigil ceremony in Adelaide, South Australia's school students are taking a leading role in 2007 Anzac Day commemorations. State schools have been asked to encourage students to learn about the significance of the Anzacs. Its significance is taught in Australian history lessons. Remember years ago

when we all called for the Anzac story to be taught in our schools. Of course, the tremendous news is that that happens right across our state.

South Australian schools have received an Australian and Vietnam War education pack and information on the Australian War Memorial's education program. As a government, we invited senior secondary students to enter a new Anzac School Prize in which winners take part in a study tour to the Western Front battlegrounds in France and Belgium. The five winning students who are currently overseas as our Anzac Day ambassadors are Elise Ganley of St Marks College, Port Pirie; Alannah Williams of Wilderness School; Jemima Nicholas from St Peters Collegiate Girls School; Emily Cock from Birdwood High School; and Ankur Verma from Mount Barker High School.

As honorary Australian ambassadors they are currently accompanying, I am told, Governor Marjorie Jackson-Nelson. Already they have visited many sites of importance, such as the Australian war memorials and grave sites of fallen soldiers in France and Belgium, and taken part in numerous wreath-laying ceremonies. The delegation took part in a service in Dernancourt, France, which was 'adopted' by Adelaide after the First World War, creating a special and historic bond that has endured 90 years. I know that the Minister for Education and, indeed, her staff, visited Dernancourt last year and met with His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales at a special service.

On Anzac Day, the group will attend the dawn service at the Australian War Memorial in London. It will also attend services at Whitehall and Westminster Abbey. Their feedback so far has been inspirational, and they have described their trip as a roller-coaster of emotions and a moving experience. This new Anzac School Prize, increased attendance at Anzac services and school studies reflect the respect our schools and young people have for the sacrifice so many young Australians made during the war.

I make this announcement today. I know that, while the young students will be in London at Westminster Abbey and at the dawn service, Her Excellency the Governor will represent us at Anzac Cove in Gallipoli. Today, the state government announces that the Anzac School Prize will continue into the future. I hope that next year the students who are selected and successful will be able to go to other destinations that tell the heritage and story of Australian sacrifice.

BRANCHED BROOMRAPE

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): My question is to the minister responsible for primary industries and resources.

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEDERICK: Why are primary producers dealing with branched broomrape on their properties being asked to sign a legal contract (better known as the Branched Broomrape Eradication Program Grant Agreement) with the state government? Primary producers attracting branched broomrape eradication program grants of \$5 000 or more from the state government to spray herbicides for the management and control of branched broomrape on their properties are being asked to sign a legal contract with the state government—a contract that has not been consulted upon by the Branched Broomrape Ministerial Advisory Committee or the Branched Broomrape Community Focus Group.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I take this question on behalf of the Minister for Environment and Conservation, who is responsible for managing this program. I would be very happy to get a response for the member in due course.

Mr PEDERICK: My question is again to the minister for primary industries and resources. Why is there no record of which spray herbicide chemicals have been used for the eradication of branched broomrape under the Farm Plan Scheme?

The Hon. K.O. Foley: Is this the best you can do today?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PEDERICK: Under the scheme, chemical herbicides, such as Broadstrike, Ally and Roundup, are used for spraying larger areas. Broadstrike and Ally are group B herbicides, meaning that they require moisture to break down. A record of which chemicals have been used is required, given that in these dry times they may not break down.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Of course, branched broomrape is a very serious threat to agriculture in South Australia. That is why this government has invested an enormous amount of effort and energy into dealing with this issue.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The deputy leader says that it was a matter of the compact with Peter Lewis, the former member for that area, who raised this very vigorously in this house. I believe that both sides of the parliament supported him in that. I know that, when the Hon. Rob Kerin was responsible for this part of policy, he was very concerned about this issue, as was I when I was the minister for environment and conservation. I know that our current minister is concerned about it as well. A whole range of experiments is going on to try to work out the best way of dealing with this weed. I am happy to get a report for the member, in particular in relation to the issue he raises, but I am sure that, if he would like a more detailed briefing, officers from the minister's department would be happy to give it to him.

DESALINATION PLANT, MARION BAY

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder): My question is to the Premier. Why has the government refused to provide financial support to the District Council of Yorke Peninsula in the construction of a seawater desalination project for Marion Bay? The Marion Bay Desalination Project has been costed at \$450 000 and is nearing completion. The South Australian Tourism Commission committed \$15 000 to the project in 2005, while \$45 000 was committed by the commonwealth government community water scheme in late 2006. Despite requests being submitted to the Premier and the obvious innovation being shown by this community, no state government support has been forthcoming.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I am very happy to obtain a report on that matter for the honourable member, and I am very pleased to get a question from him.

BUSES, KING WILLIAM STREET

Mr PISONI (Unley): My question is to the Minister for Transport. Will commuters travelling to the city from my electorate on bus routes 191, 192, 197, 198, 199, 195, 196F, 171, 172, 296 and 297 continue to disembark at the existing King William Street bus stops once the tramline extension has been completed? Following the announcement of the

tramline extension and the subsequent commencement of work, constituents in my electorate who use those bus services have contacted my office wanting to know how their daily commute to the city and back home will be affected. I asked for this simple information in a question on notice seven months ago, but I still have not received an answer.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): I do not recall any question on notice or otherwise about this matter, but I will attempt to find that information for the member. I am really gratified that those on the other side are finally seeing the light about the tram extension, because we know that they have made their new shadow spokesperson the most enthusiastic supporter of the tram extension we have seen in this parliament—a person who is on the record talking about the decision to extend the tram in glowing terms, who once moved a private member's motion calling for the extension. I am very grateful to see this—

Mr PISONI: Sir, I rise on a point of order. My question was specifically about bus routes, it had nothing to do with the tramline—

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the member for Unley's point of order.

RESPITE CARE

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Can the Minister for Disability confirm whether any funding is available for new respite care places through Disability SA in the Barossa region? I have been advised by a constituent with an autistic son that, when she contacted Disability SA in the Barossa to try to get a few hours of respite care each fortnight for her son, she was informed that there was no funding left for new respite care places and there would not be any until 2008. My constituent is very distraught.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Disability): Of course, we budget on an annual basis, and each new year is obviously a new opportunity to provide services. There are enormous demands in this area (as is the case in a whole range of our social services areas), and we will obviously consider those matters sensitively. If the honourable member wants to supply the particular details (and I have some vague recollection that he might already have written to me about this matter), I can then take the matter further.

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Is it true that, as a result of SA Water increasing the price of treated water from the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant by 1 600 per cent, former water customers are now not using the treated water and, therefore, outflows into the gulf have increased significantly and recycling has dropped to a tiny 6 per cent? Figures provided by the minister's office show that users of treated waste water, such as the City of Holdfast Bay, have had an increase in the price of water from 2.5¢ a kilolitre to 45¢ a kilolitre, an increase of 1 600 per cent.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Minister for Water Security): This government is a very strong supporter of treated effluent and water reuse in the state. In fact, South Australia, in the city of Adelaide, is leading the nation in respect of the amount of waste water that is being treated and used for other purposes. We also have a strategy under Waterproofing Adelaide to continue to invest in waste water treatment and stormwater reuse programs to enhance

Adelaide's water supply into the future and to look at ways in which we can relieve pressure off the River Murray for Adelaide water consumption. The specific issue to which the member refers, I will take on notice and bring back a report to the house.

