

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 13 September 2007

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

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CRIME AND CORRUPTION BILL

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to establish the Independent Commission against Crime and Corruption; to define its functions and powers; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

Mr HANNA: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I bring an important proposal to the parliament today. It is for an independent commission against corruption. I acknowledge the work of Ian Gilfillan in relation to this issue, and my bill copies what he brought into the parliament before the last election. I acknowledge also that the Hon. Sandra Kanck introduced such a bill in the other place. I was once sceptical of the need for an independent commission against corruption in South Australia. It always seemed that there was less corruption in South Australia than in the eastern states.

The examples in the Bjelke-Petersen years in Queensland are infamous. The stories of police corruption in New South Wales are also infamous—they have even been made into a TV mini-series. In South Australia it always seemed that we did things differently. On the other hand, most of us in this place would have heard of stories of police abusing their power and of politicians doing things in an irregular way. Whether or not these stories are true is a little beside the point. The real issue is whether we have adequate mechanisms for investigation of allegations such as these as they arise.

I acknowledge that, to some extent, we do have mechanisms to investigate these issues. We have the Auditor-General, the DPP, the Ombudsman and the Police Complaints Authority. We also have the Internal Investigation Branch of the South Australia Police Force. All these agencies, however, have limitations, and I am not alone in suggesting that. The former auditor-general of South Australia, Ken MacPherson, currently acting as Ombudsman, said in a speech just a few weeks ago, on 22 August, that there was a real need to look at this issue. I will quote a few brief passages from his address as follows:

The fact that there is no evidence of a need may simply be a result of there not being an appropriate mechanism to identify the problem and draw the matter to public attention. The recent comment by the South Australian DPP that there were matters that he would have referred to a corruption commission should be a cause for concern. The DPP is, after all, the very official in the constitutional framework responsible for the prosecution of offences under the criminal law of this state. The issues raised by the Coroner on a number of recent occasions are also a further reason to question the adequacy of the present institutional arrangements to protect the community.

The former auditor-general went on to say:

To argue that there are institutional arrangements in this state that could address these matters is to fail to understand that in those other jurisdictions as already mentioned there also exist the same institutions as we have in this state, but these have been shown to be not up to the task and a corruption body was also required.

The other jurisdictions referred to are in fact the other state jurisdictions. In other words, in Queensland during those infamous years when a commissioner of police had to be gaoled for 14 years for corruption, and ministers of the crown were convicted of corruption and gaoled, there was during that time an ombudsman, an auditor-general and ostensibly a police department responsible for protecting the community from corruption. The experience in New South Wales and Western Australia has been similar. All of those agencies, which on the face of it are independent and powerful within our constitutional framework, existed, yet there was significant official corruption. The former auditor-general also went on to say:

In South Australia, short of a royal commission, there is no mechanism to address serious public interest concerns where the police and the DPP are involved. The further issue that arises in this context is that police reporting to police has unequivocally been shown to be fundamentally flawed as a matter of principle.

The former auditor-general also went on to say that even the auditor-general's office itself had limitations in dealing with official corruption, particularly due to its lack of powers in respect of covert surveillance, and so on.

The fact that we have a number of independent agencies to investigate allegations of corruption does not seem to be the answer. The calls for an independent commission against corruption have broadened in recent years. I acknowledge also that the Liberal opposition has taken the view that an independent commission against corruption should be introduced. Professor Dean Jaensch, in commentary in *The Advertiser*, also called for an independent commission against corruption. Lawyer Michael Kelledy, only a week or two ago, wrote another article in *The Advertiser* suggesting that there should be some sort of corruption commission. In *Portfolio* magazine of September 2007 Mr Rod Sawford, member for Port Adelaide, also called for a corruption commission.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr HANNA: It is all very well for the Attorney-General of South Australia to make allegations against Mr Sawford while I am making this speech. Let us see if the Attorney-General has the courage of his convictions to put those allegations on the record.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I already have, actually, and it's in the latest newsletter.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HANNA: There are reasons that have become manifest in recent years which motivate this move to set up an independent commission against corruption. The Labor government, as well as the previous Liberal government, has displayed an increasing tendency to become secretive about any failings of the executive. We have heard allegations of conflicts of interest. We have heard allegations of lobbyists unduly influencing government decisions. We have heard allegations of unregistered campaign donations. We have heard about misappropriation of government funds, and we have heard about bikie gangs having an undue hold on police officers. I will not go into specific allegations or specific issues—I do not believe I need to. The Liberal opposition can make plain the list of allegations that has been raised against Labor and the government ministers, and the Labor government can also level a number of allegations (in some cases proved) against former Liberal ministers and even former premier John Olsen. I do not need to set out all of those incidents in detail.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: No, you don't. That's right.

Mr HANNA: The Attorney-General is goading me to do so but, as I have said, there is ample on the public record which members may wish to reiterate in the house in the debate on this bill. I do not need to do that. There is a concern when setting up a commission such as this about how to filter out scurrilous and vexatious claims of corruption from legitimate claims. In the experience of New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland, the relevant corruption commissions have always managed to do this. Obviously, there needs to be some sort of threshold inquiry to see whether there is a real basis to any particular complaint and a subsequent stage of full investigation, if required.

To take an example, the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988 in section 10 stipulates that the commission may decide whether or not a complaint should be investigated, so there is that threshold test, and the corruption commissions in those respective states have had a good record in focusing on the most serious allegations. Of course, those investigations which find that there are matters that might be better dealt with through another agency, whether it be through internal police investigations, the ombudsman or the auditor-general, can always refer those matters to other agencies, but there will be some serious matters of corruption perhaps which are best dealt with by such a commission.