Dr McFETRIDGE: What is the Minister for Water Security doing to increase the use of treated effluent from waste water treatment plants and how does the minister explain the reduced use of treated water from the Glenelg waste water treatment plant? Figures supplied by the minister to the opposition and to the Messenger newspaper show a decline in the use of treated waste water from Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant from 10 per cent in 1998-99 to 6 per cent in 2005-06. Further to this, I have been informed by the City of Holdfast Bay that no more A-class water is available for recycling due to the failure of SA Water to increase the volumes of water that are being treated to A-class levels. Council minutes note that, with the provision of an additional treatment unit, significantly more A-class water would be available to be recycled.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: This government is serious about increasing the use of treated effluent water and ensuring that South Australia continues to lead the nation in regard to the use of recycled water. We are working with the Onkaparinga local government on an extension of a program down there. We are also looking to extend the Virginia pipeline at the moment and a project is underway. As to the specific issues of the Glenelg treatment plant, I will again take that on notice and provide a report to the member and the house. I would also like to mention a number of councils in the regions that are doing a great job on waste water reuse and treatment plants, in particular the Berri-Barmera council in my electorate of Chaffey, which is investing \$14 million and which is supported by the state government, but unfortunately was not supported by the federal government.

This new treatment plant will take effluent water from a number of the towns in that council area and also industrial water from the BLR Hardy business. It will treat it and reuse 100 per cent of their effluent water. This is a fantastic effort from the community council which has been supported by the state government. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful in getting support from the federal government. Also the Loxton Waikerie council is investing in a scheme at Waikerie which will see the effluent ponds finally moved off the flood plain and which have been a particular bone of contention for that council for many years. Supported by the state government, that scheme will provide treated effluent water from the township of Waikerie to the golf course, and once again it will be 100 per cent reuse. Congratulations to those country councils. In relation to the particular issue mentioned by the honourable member, I will bring back a report to the house.

STURT RIVER

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): My question is to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Environment and Conservation. Can the minister inform the house whether any environmental damage was caused by the escape of polluted water flowing into the Sturt River as a result of the recent paint factory fire at St Marys and whether there have been any escaped pollutants of a toxic nature? Constituents have reported some grey-white discolouring of water in the Sturt River approaching the tidal basin at the Barcoo Outlet.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I am not aware of the details that the honourable member has brought to the attention of the house, but I am very pleased to refer the matter to my colleague in the other place and get a report for him.

SOUTH-EAST LAND TITLES

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Will the Minister for Transport undertake to have the Lands Titles Office expedite the issuing of new titles to landholders in the South-East where land has been acquired for the construction of drains under the Upper South-East Salinity and Flood Management Scheme? Five years after the passing of legislation to allow for the acquisition of land for drainage construction, a constituent who signed a contract for the sale of his property has been told that he will have to wait another four or five months before new titles are issued which will then allow the sale to proceed.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): I can assure the member that, in recent months and as a result of high levels of activity, we have moved to decrease the time delays in the Lands Titles Office very significantly. I am not aware of the matters—

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: What's the matter, I can't hear you.

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Christopher Pyne's man is attacking me, sir, I seek your protection. We have made very significant decreases in the delays of issuing titles out of the lands titles office. I am not aware of the specific issues. We will have a look at it. I can assure you that the last time I looked at delays, it was about 15 days for the issuing of a title, which is a significant reduction.

HEAVY VEHICLES

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Is the Minister for Transport aware of the changes that have been made to the Road Traffic Act, particularly affecting farmers in relation to overloading and chain of command rules? The minister is probably aware that a roadshow has been going around the state. Farmers are being told that the standards have changed and that there will be nil tolerance for overloading. The chain of command will mean that the onus will be on the owner of the property, or whoever loads the truck, and not on the driver or the carrier.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): I think I understand the question to be about the new compliance and enforcement regulations, which come into force at the end of this month, from memory. I will check that. This is a matter that has been the subject of lengthy discussion with the industry and, in particular, the South Australian Road Transport Authority. In fact, I think we will probably do some joint media on it.

The operation of a compliance enforcement has deliberately been delayed from the original passage of the bill in order to make all those responsible for moving freight aware of their responsibilities. I can assure you that this was a matter of some very substantial debate in the house, particularly from the member for Stuart, who, as I recall, kept me here for about four hours in the committee stage of that bill. This is a matter that has been very well canvassed in debate.

Points were made then and I understand the points the member is making now. The defence that I would offer is that the industry itself has been supportive of this approach to managing freight. I can say that our view in the Department of Transport is that regulations should be done with not only an eye to safety but also with an eye to facilitating the business of road freight. I will go on the record and say that road freight is extremely important. Not only is it extremely important, but the track record shows that every piece of efficiency made is passed on to the end user. So, we have a genuine regard and a genuine desire to make sure that our regulation is as efficient as it can be, but, at the end of the day, the safety issue requires us to enforce safety regulations on heavy vehicles.

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Given the pressing nature of a motion concerning standing orders, I wish to indicate, on behalf of the opposition—and we appreciate the government’s indication of not asking any further questions—that we have no further questions today.

The SPEAKER: I indicate that, by agreement across the house, I will not propose that the house note grievances.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE’S OFFICE

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Late on Friday, 20 April, my office was alerted to allegations involving a member of staff within the Office of the Public Trustee. When I returned from leave yesterday, I was advised that an investigation into the allegations was carried out by the Government Investigations Unit of the Crown Solicitor’s Office in February 2006. The allegations are about financial transactions relating to the administration of the office, although the investigations extend to another transaction made in 1998. I understand that the allegations were referred to the Anti-corruption Branch of the South Australia Police and that the matter is now with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for adjudication.

I wish to inform the parliament and to assure the public that the probity of the public trustee is of the highest importance to the government. Under statute, liabilities of the Public Trustee are, of course, enforceable against the Crown. I have written to the Auditor-General alerting his office to this matter. Honourable members may also be aware that the Public Trustee, Cath O’Loughlin, is not seeking to be reappointed at the end of her contract in September this year. The Public Trustee, Ms O’Loughlin, is not the subject of the allegations being investigated. Throughout its 150 years of history the Public Trustee has been an institution that the people of South Australia can turn to with confidence. It is for this reason that I have decided to inform the house of the allegations brought to my attention. Until the allegations and subsequent investigations are considered and determined by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and South Australia Police, it is not appropriate for me to comment further.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORT

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

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move a motion for the adoption of sessional orders relating to sitting times and the right of reply.

Motion carried.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I move:

That for the remainder of the session sessional orders be adopted so as to provide for the sitting of the house to commence at 11 a.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday and provide for a citizen’s right of reply as detailed in the draft sessional orders circulated to members.

This is a matter supported by the government, or I would not be moving it. I understand that a number of opposition members wish to oppose this. It is my view to allow them to do that, and I will exercise a right of reply.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): The opposition is totally opposed to No. 1. We do not have a problem with Nos 2, 3 or 4. However, it is clear that this is designed for the convenience of Labor marginal seats, so that they can go out in the evening, and it is designed to make life difficult for the opposition. Get us down here, and a lot of us cannot go back to our electorates, so we are constricted. That is the purpose of it. It is symptomatic of when governments get big majorities. When they have been in power for a few years, they get inward looking, they get sensitive, and they want to put barriers in the way of the opposition. This is the first step in that process.

The house will meet at 11. We have not been told when the committees will meet. When will the parliamentary standing committees meet?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: When are the parties going to meet?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Well, that is the next question. I look forward to the Attorney-General’s support. When are the party meetings? They are a very significant and important part of parliamentary democracy, so that the members of the duly elected political parties can meet and have proper time to give adequate consideration to all the complex issues that are put before them. Part of our system of parliamentary democracy, of which we are celebrating 150 years today, is to have effective, well-informed political parties. That is the safety valve; that is the first filter in the system to ensure that we get appropriately qualified people. Unless you can have those meetings and you have plenty of time, in the case of rural members, it will mean that you will drag them to Adelaide on Monday afternoons. That is what it means.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: And when can a man get to his club?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I will allow the honourable member to deal with his club. When can someone—

Mr Goldsworthy: Nobody would accept you in their club, Atko.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I was in the Adelaide Club the Monday before last.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That was a considered response from my colleague, and perhaps it had some merit. I would not like to be offensive because I am a very simple, quiet soul. But I say to the minister that this has been thrust upon us. It came to the Standing Orders Committee. Some of these members obviously like to go to bed early. They knew the rules when they came in here, but they want to change it.

They were keen to come in but they knew the rules. They were quite happy to come in here. But what are you going to do? You have an opposition and they are a nuisance. Bureaucrats do not like backbenchers or oppositions asking questions and, of course—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: And they don't like late night sittings.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is part of the parliamentary system around the world. This will be imposed upon us. One unreasonable act always generates another, and I hope the minister has his running shoes on so that he can race up and down those stairs when the bells are rung. If you want to play at this, we would have compromised to come here at 1 o'clock—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Gunny, you never compromise. You have never compromised in your life. You'd get what you want.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Me? I am a very compromising character. I am a very reasonable person. If I were not, I would not have been sent back here 12 times. I must have done something right, even though it might have been to annoy the opposition. I have been sent here. Some of your colleagues who are the architects of this want to enjoy it because they will not come back next time. They will not be here next time. We do not really have a problem with it. People are entitled to have a right of reply if they are badly attacked and maligned in this place in relation to moving the adjournment and having the adjournment debate extension beyond 6 p.m., okay, but the actual sitting at 11 a.m. is a problem. I predict that this will be another Monday sitting example. Someone has had a rush of blood to the head. As a parliament, we were going to sit more often—we would sit on Mondays.

Mr Goldsworthy: Karlene didn't like that.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No, not only that, the ministers did not like it. It interfered with their ability to run their departments and have cabinet meetings. Suddenly, that just got pushed aside and off the agenda. Now we have come up with a great idea that we will start at 11 o'clock because the Labor marginals want to go out in the evenings to functions in their electorate, and it will make it difficult for the opposition. That is the core of the matter.

Mrs Geraghty: No, it's not.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, it is; it is designed to make life difficult for the opposition, to contain and control us. Okay, if you want it that way, that is the way you are going to get it. There are certain processes, if you are going to take those rights away from us, that we can use in this place to be difficult and obstructive and to show clearly that we have a point to make.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Don't hold back.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I don't intend to. Don't invite me to be more difficult because, if you want to stay here for a fair while, that sort of comment shows the arrogance which the opposition is now having forced upon us. It is this attitude that the government knows best and that it will impose its will upon us whether we like it or not. The government is not prepared to compromise. It is not prepared to take into consideration the difficulties that we have reasonably put forward. We did not reject these out of hand; we accepted the majority of them, and we put forward a fair and reasonable compromise. But that was not acceptable because there has been a strategy designed quite clearly. We know that the member for Napier does not like parliamentary democracy

and he has been one of the architects of this. He does not like the role of the opposition.

This is a way that the member for Napier can leave the leafy suburbs and go right out to Salisbury. It gives him more time in the evening, but it certainly will reflect upon the effectiveness of parliamentary committees and, in a modern democracy, parliamentary committees play an important role in ensuring that public servants are properly questioned; that projects put to the parliament are thought out, responsible and financially viable; and other investigations. It has been traditional that they meet on Wednesday mornings, so when are they going to meet now? The minister has not told us.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: There is a lot of morning before 11.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I do not think that the minister in charge of this debate would be noted for early rising! I would say that, if someone wants to ring him at quarter to six in the morning, I reckon he would be pretty grumpy.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: You've got that one wrong, Gunny: I've always been an early riser.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I tell you, the minister will be fit by the time he is finished with this. He might not be an early riser but he will be trim by the time he goes up those stairs a dozen times in a couple of hours. He will need to wear his sneakers: he will need to get a good pair of Reeboks, otherwise he will slip, because we are going to test him out. The minister has not told us when the committees are going to sit or when he expects the party meetings to take place, because the tradition of this place has been that party meetings have always been on Tuesday mornings, normally at 9 or 9.30, and they often take a long time, particularly when there is a lot of legislation to be debated and properly discussed.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Or a ballot.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: The honourable member would not know anything about fairly conducted ballots. He is a numbers man. I do not know what sort of ballots they have in the shop assistants union, but I would not think they were very democratic ones. Here we have these two mornings on which they want to drag us here. Does that mean that every minister will be here? Will you want pairs? You want to have a minister here?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: No, it is your job to answer the question. You happen to be the government at this time. It is your job to inform the house. The government has not properly informed the house. It has not properly informed the Standing Orders Committee. It has come here with a heavy-handed approach and dumped this on the opposition. I repeat: it is purely designed to make life as difficult as it possibly can, to obstruct and curtail the opposition so that the government can proceed with its own ill-gotten views on how this place should be run. It has always been a tradition that there should be a bit of consensus when changing these things. As I pointed out, we did not reject it out of hand. We offered fair, just and reasonable compromise but, in an attitude typical of when a government is starting to lose its perspective on life, it just chopped the opposition off.

If the government wants that, that is fine, and the process that will follow will be one of no cooperation. If you do not want cooperation, you will pay the price. Therefore, we will oppose this particular process all the way as we consider it to be an unjust and unfair imposition upon the ability of the opposition to properly discharge its functions and duty in a democracy. On a day when we are celebrating 150 years of

this house, the government decides to put the sledgehammer on the opposition in such an arrogant and arbitrary way. Not only is it improper, but it is wrong and the government cannot make it right. As much as the spin doctors will try to dress it up as being an improvement, as being a modernisation or being something like a family-friendly parliament, this is just the opposite.

Certainly, it is not family friendly to those of us who happen to live a reasonable distance from Adelaide, but the government has no regard for those people. It will thump those people. Okay, we will have to take the action that is available to us, that is, to be as difficult as we possibly can until the government comes to its senses and accepts some—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: How do you explain Queensland?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Queensland has got a chequered history of less than honourable conduct by members of parliament.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You did not say that when Bjelke-Petersen was in.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It has a history of chequered, unconscionable, corrupt and disgraceful conduct.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: What, because the parliament starts at 9.30?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Attorney-General.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: For the honourable Attorney-General to equate the process in Queensland with the history of this parliament is not only unfortunate but certainly reflects upon him, because he has little understanding of what is fair, reasonable and proper. They change the law overnight in Queensland. They suspend standing orders and push bills through no matter what anyone thinks. Perhaps that is the next proposal the government wants to implement.

Mr Goldsworthy: The police commissioner went to gaol.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is right. Ministers went to gaol. You have had Dr Death and God knows what!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: It was your mate. It was your august, esteemed and honourable Attorney-General who raised Queensland. You distracted me, and I am not easily distracted. It takes a lot to get me on my feet. I have to think about it all day, you know.

An honourable member: You worry about it.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Yes, I do. I get quite perplexed about the whole process. I have to study these documents at great length to work myself up to a position where I am going to say a few well chosen words in support of parliamentary democracy and a fair go for the opposition. We want a fair go. We do not want anything unreasonable. We have not rejected—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: We remember when you were speaker.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Look, if the honourable member wants to go into that, I have some interesting documents, and one day I might read about one or two members. If he wants to go down that track, I am very happy to do it. If he wants to carry on like that, I am quite happy to accommodate him. The first thing I—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I will just hold back but, if there is any more of that, on Tuesday I will get the grievance debate and I will read some stuff out and embarrass a few of

the honourable member's people. Come in here and make any of those reflections and the honourable member will get it right back. Some of his colleagues were the worst behaved. The honourable member's whip used to come up and say, 'Pitch them out' because of the way they carried on. That is what used to happen. So, the Attorney wants to get his facts straight. That attitude which he has now displayed is typical of what this government is doing to the opposition. It is arrogant, insincere and undemocratic. The opposition opposes this process.