As to the issue of funding, there is the question of how much it will cost. I am told that in 2005-06 the New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption had a net cost of services just under \$15.5 million. Mr Cripps, Senior Counsel, who recently visited South Australia and pressed for such a commission in this state, commented that only a very small proportion of the commission in New South Wales involved lawyers engaged by the commission. Most are clerical and other investigative staff. So, the claims by Premier Mike Rann that it is a lawyer's picnic and that it is just a bunfight for the lawyers are proven to be false.

The New South Wales ICAC received 2 191 complaints in that year and found that 61 of those constituted corruption. They successfully prosecuted 15 claims after the investigation. I suspect that the number of complaints and the number of cases of corruption would be much less in South Australia, but I seriously doubt that you could say it would be zero. There is every reason to believe that setting up a smaller, leaner commission against corruption in South Australia would cost a lot less than that. One must also weigh up the cost against the benefit achieved in terms of promoting public integrity and confidence in politicians and police.

In conclusion, I again note that there has been an alarming number of claims of corruption of different kinds in recent years. It makes one wonder how many more allegations there are that have not achieved publicity, perhaps because it is very difficult to get evidence for the claims to be taken seriously. In Western Australia, about one out of every 4½ claims, or two out of every nine, were substantiated, and that is just another example. It just shows that, wherever these commissions are set up, they tend to find some corruption. If there is any corruption at all, it is worth having such a commission. No matter how well our current agencies do, they still have limitations. We therefore need an independent commission against corruption.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

SEWERAGE (WATER MANAGEMENT MEASURES—USE OF WASTE MATERIAL) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from 26 July. Page 675.)

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I will continue my remarks from Thursday 26 July, when I moved that this bill be read a second time. I hope that anybody who reads my remarks today will go back to the beginning of my explanation of this bill. For the sake of the house and those reading those remarks, I will briefly reiterate some of the things I mentioned with regard to this.

I remind the house that we successfully moved this bill, along with two other bills, in the other place almost 12 months ago. I say 'successfully' because the measures were, indeed, supported by the minor parties and Independents in the other place, but they were not supported by the Labor government in that place, purely for base political purposes. We now have the Labor government recognising the dire circumstances we find ourselves in with regard to water supply in South Australia. We have had the biggest backflip in South Australian politics occur over recent days when we saw a taxpayer-funded advertisement in Sunday's state newspaper saying that water restrictions, if anything, will become more stringent and, within 24 hours of the government spending taxpayers' money trying to justify its position, it did a complete about-face.

We have a government that has been arguing for almost 12 months that the opposition was getting it wrong in recommending that we build a desalination plant to guarantee water security for the people of Adelaide. For nearly 12 months the government has been saying the opposition has got it wrong, we do not need a desalination plant, it is too expensive, we cannot afford it, and we do not need it so let us not go down that path. But what do we have now? Suddenly, the government is picking up what the opposition has been saying for 12 over months.

One of the questions I have for the government is: how are we going to get through the next year or two, and why is this government saying it is going to take five years to build a desalination plant? I remember reading in the paper that Morris Iemma in New South Wales said they will build a desalination plant that will be much bigger than the one we are proposing in South Australia and they will have it operational within 26 months. The point is that, if the government of South Australia had taken the advice the opposition gave it almost 12 months ago and started work, we would be half way to having a desalination plant completed, and within probably 15 months from now—so, prior to Christmas 2008—we could probably have a desalination plant in operation. That is the point.

Not only do we still face significant water restrictions this year but also we are going to have to save a fair bit of the water that is already in our reservoirs for a contingency for the following year, as we have no backup, because we have squandered 12 months. That is the problem: we have already squandered 12 months. If the drought continues next year, it will be even worse and, according to this government, in each time frame we will still be years away from getting any sort of water security.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Do you know how to build a desalination plant?

Mr WILLIAMS: I do know how to build a desalination plant, minister. The reality is that, if we had built a desalination plant as proposed by the opposition almost 12 months ago, we could guarantee at least enough water for metropolitan Adelaide for drinking and the urgent health needs of the community. That is why we came to the conclusion 12 months ago that that is the path we needed to go down and began our investigations. Even from opposition it only took us a month or two to realise that, to use the vernacular, it was a 'no brainer' and we needed to go down the path of desalination in South Australia.

It has taken the government nearly 12 months to even get it on its radar, because it just kept hoping and praying it would rain. Why? Because it had already spent the money. It had already spent the \$1.6 billion it had taken out of SA Water and wasted it on an extra 10 000 public servants, and it does not have any money left to provide the essential needs and services for the people of South Australia. That is the problem this government faces, that is why it is in trouble, and that is why it will find the political tide will turn against it over the next year or two.

I would like to go back and address the matter we have had before us: what is commonly known as 'sewer mining'. The opposition proposes that, under a licence system, organisations (such as the Adelaide City Council, for example) could apply to set up an operation to use water extracted from our sewer mains to (for instance) water the Parklands. Instead of taking potable water from SA Water pipelines we could actually set up small plants around the city and take that water to use on our Parklands. That sounds to me a much more sensible idea than the proposal to build a pipeline from Glenelg to achieve the same thing; this sounds like a much more sensible idea, and we could do it all across metropolitan Adelaide.

As I said back on Thursday 26 July, this would save the cost of building another network for non-potable water, because you actually extract the water where you will use it. You find a point where there is a large demand for non-potable water, you extract water from the sewer near to that point, you filter it and place the solid material back into the sewer, and the water is available for non-potable uses such as watering the Parklands or a number of other industrial uses. I imagine that if you had a concrete batching plant, for example, it might be ideal water to use to put into making concrete for a commercial concrete batching plant. It would be for those sorts of uses.

There is a significant number of high water use points around the metropolitan area, and this would be a very efficient and cheap way of providing water. It would provide a net benefit, because it would replace the high quality, potable water currently being provided by SA Water—unlike the extension to the Bolivar pipeline. I am not arguing against that, but that pipeline does not give a net benefit of water to metropolitan Adelaide, because it is not replacing water that is currently provided through the SA Water pipeline network. I think the Bolivar pipeline is a great thing and I do support it; in fact, we started the project. It is a pity that it has languished—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You started everything!

Mr WILLIAMS: We did start everything; we even started Roxby Downs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

SEWERAGE (GREYWATER) AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This is the third of the bills I started to talk about back on Thursday 26 July; bills that (I reiterate) successfully passed through the other place almost 12 months ago. Prior to Christmas last year the upper house, in its wisdom, passed a series of three bills proposed by the opposition as part of a raft of measures to underpin water security for South Australia.

I picked up the *Waterproofing Adelaide* document recently—a document that has been around since 2005, so it is over two years old—and it is interesting to note that it clearly indicates that the government's own advice was that, by 2007, under drought conditions (and of course we have been under drought conditions since at least 2002, particularly in our main water supply of the headwaters of the Murray-Darling catchment, and that is no news), demand for water in Adelaide would outstrip supply.

That is something we have known; it has been noted in the government's own documents for over two years. The documents then argue that measures taken by the government—measures known as permanent water restrictions and mandating the installation of rainwater tanks for new buildings—would actually push out that time where demand outstripped supply by probably 12 or 18 months. We know that those measures have not made the expected savings. In fact, we also know that, even with much more stringent water restrictions over the last water year (that is, to 30 June this year), the demand for and usage of water in metropolitan Adelaide actually increased over and above that for the previous full year—and that is in spite of severe water restrictions. Yet the government has done nothing to move forward to solve the water supply problem in South Australia.

What the government has done is remove from the SA Water website the usage figures. You used to be able to go to the SA Water website, go to the page showing the amount of water in our reservoirs and the amount of usage for the year to date (a figure which was updated regularly) and compare it with the previous year. Amazingly, that figure has disappeared from the website. It had been there for years, but it has now disappeared. Not only is the government in denial but it obviously also knows it has got it wrong, because it has removed that figure from the public gaze. The government has deliberately removed that information from the website so that the public can no longer look it up on the website and say, 'Oh, sorry, Mr Rann, but your claims about supply meeting demand in 2007 are not going to work because not only are we not using less water, we are actually using more water.'

The government cannot claim that it did not see this coming. The drought has been with us and continuing since 2002. The government's own documents highlight the fact that, under drought conditions, we will run out of water. Vital information has been removed from the website which proves that the government is in denial and has been getting it wrong. The evidence is damning. Here, at the eleventh hour, after spending taxpayers' money on advertising in the Sunday press that, if anything, water restrictions would become more severe, the government does a backflip within 24 hours of spending that money, and lifts the water restrictions. Why?

The government's answer is, 'Oh, we had this rain in the Hills.' Well, a number of my colleagues represent electorates in the Hills—a number of my colleagues actually live in the Hills—and they were more than a little bemused by the minister's explanation that it had been raining there. My colleagues and their constituents can attest that, in fact, it has not been raining in the Hills. No wonder the people of South Australia are becoming very cynical about this government—

Mr Pederick: Somersaulting government.

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, this somersaulting government. The reality is that the government has made a mess of managing South Australia. The government cannot afford to supply water, notwithstanding the fact that it has stripped \$1.6 billion out of SA Water. The government has committed to \$700 million under a PPP program to build prisons; racked up a debt under PPP projects to build new courts and police stations; and committed to building at least six super schools under PPP proposals.

They committed to building a \$1.7 billion hospital—if they are very lucky—hopefully under a PPP proposal. Notwithstanding the \$1.6 billion they have stripped out of SA Water, where is the money coming from to undertake the sort of projects they are talking about—the expansion of Mount Bold or a desal plant to guarantee water for South Australia? The trouble is that the government did not want to go down this track because it has spent the money. The money is gone. It does not have the money—

Mr O'Brien: What is your financial model?

Mr WILLIAMS: My financial model would not have been to employ 10 000 public servants over and above what you budgeted for. That is a considerable amount of money—10 000 public servants. The Treasurer and the ministry have lost control of the state. Consequently, the government has been hoping and praying for rain, because it is the only saviour for the state. Now we will have to go into more debt. We have government ministers and the Premier saying, 'Oh, woe, alas! We will have to increase the price of water to pay for important infrastructure.' Hello! On 8 December last year, the then minister, minister Wright, put out a press release—I have a copy of it upstairs in my office—stating that there would be a 32.5 per cent increase in the price of water in South Australia over the next four years. Why? What is his excuse? To build new water infrastructure.