Mr PISONI (Unley): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

The SPEAKER: I am sorry; the call has passed to the other side. If the honourable member wants to do that he will have to do that after a member from the government benches has spoken. The member for Torrens.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): I will speak briefly, but I am pleased to support the motion. I say to the member for Stuart that the changes are not designed to disadvantage anyone—certainly not any country members. I might say that similar sitting times work in other parliaments. It is about time that we had sensible business-like sitting hours. Over the years I think the member for Stuart would have attended many of the meetings I attended where we talked about changes to standing orders, and we made very little progress. In fact, I think we made hardly any progress at all. Nothing actually came out of many of those meetings we went to. This parliament simply stayed locked in a time warp. Our sitting hours are not relevant to today's times. They do not take into account the changing needs of members in this place. Members today are very different from those of years ago. People who work in this place have young families; in fact, women have given birth whilst serving as a member of parliament. We need to take into consideration—

The Hon. S.W. Key: Older dependants.

Mrs GERAGHTY: Yes, some have older dependants, and we need to take into consideration the needs of those people. I understand the frustration of the member opposite, but we need to become more modern. We must move with the times and, given the range of options that has been discussed over the years, I think that these changes to the sitting times are a really small step forward. I know that we will need to adapt our parliamentary and electorate work patterns, and that will take a little bit of effort and time, but none of the problems that are being presented is insurmountable.

This is a great opportunity, and I really think that it is time that we moved forward. In my opinion, we have a lot more to do on this issue, but I think that it is time we moved on and considered the needs of members. When you look around the chamber today, we are very different types of people from those of years ago. I support the motion. I think that it can only benefit this parliament.

Mr PISONI (Unley): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

The house divided on the motion:

AYES (12)

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Chapman, V. A. | Evans, I. F. |
| Goldsworthy, M. R. | Griffiths, S. P. |
| Gunn, G. M. | Hamilton-Smith, M. L. J. |
| Kerin, R. G. | McFetridge, D. |
| Pederick, A. S. | Penfold, E. M. |

AYES (cont.)

Pisoni, D. G. (teller) Venning, I. H.

NOES (26)

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Atkinson, M. J. | Bedford, F. E. |
| Bignell, L. W. K. | Caica, P. |
| Ciccarello, V. | Conlon, P. F. (teller) |
| Foley, K. O. | Fox, C. C. |
| Geraghty, R. K. | Hanna, K. |
| Hill, J. D. | Kenyon, T. R. |
| Key, S. W. | Koutsantonis, T. |
| Lomax-Smith, J. D. | Maywald, K. A. |
| O'Brien, M. F. | Piccolo, T. |
| Rankine, J. M. | Rann, M. D. |
| Rau, J. R. | Simmons, L. A. |
| Stevens, L. | Thompson, M. G. |
| Weatherill, J. W. | White, P. L. |

PAIR(S)

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Williams, M. R. | McEwen, R. J. |
| Pengilly, M. | Breuer, L. R. |
| Redmond, I. M. | Portolesi, G. |

Majority of 14 for the noes.

Motion thus negated.

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

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

Motion carried.

Mr PISONI (Unley): I also expressed a dissenting view on changing the sitting hours, because I was convinced by the argument put forward in our party room by the country members. Having spent a good part of a day driving to Port Augusta and back for a meeting a few months ago, I realised just how much our country members travel. I am sure that that is reflected in the—

Mr Griffiths: It's 60 000 kilometres a year.

Mr PISONI: The member for Goyder informs me that it is 60 000 kilometres a year. We have a Magna which we purchased in 1998 which still has only 45 000 kilometres on the clock. I could not imagine, until I experienced it, the distances travelled by our country members. The argument put forward by those who moved for the changes to the standing orders and an 11 a.m. start on Tuesdays and Wednesdays was to make the parliament more family friendly. It is unfortunate that those members do not understand that country members have families as well. Many of them, particularly members on the back bench, will not be able to leave in the morning. They will need to leave the night before, which means one night fewer that they will spend at home with their families. It will also make it more difficult for them to attend to their constituent duties.

I asked questions in the committee about what consideration was given for committee meetings and what discussions were had with the Legislative Council. The response came back time and again that that is none of the concern of the House of Assembly standing orders committee. I am not convinced that this has been thoroughly researched or thought through. We were not given enough time to consider this for the benefit of the parliament in the longer term. This is a significant change. We felt that this change could be done in two stages, that we could look at starting perhaps an hour earlier on a Tuesday—for example, at 1 o'clock—and then starting the Wednesday at 11 a.m. We were prepared to work with that situation. That compromise was reached as a result

of some quite lengthy debate in the party room. Our country members felt that that was a significant compromise and a significant shift in the way in which the parliament operates.

We all knew before we came into this place what we were getting into in the first instance, and it is a bit like the superannuation contribution. There are those members—and I believe that the Premier is one of them—who have criticised others who have made noises about changes to the superannuation contribution for new members. I think that the very first contribution from the member for Newland was a push to increase superannuation for new members. I say to members who want change that they will get their way because the government has the numbers. We did offer a compromise position, and we were keen to compromise. However, that is obviously not the case.

The government is railroading this through—like it does much of the legislation in this house—and not allowing a full and thorough debate so that we can discuss committee meetings, the other workings of the parliament and working in conjunction with the Legislative Council. Unfortunately, that is not to be the case.

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Taylor): In offering a few words in this debate, I do declare an interest as probably the only member of this house who will derive a direct financial benefit from changed sitting times through a reduction in my weekly babysitting fees. However, I take issue with the argument offered by both members on the other side, particularly the member for Stuart, that this move is aimed at disadvantaging the opposition. The member for Stuart even suggested that it might be that we would like to go to bed earlier. The other argument was that we all knew when we entered this place that these would be the sitting hours. Hence the point, if we want diversity of members in this place—and we all say that we do—we must consider that the sitting hours have been enormously unfamily friendly.

They have been enormously unfamily friendly to anyone with a young family or older dependents and particularly to single parents—and I speak as one of those. Yes, we all knew what we were getting into when we entered this place, but the people of South Australia know how unfriendly a job as a parliamentarian would be for many of them, so they do not put up their hand. How much better would our parliament be if some of those people who do not consider this job environment friendly enough for them put up their hand because we worked more like most businesses around the world and nation, that is, during standard business hours, rather than the extraordinarily silly hours that we have had over 150 years? It is time to change.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): I have been here for some time and, while I welcome the debate and always keep an open mind in relation to the sitting times of the house, I believe the government has got this wrong. As a country member, if I am in Adelaide, I may as well be here in the parliament, because if we finish at 6 o'clock there is still no family life for me at night because my family is two hours away—or my wife is—so I am quite happy to be here in the evenings. But I believe there is room for compromise because—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: You're not a country member; you live an hour and a half away. People travel further than that in metropolitan Sydney.

Mr VENNING: It is too far to drive. I question the proposal to sit on Tuesday at 11 o'clock. I do not know how

the government is going to get through its caucus meeting by 11 o'clock.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: It's harder for us than for you, but we'll manage.

Mr VENNING: And likewise for us. I thought a commonsense approach would have been that we start at 1 o'clock on Tuesday. I think we could discuss and work through 11 o'clock on Wednesday even though we have committees in the morning. As a former member of the Public Works Committee doing a lot of inspections, I do not know how members will conduct an inspection and be back here before 10.45. In fact, the committee will not be able to do that; it will do all this during non-sitting weeks, which makes it very difficult.