Then we come to budget time, and there is the Treasurer saying, 'Oh, woe, alas! We might have to build some new water infrastructure. We are going to have to increase the price of water.' Well, they have already increased the price of water; it was announced on 8 December last year. Then we had another announcement in the budget, and this week we have yet another announcement. What is happening? You have spent the \$1.6 billion that you raked out of SA Water, you have given us no water infrastructure, you have done nothing to secure our water supply, spent the money, and now you want to up the price, which you have already announced will be increased by 32 per cent. And you sit there and tell me that your budget is under control? Give us a break!

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: I will tell the minister what we did with SA Water. Against all the efforts of the then Labor opposition, we actually turned SA Water around from an organisation that was costing the taxpayer over \$50 million a year in subsidies. Where did the \$1.6 billion come from? That came out of SA Water, because we turned it around into an organisation that actually worked efficiently and effectively. That is what we did, and we got no help from the Labor

opposition. It is a bit like what John Howard is saying in Canberra: every reform made by the Liberal Party when it is in government at state and federal level takes place despite the opposition of the Labor Party. When the Labor Party brings forward sound measures, they by and large get the support of the Liberal opposition at both the state and federal level. That is fact.

The measure that this bill seeks to bring forward is to make it legal for people to actually connect their grey water outlets, for example, their washing machine outlet, directly to a pipe to discharge water onto their garden. It is quite simple and straightforward; it is not rocket science. In fact, the health department has put out a leaflet telling people that they can collect their grey water from the shower, bath or washing machine in a bucket and carry it outside and put it on their garden, but the law prevents them from connecting a hose to their washing machine, putting it out through the window, and running the water directly onto their garden. That is the position that this bill seeks to rectify. It is very simple: all it seeks to do is to save an 80 year old person from having to carry a bucket from the laundry out to the lawn; he or she can connect a hose. There is a pump in the washing machine which will deliver water out through a hose directly onto the lawn, and it will save those people carrying a bucket. We know this government's attitude to buckets. This government believes it is good for the health of 80 year olds to be carrying buckets around their garden.

The opposition believes that this is a sound measure, which should have been adopted by the government a long time ago. However, unfortunately, the government is in denial. All we are asking is for the government to support a very simple measure that will make it legal for people to simply connect a hose to their washing machine to allow the water to be distributed directly to their garden, rather than having to do it via a bucket, as is proposed by a leaflet put out by the government's own Department of Health. That is all we are asking. The reality is that, when this was passed in the other place almost 12 months ago, the government voted against it. I challenge members of the government to vote against this matter and go out there and justify why they are doing so.

Mr O'Brien: High phosphate levels.

Mr WILLIAMS: Then why is the government's health department recommending that people collect it in a bucket and carry it outside and put it on their garden? I have never seen a phosphate filter in a bucket. However, the member obviously believes that, if you pour the water out of your washing machine into a bucket and carry it outside, the phosphate has dissipated. That is a nonsense: it is a spurious argument.

The reality is that this government, from the evidence in front of us, is not interested. It has dropped the ball on this matter. You have to get it right, and I hope that the government gets it right. The member and the government will have the opportunity on 18 October to advance their arguments with respect to some of the other measures that I have brought forward today (they have chosen not to take that opportunity at this time). I look forward to hearing the arguments of the member and other members of the government on 18 October about why they would not go down this path: why they would demand that people who want to use water from their washing machine, shower or bath have to transfer it outside their home via a bucket rather than through a hose—because that is what they are doing. I really look

forward to a sound argument from the government with respect to its position.

The reality is that we are a long way from being home on water security in South Australia. As the water security minister continually reminds us, we are in the grip of the most severe drought that this country has seen since white settlement, over 200 years. We do not know, in fact, how severe droughts can become in this country, because our history here is not long enough. So, this might only be a foretaste of what is to come.

That is why the opposition made the decision a long time ago that we had to find a new water supply, independent of climate. That is also why the opposition argued a long time ago that it was a no-brainer; we need a desal in South Australia. We did not need to go out and have all the minute detail in place. What we said was: 'It is a no-brainer; we need desal. Let's solve the problem.' However, the government has said, 'No, we don't need any of that,' and now its excuse is, 'No, we have to solve all the problems; we have to have all the details before we even make a decision.' That is wrong, wrong, wrong! What that means is that we will have water security in South Australia probably four or five years too late.

Time expired.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (NOTIFIABLE DISEASES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 7 June. Page 375.)

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta): I oppose this amendment to the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987. The deputy leader is suggesting that the act be amended so that staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) be added to the notifiable diseases register. This is simply ridiculous if you examine both the purpose of the notifiable diseases register and the nature of staphylococcus aureus. Notifiable diseases are communicable diseases that are declared to be notifiable either by having been included in the schedule to the Public and Environmental Health Act, or subsequently prescribed as notifiable by regulation under the act. There is a requirement on registered practitioners and laboratories to notify the department if they suspect a person is suffering from a notifiable disease. The whole point of this requirement is that the surveillance of notifiable diseases requires a timely exchange of information between medical practitioners and laboratories that suspect a person is suffering from a communicable disease, and they then inform the Department of Health.

The sharing of this information allows an opportunity for intervention and the prevention of communicable diseases in the community. It means that the Communicable Disease Control Branch of the department is able to monitor and investigate these diseases to reduce their impact on others. For this reason, such diseases listed on the register generally fall into the categories of 'vaccine preventable diseases'. These include: food-borne infections such as botulism; infections from the environment such as Ross River fever and malaria; most sexually transmitted infections; infections by potential agents of bioterrorism such as anthrax; and illnesses of great clinical importance such as TB or leprosy. Staphylococcus aureus (or golden staph, as it is commonly called, particularly in the media) is not a vaccine preventable disease.

It is, in fact, one of the most common bacteria found in humans.

At any given time, up to 40 per cent of the population carries staphylococcus aureus, with no clinical consequences. It causes countless, minor infections such as pimples and boils suffered by the majority of the population at some time in their life, as well as some more serious infections. The practicalities of amending the register to include a common bacteria need to be examined closely. Pragmatically, this would mean that every time a pimply teenager turned up at a doctor's surgery, it would trigger a requirement for the GP to notify the health department when, in reality, except for a comparatively small number of strains of MRSA, it is treated by oral antibiotics. I suggest to the member for Bragg that I do not believe that this is a good use of health department resources or a good way to occupy busy GPs' time, even if she does.

I presume that she realises that making a disease notifiable means that personal health information on individuals must be disclosed to the health department. I suggest that this intrusion on people's privacy is not something that should be undertaken without profound benefit to the community. The reality of the situation is that the majority of infections of staphylococcus aureus in the community are so minor that they would not even be seen by a doctor, a specimen would not be taken or sent to a laboratory for analysis, and hence the department would not be notified of them. This reality would doom to failure even the intent of surveillance of infection in the community, let alone the control of this common bacteria.

It is important that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition understands that staphylococcus aureus is ubiquitous in the human population and also in many animals. Making staphylococcus aureus infections notifiable would have no public health benefits to the community, as it will never be possible to eradicate or even significantly reduce its prevalence in the human population. In fact, even if it were possible to clear it from humans (and it is not), it would be introduced very quickly through our contact with animals. Again, it is a fact that there are hundreds of bacteria which can be fatal if they cause bloodstream infections. However, this is not a reason to make them notifiable. The Communicable Disease Control Branch of the Department of Health reported in the *Public Health Bulletin* (Edition 4 of 2006) that new infection control measures introduced in 2002 in SA hospitals by the previous minister for health (Hon. Lea Stevens) were having great results.

The number of episodes caused by MRSA have fallen steadily over the past five years in SA hospitals. This fall was attributed in the article to several interventions, including improvements in intravenous line management, the widespread introduction of alcohol-based gels and, at one hospital, the introduction of a dedicated line nurse. However, the careful washing of hands is still the single most effective way of controlling the spread of Staphylococcus aureus. Good personal hygiene is important, especially to reduce the amount present on any individual's skin at any time.

In our hospital system, patients with known MRSA infections are already kept in separate rooms with strict hand washing, gowns and gloves treatment, but this does not get away from the fact that 40 per cent of the population are carriers of Staphylococcus aureus at any one time, without any signs of infection. There is, however, an intention to alert clinicians working in hospitals to the incidence of a potentially preventable consequence of medical intervention, but only in the hospital setting. I emphasise that this would be

applicable only to health care associated bloodstream infections. Making all *Staphylococcus aureus* infections notifiable would swamp the public health system with notifications of relatively minor infections where little public health action can be taken. I repeat that this micro-organism is one of the most common causes of minor skin and wound infections in the community. It cannot be prevented by vaccine and, therefore, the sharing of information of incidence through the register will not allow any opportunity for intervention and prevention in the community. It is, therefore, of no benefit to the community. I oppose the motion.

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I thank members of the house who have made a contribution to this debate and, in particular, to the proposed Public and Environmental Health (Notifiable Diseases) Amendment Bill. I am disappointed to note that a number of members have indicated that it should be opposed. It is a matter which continues to cause difficulty for patients, particularly children, in our hospitals. I should place on record that minister Hill has indicated to me his opposition to this by letter dated 25 July 2007. I put him in the category of those I referred to in opposition to this. He indicated that, in South Australia, most of the metropolitan hospitals, including both public and private hospitals, already collect data on all bloodstream infections and contribute to a statewide surveillance system conducted by the Infection Control Service within the Department of Health's Communicable Disease Control Branch. He indicates that this has been occurring for some time and makes some of that information available but, generally, he opposes *Staphylococcus aureus* infections being included.

I am disappointed with the minister's approach to this matter, because we have identified cases where there has been a lack of communication—even if it goes to the control branch—within hospitals to their patients. Accordingly, current or prospective patients of a hospital are not in a position to be aware of any contamination. The opportunity is removed for them to make a decision about whether they undertake a procedure in that hospital. I am disappointed with the minister's approach and decision. I note that today it was reported that there has been a 13th case of meningococcal disease. Six or seven cases of Q fever have been reported and horse flu is rampant in the community. Numbers of notifiable diseases have increased this year, yet the government's position is to oppose the disclosure of this condition, resulting in the case histories to which I referred in my second reading explanation.

I want to recognise one person who wrote to me on this matter to suggest that I made an error when I referred to this as a virus. For the record, I indicate that I erroneously referred to it as a virus. I certainly did not wish to cause any concern with that description being in any way misleading as to the nature of the condition. I also note that during the adjournment of the debate there was a very serious level of risk of infection in our hospitals. For example, the Communicable Disease Control Branch—Infection Control Service in its November 2005 report confirmed that there was an increase in the number of episodes from 617 in 2003 to 627 in 2004.

Time expired.

Second reading negatived.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (SAFETY OF PASSENGERS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 21 June. Page 522.)