I question why the parliament does not restructure itself to sit through its mealtimes. We have never gone there. It could make a rule so that we do not have divisions during mealtimes. We could do committee work or committee reports during mealtimes. All these things could be discussed, and I am sure there would be common support across the house. I oppose these hours, particularly starting at 11 o'clock and going home at 6, because I am here and I may as well be here at work. I oppose sitting after 10 o'clock, and I feel for members here who have young families and the extra costs associated with that.

I believe we could greatly streamline the processes here. Some things that happen here are such a waste of time, particularly during question time when the government asks its own questions. We could cut question time down by half an hour. As long as the opposition was guaranteed its 10 questions, we could save 30 minutes there and then. We could do a lot to save time. The length of speaking time in this place should be restricted. Lead speakers should not go past one hour. There is so much we can do, but to whack on an 11 o'clock start is not practical, and I do not think any member would say it is practical for Tuesday, anyway.

We could come to a compromise, and I am sure the opposition will talk to the government on this matter. I cannot see why one of those bargaining chips is not sitting through mealtimes, particularly the evening meal, and, indeed, to sit through lunch on Thursday. I cannot see any problem with that at all, particularly if dealing with committee reports. It mainly only involves those members of the committee putting the report on the record. So, with those few remarks, I oppose the motion and I encourage the government, in the spirit of compromise, to come back with a more workable solution, particularly for the country members.

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): It is wholly appropriate on the day that we celebrate 150 years of representative government that this house ties up one of the last loose ends associated with the great democratic reforms that delivered some semblance of democratic government to South Australia in 1857. As members may be aware, in 1838, some 19 years before self-government in South Australia, the London Working Men's Association, the so-called Chartists, drew up a six-point chart of demands for democratic reform. One significant item from the charter of 1838, and the loose end we will hopefully tie up today, relates to the payment of parliamentarians. This particular reform was achieved in South Australia relatively early, in 1887, but only after three years of wrangling with the conservative forces in the Legislative Council.

Payment of parliamentarians had a clear objective of opening up this institution to wage and salary earners. But,

rather than changing the sitting hours in 1887 to reflect this new reality, they remained unchanged to allow members with business or professional interests to continue to do what they had always done: run their business affairs in the morning. Mr John Cummings, in speaking to a bill to introduce payment of parliamentarians in Victoria, said the following in the Victorian Legislative Council on 21 December 1870:

How often it has been said by the most conservative members that they cannot afford to give more than three days a week for the business of legislation or to meet at an earlier hour because they have livelihoods to earn. If even a moderate sum were offered, members could devote more of their attention to the legislative duties instead of making it [as they now do] a mere pastime for the employment of their leisure hours.

As recently as 1930, the House of Commons examined the issues of sitting hours, but again the forces of conservatism triumphed when they claimed that morning sittings of the house would dissuade professional men from embarking on parliamentary careers.

Let us be perfectly clear about this. The sitting hours that we currently labour under are designed for the world before 1887, before parliamentarians were paid, when the benches of this chamber were occupied by the self-employed who attended to their business affairs in the morning and the affairs of state in the afternoon and evening. Our sitting hours are now seriously at odds with the conventions and expectations of the world around us. The 1999 South Australian Joint Committee on Women in Parliament reported that work patterns in this chamber would make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a person who has day-to-day responsibility for running a family to combine this with the job of being an elected member.

Our current sitting hours were considered to be the major obstacle to increasing female representation in this parliament. In a grievance I gave on the issue of sitting hours over four years ago after a 2 a.m. sitting, I observed that evening sittings were not only corrosive of family life for parliamentarians and staff alike, but they also had a debilitating impact on our health. They also produced poor legislative outcomes by bringing before us the most demanding stages of legislation when members are at their lowest physical ebb. I made the following point at the time:

This practice defies logic and diminishes the public standing of this house and the parliament. Here is a body, a house of this parliament given the task by the people of this state to govern in its best interest, itself engaged in a practice of self-management that would not be tolerated by the wider community.

We are the last parliament in Australia to adopt morning sittings, to tie that one remaining loose end of the Chartist reforms. Again, like all the other reforms, we face the diehard opposition of the conservatives. Their position is to meet us halfway, reform on Wednesdays but not on Tuesdays. Their ostensible objection to full reform is cost and convenience rather than naked and intractable conservatism. They know that they have lost the argument on the grounds of principle and are vainly fighting a rearguard action against change that has been in the wind since 1887.

As a member of the Standing Orders Committee and a chief proponent of the proposed changes to sitting hours, I have asked the Acting Clerk of the house to look at the financial impact of these changes. The opposition members of the committee believe that full reform, that is, morning starts on Tuesday and Wednesday, will necessitate country members staying in Adelaide on Monday nights. As a result, the opposition claimed in the report that this would lift the cost of operating the parliament. The costing supplied by the

Acting Clerk—and these are freely available to all members—in fact showed the reverse: a significant reduction in operating cost as a result of earlier sittings. According to figures supplied by the Acting Clerk, overtime paid over the past two financial years to parliamentary staff serving this chamber averaged out at around \$53 000 a year. In addition, meal allowances paid to staff and taxi allowances for members and staff averaged out at \$16 000 per year. So, on average, late night sittings over the past two years have cost the taxpayers of South Australia \$69 000 a year, and this does not include overtime for drivers.

In contrast, if every country member were to claim an additional night's accommodation on every sitting week, this would only amount to an increased cost of \$32 538, and that is the new allowance. It may well be that a large number of country members are already staying overnight in Adelaide—and I was unable to ascertain that due to privilege—so this cost may be significantly less than the \$32 000 figure. On the figures supplied by the Acting Clerk, the savings to taxpayers could be as high as \$36 500 a year if the house abides by the spirit of the proposed earlier sitting hours. The Acting Clerk has indicated that it may be necessary to employ an additional attendant to help set up the chamber in the shorter available time each morning of sitting days. Even if this were to occur, and I have doubts that this will be the case, it will still produce a positive revenue return for the taxpayers of South Australia.

As for the issue of reduced time in electorate offices for country members, I have a certain amount of sympathy for their situation. I grew up in Whyalla. I worked for Elders. I have relatives who are known to at least three or four members of the opposition who farm in the Mid-North and Kangaroo Island. I am quite sympathetic to their concerns. But in relation to the operation of their electoral offices, I do not really believe this is an insurmountable issue. My belief is if cabinet and ministers are prepared to make not inconsequential adjustments to allow this reform, then it is not too much to ask country members to also adjust their work practices. As I said from the outset, the proposed changes to sitting hours contained in the report tie up one of the last loose ends from the Chartist agenda of 1838. The changes give practical effect to the reform of 1887, which introduced payment for parliamentarians in South Australia. The proposed changes to sitting hours also go far beyond the aspirations of the Chartists in recognising the equally valid aspirations of the suffragettes. The recommendations are a clear and unequivocal response to the major recommendation of the report of the 1999 South Australian Joint Committee on Women in Parliament.

In conclusion, on the day on which we celebrate the 150th anniversary of responsible government in South Australia, I urge the house to support the two very practical measures contained within the report, namely earlier sitting times and the right of reply.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell): I rise to speak in support of the changes proposed to sessional orders. These changes will change the way we do business in the House of Assembly for the coming session of parliament. There are four different aspects to it, but the main two areas of reform are, first, in relation to the hours that we sit and, second, in relation to a right of reply for aggrieved citizens who have been named in parliament adversely. Dealing with the second point first, I approve of citizens being granted a conditional right of reply in the House of Assembly if they are named in here by a

member of parliament. It is only fair to give people a right of reply. There is some debate about how exactly that mechanism should be put in place. I favour the Speaker making a decision exclusively about whether or not to allow someone right of reply, after all, we have to allow for the fact that there could be vexatious claims in relation to this.