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier): The member for Mitchell's bill seeks to amend the Passenger Transport Act in two ways; first, by making it compulsory for a taxi to be fitted with a GPS system which operates when the system is running and which records the GPS tracking for at least three months. Clearly, this measure is designed to assist police in identifying the perpetrators of sexual attacks on female passengers. Secondly, the bill seeks to improve the taxi security camera system so that an image is recorded every 60 seconds while the engine is running. This measure is clearly designed to improve safety for both the driver and passenger. The government will be opposing the bill for the following reasons: first, the requirement that a taxi be fitted with operating GPS and a security camera system is already addressed in the Passenger Transport General Regulations 1994.

Debate adjourned.

HEALTH FUNDING

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): I move:

That this house condemns the federal government for reducing its percentage of funding to South Australia's public health system and notes that—

- the federal government's share of funding for public hospitals used to be 50 per cent and has now fallen to 40 per cent under the current Australian Health Care Agreement;
- it is estimated that if current growth rates continue, the commonwealth's percentage of funding will drop to 25 per cent within 20 years;
- the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare's figures show that the shortfall in federal funding is up to \$1.1 billion a year; and
- despite the current Australian Health Care Agreement expiring next year, the federal government is refusing to begin renegotiations for the next agreement until after the federal election.

My concern is that the federal government is continuing to show its contempt for the health of South Australia's community. It is particularly showing its contempt for the people who rely on the public health system and GPs for their health care. The Premier, together with the Minister for Health, has taken a range of actions to try to bring the federal government to the party in negotiating decent health care arrangements for South Australians. Successive federal health ministers have failed to deliver, and the Prime Minister has not made them deliver. His attention has certainly not been turned towards the health of Australians and South Australians. He has had other things on his mind for quite some time.

The Premier has stated again and again how the Howard government is short-changing South Australia's public hospitals to the tune of more than \$400 million in this year alone. As the Premier says, the federal government used to fund health on a fifty-fifty basis with the states, but in recent years the federal government's share has been steadily dropping as demand has increased. Over the past five years admissions at South Australia's public hospital emergency departments have increased by 25 per cent, but under the current five-year Australian Health Care Agreement (AHCA)

the federal government has failed to meet its share of increased costs.

Commonwealth funding of increased costs is around 4.5 per cent, less than half the real cost increases, so the South Australian government has stepped in to fund a growing share of hospital services. A gap of \$1.2 billion will have accumulated between South Australian government and federal government spending over the life of the agreement from 2003-04 to 2007-08—\$1.2 billion that could have been used to deal with the backlog of health care needed, not to mention other matters that South Australia sees as important. Audited figures show federal hospital spending increased by just 14 per cent, while South Australian government spending increased by 45 per cent in the first three years of the current agreement.

This year alone, the federal shortfall has reached \$408 million—a burden being placed on South Australians. While South Australia is working to address the increased demands, it is disappointing to see that the Howard government's only response is to announce a takeover of the Mersey Hospital in Tasmania. The Premier has written to the Prime Minister urging him to restore funding under AHCA and to agree to the request by all state and territory health ministers to immediately start negotiations on the next agreement—a request which the federal health minister has repeatedly refused. South Australians can see how they have been cheated by the federal government by examination of the following table. I seek leave to insert the table into *Hansard*, sir. I assure you that it is statistical in nature and of less than one page.

Leave granted.

	2007-08 estimated distribution \$m.
SA Hospitals	
Royal Adelaide	\$78.9
Flinders Medical Centre	\$55.9
Noarlunga	\$14.3
Lyell McEwin	\$32.7
Modbury	\$19.2
Queen Elizabeth	\$43.7
Women's and Children's	\$31.9
Repatriation	\$18.8
Other hospital	\$14.6
Country Health SA	\$98.4
Total	\$408.4

Ms THOMPSON: I am particularly concerned, of course, that the table shows that Flinders Medical Centre has been cheated of \$55.9 million by the Howard government and that the Noarlunga Hospital has been cheated of \$14.3 million by the Howard government—money that represents services, not capital infrastructure building (which is the responsibility of the state) but services: much-needed operations, much-needed treatment and much-needed support and care for people leaving hospital.

The burden imposed on the community is felt particularly within the area of GPs, and the provision of GP services is also the responsibility of the Howard federal government. Again, Mr Howard and his ministers have short-changed South Australians. This week's *Southern Times Messenger* illustrates very well what this is doing to GPs and their patients in the south. I will quote quite extensively from the article and acknowledge that most of what I am about to say was written by Jai Bednall of that publication. It states:

Severely undermanned southern surgeries are being stopped from hiring overseas-trained doctors because they are not deemed needy enough by the Federal Government.

'We need to get away from the line of thinking that some areas are more needy than others,' Southern Division of General Practice chief Dr Helena Williams said.

'The fact is that everyone is in need. Most of our practices are telling us they want more doctors. If there's doctors available then we should be placing them.' Under section 19AB of the Health Insurance Act (1973) overseas-trained doctors are required to work in areas of workforce shortage, which is defined by less than 1 GP for every 1 408 people.

Here comes another disgraceful statement:

The Federal Department of Health and Ageing would not release current GP to population figures for southern Adelaide last week. But ongoing investigations by the *Southern Times Messenger* have revealed some patients are being forced to wait six weeks to see a doctor and up to 30 per cent of surgeries have closed their books to new patients.