However, the government has opted for a system whereby the Standing Orders Committee will decide whether or not a person should have that right of reply that they claim. I am not objecting to that detail. Under the circumstances, it is an overall improvement. In relation to the hours of sitting, I note that we are being so radical as to have the house meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 11 a.m. instead of 2 p.m. It is about as radical as this government is going to get, I feel, in any area of reform.

We take reform where we can get it, and I will certainly be supportive of that change. In fact, it is something that I have been advocating for years. I turned my mind to the way we do business when I sat on a select committee looking at the standing orders of parliament in 2001. That was a very interesting committee. Former Premier Rob Kerin, the current Minister for Water Security, Karlene Maywald and I and a couple of others were on that committee, and we really thought carefully about how we could improve the business of the house in almost every facet of our business. When it came to hours, it was one of the most difficult nuts to crack, because almost every member has a different point of view about the optimum hours for business.

I was then very firmly an advocate for hours of business that correlate to the usual hours of business out there in private enterprise and the rest of the world, in fact, in our society. It seems to me that if we had more like 9 to 5 hours then the other things that we have to do outside of the sittings of the house, such as committee work and party meetings (for those who have parties to worry about), could be done in the evening. I still think that is the case. I think it would actually be better for witnesses and members of parliament if committees were held after 7.30 p.m., but I know that is probably not a majority view. However, the arrangement proposed by the government, whereby the house will meet at 11 on Tuesday and Wednesday, will necessitate some rearrangement of current practices, whether it is committees or party meetings.

The point is that we will be seen as having something more like normal working hours, and it means that, in many cases, we will be leaving this place in time either to go home for dinner or to go to evening community functions. And that is not a bad thing. If I were to be cynical about it, I would suggest that one of the motivations behind the change is that there is actually less legislation coming from this government than from previous parliaments, therefore we do not need to sit in the evenings as much. It makes more sense to get home at dinner time by adding a few hours to the morning sittings of parliament. It is a better way to do business. I must say that, even when I came into the parliament in 1997, it was reasonably common to sit between 10 p.m. and midnight, at least on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Those days are already long gone.

This is almost formalising something that we are doing already. The sad thing about it is that the reform is so modest. I would invite all members to look again to the recommendations of the select committee that looked at standing orders and the privileges of the parliament, which reported in 2001. There is a lot more that we could do in terms of what we call

things, the times we do them and some innovations to allow more flexible debate.

Mr KENYON (Newland): Some months ago, during the course of a debate, the member for Stuart was threatening to keep us here till all hours, and I rather unwisely interjected, saying that I had a wife and children to get home to. The member for Stuart, being smarter and quicker than I am, said 'Some of us have seen our children grow up while we have been in here.' The reason I am supporting this motion is that I do not want to be in that position. I do not want my children to grow up while I am in here, so this change to sitting hours has my support.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): The proposal to alter sittings times has supposedly been put forward as an indication of parliament being more family friendly, with earlier starts ostensibly to enable the day's sittings to finish earlier. The question is: more family friendly for whom? Certainly not country members. It would take us away from our families and electorates for longer periods. That, however, has not been taken into account, because the issue of family friendly is a smoke screen. The reduction in night sittings will just enable metropolitan members, who comprise the majority of members in the state Labor coalition government, to attend more functions and to hold more meetings in the evening.

They already see their families most evenings and mornings of sitting days. It is no coincidence that Labor is pushing this change in the lead-up to the federal election later this year. On the other hand, Liberal members—the majority of whom represent country electorates and who, in most cases, must stay overnight on sitting days—will be kept away from their electorates, functions and meetings and their families, giving the lie to the purported notion that the change is for family reasons. The proposed change will have a great negative effect on country members of parliament and the way in which those members can service their often large, diverse electorates and also spend time with their families.

In my case, the changes will mean coming by plane to Adelaide on Monday afternoons, resulting in a cost to taxpayers for an extra night's overnight accommodation—one fewer night and morning spent with family members and one fewer opportunity to get to constituent meetings in the electorate. It effectively cuts the time the member spends in the electorate working on electorate and constituent issues so that they can be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities and the government. But Labor is not particularly concerned with those who live in rural and regional South Australia and the remote areas of our state as long as they keep working hard, paying their fees, charges, taxes and exporting the goods that provide much of the wealth of the state and do not make too much noise.

The changes also limit the time for committees, where members of parliament get briefings and information on bills which are coming before them and on which they will have to vote. These bills are often conceived by city people who may not even be aware of the different effects and difficulties they might cause in regional areas. One of the funniest examples that I remember was the occasion when I clarified the meaning of the word 'truck' where it appeared in a draft bill, which stated that trucks could not stand in streets any longer than 10 minutes. At the time it was harvest and hundreds of trucks of all shapes and sizes were lined up in towns across the state. It transpired that these were not at all what the drafter meant to attack. He or she had in mind what

we in the country would call a delivery van or a delivery truck, not huge B-doubles and triples that frequent the streets in what I consider to be the real world. Once the implications were pointed out, the clause fortunately disappeared to be seen no more.

It is to Labor's advantage to limit scrutiny on its proposals so that, hopefully, it can push through decisions that may be disadvantageous to the state and to its people but invaluable to the unions, particularly, of which they are all members (often of more than one) but of which I understand about only 15 per cent of the general population belong. This is a reason for these changes—a reason that Labor hopes people will not realise before it is too late and we, as opposition members, probably will not be able to stop.

Even a compromise to start at 1 p.m., which would not have been perfect but which would have helped country members, was totally ignored by this arrogant power-hungry party. It makes the Legislative Council of even greater importance in ensuring that those who oppose Labor can be heard. Shortening the breaks for mealtimes may at first sound reasonable. However, these breaks are opportunities for country members to meet with businesses, constituents and other people on matters relevant to their electorates or to attend briefings—time they may otherwise have to spend away from their families and electorates on non-sitting days.

Again, the changes impact negatively on members representing country electorates whose constituents are already disadvantaged in the political process because of the distances they must travel and the diversity of issues their members must cover. I give the example from my own experience. Recently, I flew to Adelaide on a Tuesday evening so that I could fly to the Beverley uranium mine to view the in situ leaching and environment and infrastructure issues that will have to be considered when mining begins in the Gawler Craton mineralisation that covers Eyre Peninsula. I then attended the Pay Dirt Uranium Conference on Thursday and Friday, leaving the conference early to catch a plane to Port Lincoln. My husband met me at the airport and took me straight up to Streaky Bay where I attended an evening meeting of local people to listen to their concerns and speak about the Eyre Peninsula's water issues. After staying overnight in Streaky Bay on Friday, we drove on to Ceduna the next day and were picked up by a local constituent. We then travelled to the Scotdesco Aboriginal community located the other side of Penong to discuss their water and numerous other issues.

Returning to Ceduna late on Saturday, we stayed overnight in Ceduna where I met with my personal assistant (who lives in Ceduna) to discuss the many more issues that are being faced by the people of the district. I returned home Sunday afternoon—a drive of over four hours—to do the washing, check the emails and collect the mail and the local papers to read in the evening.

Monday in my Port Lincoln office was taken up with writing an email to Scotdesco to confirm the visit and the undertakings made and to supply some of the information requested; getting out a press release on the uranium conference; doing some media; and preparing documentation for the next three days in parliament. By 7 a.m. on Tuesday morning, I had packed and left for the airport for an 8 a.m. flight while taking a call requesting an ABC interview, which I prepared on the plane and which was held in the car in front of Parliament House. I then attended a party meeting and, before parliament started for the day, I worked on one of my speeches for the week.