I would like the house to note that this is yet another example of how, when the federal government does not like the story, it does not release the figures—just as with WorkChoices, where it does not like the story so will not release the figures. It is the same with the lack of service to our southern communities in relation to health care: it does not like the story so it does not release the figures. The article continues:

Meantime, figures obtained by the Southern Division of General Practice in 2005 showed glaring gaps in suburbs such as Woodcroft (1 GP for every 5 521 residents), Hackham (1 to 3 150) and McLaren Vale (1 to 2 008).

Sir, I remind you that areas of workforce shortage are defined as one GP for every 1 408 people. The article also states:

But the likes of Morphett Vale (1 to 1 108) and Noarlunga (1 to 946) appeared to just miss the cut-off mark. 'It is ridiculous', Dr Williams said. 'People in suburbs where there aren't enough doctors are going to travel to the areas where there are more GPs available. So the practices that are supposedly in areas where there isn't a shortage are being swamped by patients from elsewhere.' The issue has prompted calls for the abolition of the government's workforce shortage criteria. The Reynella Medical Centre, on Hillier Road at Morphett Vale, might not appear to meet the criteria but is crying out for doctors. Dr Ian Pope said the clinic would hire 'one or two' overseas-trained GPs immediately if it could. 'We've got eight consulting rooms but we've only got six doctors', he said. 'We're turning away people every day, another doctor would make it so much easier.'

Dr Brian Symon, of Adelaide-based doctor recruitment agency Recruit-a-Doc, said he was regularly unable to place overseas doctors because of the criteria. The GP shortage is expected to worsen with the influx of 15 000 people to the area over the next decade. A Department of Health and Ageing spokesman said the placement of overseas-trained doctors had proven to be effective in increasing the supply of doctors where they were required. 'There have been no formal reviews of the section 19AB arrangement since its introduction but, as with all government programs, it may be subjected to review as indicated and as required', the spokesman said.

I congratulate and thank Jai Bednall for the investigation work he did in relation to that story, which illustrates very vividly what is happening to people in the south. People come to my office indicating that they cannot get to see a GP. All the reports indicate that the hospitals are seeing people whose disease, illness or condition has been exacerbated by the fact that they have not been able to see GPs when they should have. The situation of acuity in our public hospitals is worsening all the time.

This means that people are being subjected to daily pain and misery because the Howard government will not face up to its responsibilities. Whenever I am asked about why I disagree with the Howard government, I say that my two top reasons for disagreement are the abolition of the pensioner dental scheme and Working Nation. Some people are surprised that I do not say the war in Iraq, or something. While I find that abhorrent, what I find most abhorrent is the

way in which the Howard government has attacked the daily lives of citizens in my area, often citizens in their late 50s and 60s who have not been able to get adequate dental care.

Finally, we have a situation whereby if a GP can attest to the fact that lack of dental care is affecting someone's health that person can get some dental care, but it has taken 10 years to get to that level. I have seen so many people in my office whose health is and has been affected by a lack of dental care. My concern about the abolition of Working Nation is also one that affects health. Many people, particularly from the manufacturing area, were made redundant in the 1990s during what now has proved to be a necessary if brutal industry restructure, and the Keating government recognised that this would result in casualties in terms of individuals.

The Keating government installed the Working Nation scheme, which provided individual case management to people to be able to find a place in the new workforce. One of the first actions of the Howard government—besides abolishing the dental scheme—was to abolish Working Nation. That has meant that so many people have been left with no place in the world, and many have become sick and their injuries have exacerbated. Members opposite laugh. They seem not to understand how a person's feeling about themselves and their role in the world and in their family is often defined by their work. People who have long prided themselves on being the provider in the home suffer great mental distress when they are no longer able to fulfil that role. Some of us might say that it is normal now for families to have both partners working. However, many of those people did not find it normal.

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. This is a motion in relation to federal government funding of the health system. Whilst the member raises in her current submission to this motion important issues in relation to employment, they are nothing to do with the motion before the house.

The SPEAKER: I will listen to what the member has to say, but I generally give a fair amount of latitude in these sort of motions.

Ms THOMPSON: These matters are exactly to do with the motion before the house. The failure of these people to be supported in readjusting to the new economy has affected their health. However, they have not been able to get the health care they so truly deserve because of the lack of the Howard support for our health care system.

Time expired.

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): I oppose the motion, which seeks to condemn the federal government in relation to the percentage of funding it provides to the public health system. Essentially, in support of that, it identifies three areas and, lastly, makes some complaint about negotiations for the health care agreement, which expires in June 2008, not being commenced pending a federal election. In relation to that matter, I was surprised to read in this motion, given the pending federal election, that the mover would not be keen to ensure that there was not a renegotiation of the health care agreement, in her wishful hope of a change of government.

I find that inconsistent with the motion, given the importance of the federal election and determining who will be responsible for renegotiating that agreement. To say that that should be undertaken some 12 months prior to the agreement, when her own government did not embark on the negotiations for the nurses enterprise bargain agreement until four months

before it expired in June this year (it having only been recently negotiated), shows the utter hypocrisy of the mover's intent in that regard.

To get back to the principal funding, clearly in the past five years the commonwealth has honoured its Australian health commonwealth agreement, worth some \$3.5 billion. However, continually concern is raised about the percentages, yet there is no point crying poor on the federal budget allocation towards this when clearly there is an inability for the state government here to manage the extra \$7 billion it has received under that agreement. Despite having the highest recurrent health expenditure in this state per capita out of all the states, South Australia is not receiving the health care it deserves. South Australian hospitals have the highest percentage of unplanned readmissions in the nation, our emergency departments do not measure up and South Australians are subjected to long waits for elective surgery. That is notwithstanding that there is the highest amount of funding per person out of this state.