For some reason, after 1 000 kilometres of driving (which I shared with my long-suffering husband), numerous meetings covering dozens of issues and three aeroplane flights, I was just a little tired on Tuesday and felt somewhat irritated by the Attorney-General's ignorant sarcasm about the reading of my speech. I assure him and others that it was a much better 20-minute supply speech than I would have been able to give otherwise. In the last two weeks alone, I have travelled around 3 000 kilometres by road to visit and talk with constituents about power, water, roads and other issues affecting country people, arriving home late on Saturday. I understand that the member for Stuart travels about 100 000 kilometres per year.

When preparing this speech, I worked into the night to ensure that it was as good and as factual as I could make it, as I believe that it is my duty to my constituents to do so. While the Attorney travels around his tiny electorate on his bicycle to discuss issues with his constituents, every week my speeches are accessed by hundreds of people through my website. In the short month of February this year, I had a record number of over 29 950 hits on the website; in March, it was over 30 000. I have averaged over 25 000 hits every month for some years, so some people must think that I have something worthwhile to say—presumably, many of them live in the 55 000 square kilometres of my electorate. No single radio, television or newspaper covers this region so, unlike the Attorney-General and other members opposite, I cannot go on talkback and be heard as easily as they can.

In his supply speech (which waffled and had a serious lack of substance, concentrating as it did on deriding the Liberal Party and country people), the member for Torrens suggested that my replacement will be 'someone over 60, a farmer, and someone who has no leadership aspirations at all.' I suggest that Labor is trying to ensure that this is the case by making parliament so inhospitable that many young, well-educated and ambitious young people would not consider standing, particularly anyone with a young family. I would not have done so had both my children not been at university in Adelaide and if my husband and I had not been successful in business. Indeed, it was because of our success that I have been able to afford to pay two additional staff to assist me, and my husband can take time off to help to drive thousands of kilometres every year. I also use my travel allowances to fly staff over to help me during sitting weeks. I have to keep work flowing through my offices in Port Lincoln and Ceduna, so I find it almost impossible to catch up when I fly home.

I have said enough on that issue, but I ask that the Labor government reconsider its decision and leave the sitting times as they are, because they are about as fair as they can be to all members of parliament, particularly those who cannot get to their home at night, sleep in their own bed and de-stress with their own family for days on end. Labor's contempt for rural and regional South Australia, along with all the people who live in the isolated areas of our state, is highlighted by the report and its recommendations.

One vote, one value is not a reality for us, and the current proposals would make it even worse. This is not democracy for country people. The government is using its position to ride roughshod over those whom it considers opponents and those who live outside the city limits. It is giving preference to select groups and handicapping others by using its authority to manipulate parliament. The government, which comprises mainly city-based members, is attempting to change procedures for its own party and political benefit. The holding of the select committee was no more than window-

dressing for consumption by a public that Labor holds in increasing contempt.

It is sobering to realise that this is the way that a Labor government would operate were its desire to abolish the Legislative Council ever to come to pass. By putting a few non-Labor people on committees but keeping Labor representation to a majority, the government would be able to ignore any and all opposition to whatever proposals or actions it wanted to take.

This proposal is yet another step in destroying the democracy in which we now live, and shows considerable disrespect for country people. That is a concern which is not just mine alone but one which was expressed recently by a Zimbabwean immigrant friend, who commented on their concern about this government's disrespect, particularly for the judiciary, and likening it to what has happened in Zimbabwe.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): I share the sentiments generally expressed on this side that this move will be anti-regional representation and will be favourable to city members, which, in the current parliament, will certainly favour the government. I just want to make some observations, because I do not think that the proposal the government is putting to us is the only way in which the parliament can be made family friendly. In fact, we do not have to change the hours or the procedures for the parliament to be family friendly.

I entered the parliament at the age of 34. I had four children under the age of eight. I was lucky in that my wife and I made a decision that she would not engage in paid employment so that I could undertake this employment. I accept the fact that some people do not have that luxury, but in my case we did. I entered this place knowing the hours of work. I make the following points to the parliament. First, we are talking about 40 days a year, because the parliament only sits about 60 days a year, a third of which are Thursdays, and the parliament never sits late on Thursdays. The tradition has been to allow the country members to go home, especially those who need to catch flights. I mention, in particular, the member for Flinders and the member Stuart as examples, and there would have been others in the past. So, we are talking about 40 days out of 365 that the parliament may sit past 6 p.m.

This may come as a surprise to the member for Napier (who seems to be the self-appointed expert in this matter) but, in fact, the opposition does not control how late the parliament sits: the government controls it. The minister in control of the house can adjourn the parliament whenever they want to do so, simply by moving the motion. The opposition cannot control that. It is rare for the opposition to have the numbers to defeat an adjournment motion. So, if members of the government want to go home early, they can go home early any day they wish. The government does not have to change the hours that we commence to achieve that outcome. It may have escaped the government's notice that it has 28 members to our 15, and it can send home a number of members every night, for those who have—

Mrs Geraghty: Don't tell them that.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: My father was the longest serving whip in the commonwealth, member for Torrens, and I understand the whip's position. The whip can allocate it out any time they want to do so. So, if there are members with special family needs, they can be sent home at any time by the whip. We all know that, if there is an illness, or something

like that, pairs are always granted. The government is in control of its own members, if it wishes to send them home. Let us make that clear.

The government proposes starting at 11 a.m. on Tuesdays. That means that it is far harder for a Liberal opposition to have joint party room meetings. When in government (and I have explained all this to the member for Torrens and the member for Napier) it is different, because cabinet ministers brief members all the time on issues. But when in opposition—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Well, that is how we operated in government. I am not sure how you operate in government.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: No, they were always on the phone to the media, or to the opposition, mate. They weren't briefing you.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: That is all right. In opposition—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS:—we receive notice of legislation, generally, within seven days. The minister introduces it today, and in a clear seven days we can be expected to debate it. With the number of country members, that makes it difficult for us. They will either have to come in during the week that we are not sitting (which is an extra cost that the member for Napier would not have costed in) or we do it at a lengthy meeting Tuesday mornings. By changing the start time from 2 o'clock and bringing it back to 11 o'clock makes it far more difficult for our side of politics and opposition to have an effective joint party room meeting. The most likely outcome will be a joint party room meeting on the Monday.

The member for Napier says, 'Don't worry, it's going to cost \$30 000 and it is a saving of \$60 000.' I have not seen the savings, even though in my former role we had a number of discussions with the government about this. I have never seen a prediction of savings, but I say to the house that I doubt whether those savings take into account that these changes do not affect the upper house. We can go home at 6 p.m., but the dining room will still be open because the upper house will be sitting. The library will still be open because the upper house will still be sitting. The savings will not be generated and we are not doing it for savings, anyway. This place is not a business: this place is a legislator. This place is not a business: it is like no other place.

People say that young family people—mainly women is the argument—will not come into this place. Really? Have a look at the percentage of women representation in this place, compare it to other places that already have these family friendly hours and tell me the difference. There are a large number of women representatives here already. In fact, your government boasts about the large number. Well, if the sitting hours are so bad, how come all these large number of women representatives are here? It is not that unattractive. I tell you what is unattractive to future representatives—the abusive nature of this place. The abusive nature of this place is a bigger turn off than the sitting hours. Sitting hours to me are not a factor. It is 40 days of the year. Some people do not like late night work or shiftwork. That is why they do not become doctors, nurses, firemen or enter other occupations that work all night, yet there are plenty of females and young males with young families who take up those roles.

They are not as well paid as this role and they do not have the benefits or rewards necessarily of this role. I do not accept the argument that the hours are a huge turn off. I think they are a factor in the decision, but I do not believe they are a

major role in the decision. Does anyone really believe that, if you knock off here at 6 o'clock, you are going to go home; or are you going to go to the Neighbourhood Watch meeting, the Chamber of Commerce meeting, or the Rotary dinner? You are going to go to another event. If you are telling your partners that by knocking off at 7 o'clock you will be home for dinner, then I would be surprised. I think that you will be out working, because there is always a federal election, a state election, a preselection, or a branch meeting. I found when I had four kids under eight entering this place, once it got past 8 o'clock at night, there was no point knocking off. You may as well sit to 2 in the morning and get rid of the business because then it is done: it is out of the way and you have more time on the spare day.

We have members such as the member for Hammond with young children. His family time is actually in the morning. They are preschoolers. He wants to spend time with them in the morning. There are different family requirements. Dragging it forward is not the cure all that the government makes it out to be. The other issue for the opposition and I think that the media will find this—and I say to the media that I think that it is being conned on this issue—

Mr O'Brien: They find it an absurdity as well, Iain.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: That is all right, member for Napier. I make this point to you. I suspect that, if the government finds itself under pressure on an issue in a committee, the witnesses will be called (if at all) at 8 o'clock at night when there are no TV cameras, because currently—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: TV cameras don't go out at night.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: No, less likely. The minister laughs, but we all know that, for instance, Channel 10 on the weekend has a national service and South Australian stories quite often do not get a run on the national service. What I am saying to you is that you are less likely to get TVs to attend at 8 or 9 o'clock at night than you are at 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning. So, I think there are issues there. Are we going to get a guarantee that all the public servants are going to be available as witnesses after hours? Are we going to get a guarantee that briefings to our joint party room are going to be available, because our party room will now have briefings later at night? So, there will be no family friendlies for this side of politics—we will have to do it later at night.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: You poor thing!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: I just make the point, minister. I am allowed to make the point. The reality is that on this side of politics, in opposition, these changes do actually cause us some operational difficulties. I am lucky, I am only half an hour away, but for our country representatives this will actually cause them some difficulty. We did offer some compromises on this. I did offer to sit through the evening meals, even though that creates problems for us because quite often we have party room meetings and briefings during the meal break. It is quite often the only opportunity we can get lobby groups in to talk to the whole joint party room. We did offer up the evening meal, offered to sit through the evening meal breaks, just to try and speed up the legislative process, if that is what the government wanted to do. We did particularly want Tuesday mornings left alone and preferably Wednesday mornings because of our joint party room meeting and the use of those mornings for committees.

The government talks about being family friendly. It was this government, of course, that introduced a four-day sitting week for a whole four years, which I think was the worst family experience, having four days in a row in this place, let

alone three. I note the government has now changed that back. The member for Mitchell talked about having committee meetings in the evening at 7.30 and 8 o'clock, which would mean that members of committees would not be going home early. He also mentioned that the family friendly hours were already happening, and the member for Napier interjected, 'Hear, hear!'.

The point I make is my original point: you do not have to change the starting times to make this place more family friendly, if that is what you call it, because the government has the numbers on any day to sit us down, shut us up and go home. All it has to do is move an adjournment motion at 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock, or whatever time it wants. It can move a motion that we sit through the tea break any night it wants. It does not need to affect the starting times, which will actually make it extraordinarily difficult on this side of the house. As the member for Flinders alluded to in her contribution, I suspect it is the starting time and the effect on this side of the house that is actually the ulterior motive, and the family friendly excuse is wrapped around it.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): Ulterior motives—I mean, it is just sad. I hope every South Australian reads this debate. In 1857 country members were able to sit in this parliament commencing at 2 p.m.—in 1857.

Mrs Penfold interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will come to the member for Flinders in a moment with her 29 000 hits. In 1857 the mode of transportation involved a chaff feeding animal dragging a cart. In 1857 they were able to get here at 2 p.m. on a Tuesday with a horse and cart. The member for Mawson would have taken four hours getting here in 1857 from his electorate. The truth is, 150 years later, with automobiles, planes, trains, and with fast communication, they cannot get here three hours earlier, despite the fact that in Queensland (a bigger state) they can get there at 10 a.m. Apparently, if you start at 10 a.m. it will mean all your doctors will kill people. That was the logic of the member for Stuart. I hope every South Australian reads this debate and reads the entrenched conservatism of this lot. In 1857 they started at 2 p.m.—150 years later they cannot find three hours. You can argue all you like, but the truth is they cannot find three hours. They cannot get here by 11 o'clock on Tuesday, and they talk about their hardship. I think a lot of South Australians reading the debate will think perhaps they had a little more hardship than that—and I notice they all scurry out of the chamber.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: That's right: going home to their families. I will just say this: once they have vented their spleen, they are going home to their families—they are going to take the opportunity. The member for Schubert says he is a country member. I have been there—he is about an hour and a half away.

Mr Venning: From Gepps Cross.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: From Gepps Cross, oh! In Canberra they can start at 12.30 on Monday. Canberra is considerably further away, but what they have discovered there is the great silver bird, the aeroplane. In Queensland they start at 9.30 on a Tuesday. In the Northern Territory they start at 10, and that is a fair-sized place. The truth is that they know that this is a sensible thing to do. The contribution of the member for Davenport was that we should all knock off early anyway. The truth is that we cannot do that because South Australians actually want us to come here and do a

day's work. So, the way to get home earlier is to start earlier. No-one in the community thinks a starting time of 11 o'clock on Tuesday is unreasonable.

Let me say this about country members and the diatribe we got from the member for Flinders. The truth is that at least the member for Stuart recognises the good you do as well as the bad. According to the member for Flinders, this is all an evil plot. I have heard a lot from her. When my first daughter was 3½ weeks old, there were major bushfires in the Eyre Peninsula. I did not go there for three days a week: I went and stayed there for, I think, about three weeks, the first few weeks of my daughter's life. I do not complain; that was my duty. But since that time a number of people on the Eyre Peninsula have expressed to this government their gratitude for the job we have done. The only one who has never spoken a word of appreciation is the member for Flinders who seems to hate the fact that we do things for people.

I reject utterly that this government does not care for the community. It is the first government to take community cabinet out there. I have driven to Ceduna, Streaky Bay, Coober Pedy and Mount Gambier. I have been everywhere in this great state of ours and the truth is that it is not us who do not appreciate the country and the people in the country: it is those people so entrenched in conservatism who have no idea that perhaps women would like to be parents and members of parliament, and that that does bring to the parliament an insight, an appreciation and compassion that we would not otherwise have.

I hope every South Australian reads this debate. It is the most disgraceful conservatism. It is the most patent disregard for those who want to have families. Can I say that, in the modern world, fathers like to play a role in the family as well. It may have been that in days gone past the conservatives liked to send their wives off to confinement and then leave them with the children while the husbands went off to work, but the world does not work like that. That was 1857 and this is 2007.

Motion carried.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

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

That Mrs Geraghty, the Hon. G.M. Gunn and Messrs O'Brien and Pisoni be appointed to act with the Speaker on the committee.

Motion carried.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE

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

That a Publishing Committee be appointed consisting of Ms Ciccarello, Messrs Koutsantonis, Pederick and Pengilly, and Ms Thompson.

Motion carried.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON BALANCING WORK AND LIFE RESPONSIBILITIES

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): On behalf of the member for Hartley, I move:

That the committee have power to continue its sittings during the present session and that the time for bringing up the committee's report be extended until Wednesday 25 July.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER: I advise that I have received the resignation of the member for Waite from the Public Works Committee.

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

That Mr Pisoni be appointed to the Public Works Committee in the place of Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Motion carried.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): I nominate the member for Light to move an Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Deputy's opening speech, and move:

That consideration of the Address in Reply be made an order of the day for the next day of sitting.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.40 p.m. the house adjourned until Tuesday 1 May at 11 a.m.