That indicates to me not that there is a lack of money being poured into this state or is being spent but that we are not getting value for that money. On top of the \$3.5 billion Australian health care agreement funds (which is why this motion is without any foundation), the mover fails to mention that the federal government also pays directly the medical benefits scheme and pharmaceutical benefits scheme for patients in public hospitals. But always, when they add up the figures for this argument, they refuse to include that in their allocations.

Let us come to how they spend it. It is a bit rich to be championing the deprivatisation of the Modbury Hospital, which will cost \$33 million to bring the hospital back into the public sector, and then blame the commonwealth for South Australia's having health care financing woes. So, I think it is important that they look at how this money is being spent.

Let me consider a matter which has been looked into in some depth by Mr John Menadue AO, who was the author of a major review in this state in 2002-03 in relation to health and its governance structure in this state. In that review, he provided advice upon which basis, as we have heard, the announcements were made in June and July that we were going to receive a new \$1.7 billion hospital, which would involve moving the Royal Adelaide from one end of North Terrace to the other. So, he has been a very strong adviser to this government in relation to health governance and restructure. Of course, we are about to receive a health care bill, again, claiming to be based on that review. Mr Menadue is the Chair of the Centre for Policy Development in Australia and he published an article, which was forwarded to me recently and which is available on the centre's website. In this article he canvasses a number of obstacles to health reform, one of which is this question of the personal, public and social cost of mistakes in hospitals. He states:

A decade ago the \$4.17 billion, the estimated cost of harm in hospitals (adverse events) represented 23 per cent of recurrent costs in all hospitals.

That is one-fifth of the cost of all hospitals in Australia. He further states:

Bundaberg Hospital is the tip of a very large iceberg. . . assuming the same percentage of avoidable mistakes in 2004-05, the cost to Australian hospitals (i.e. taxpayers) would have been \$6.5 billion. This would be a conservative estimate, because ageing and the complexity of cases would have increased significantly in the last 10 years. There is a paucity of data, but on the basis of available information, it would not be unreasonable to estimate, very conservatively, that the cost, both within and outside the health

system, of mistakes would be about \$9 billion per annum or about 10 per cent of total health expenditure in Australia.

At least half of that is preventable—\$4 billion to \$5 billion each year. Health care delivery can be described as ‘good people working in a faulty system’. We are not dealing with performance issues by individual doctors and nurses, but rather, the ‘system’ in which they provide their care. The responsibility lies with those who have custodial responsibility from a leadership, governance, funding and management perspective. There is a conspiracy of silence. This is a public health, ethical and financial problem of large proportions. It is a scandal.

Those are the words of John Menadue AO in his published report stating that a scandalous waste of money is going on and a concealment of a very important issue that is costing us billions of dollars in the health sector, and it is the direct responsibility of state governments and, in particular, state health ministers.

What is happening in South Australia? On 26 June this year, I asked the minister to explain how many of the 42 sentinel events which occurred in South Australia from 2004 to 2006 have still not been analysed to identify why they occurred and prevent them from occurring again. The freedom of information documents relating to the sentinel events showed that there were five in 2003-04, 20 in 2004-05 and 22 in 2005-06. The responding documents stated,

The health department requires hospitals to document and analyse all sentinel events as soon as practicable in order to identify what occurred, how it occurred and how to prevent it occurring again.

The root cause analysis report that has been published for 2004-05 (that is over two years ago) has been put on the website in the past two months, and we know that there has been some inquiry on that and, from that, we know that it proposes electronic reporting for the events that occurred 2½ years ago, but it contains no detail of them. Let me place on record the sort of problem that is there which is not being addressed because the government of this state would not release that material for over 2½ years or indicate what it would do about it.

What do I say to Jean Clarke, who on 24 July 2007 publicly stated her position on radio? She is a 41 year old who is suing the Lyell McEwin Hospital, claiming that surgeons left a piece of plastic tape inside her. She said that the incident has ruined her long-term health. She had a bowel operation in hospital in 1995 and she says that she suffered dramatic weight loss and severe pain, but doctors could not find the cause. Four years later, when she had a hysterectomy, the surgeons found the piece of surgical tape. That is exactly the type of case that we need to know about. According to John Menadue AO, it is costing \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year—10 per cent of the total health budget wasted because this government will not investigate these matters. The government will not tell us what it is doing about it, it will not report to us and there is no transparency. It is doing nothing about it. It is a gross waste of the money that minister Hill administers in this state, yet the mover of this motion has the audacity to come in here and say that there is inadequate funding. Think about how it is being spent.

Time expired.

Mr RAU (Enfield): I rise, obviously, in support of the member for Reynell’s motion. The debate seems to be taking place—at least on the other side of the chamber—in something of a vacuum. The fact that was recently exposed in articles in the press—that this commonwealth government is actually returning the smallest percentage of funds received to the states of any government over the last 30 years—

should be the starting point for any debate about the public health system in Australia. All this rubbish about the GST proceeds—as if the GST was given as a windfall over and above moneys that the state always used to have—is not true. All the states have relinquished their tax bases in order to get the GST and, at the same time, the other grants offered by the commonwealth have been reduced to such a point that the states are, in effect, on a starvation diet, and have been for some time.

The question of public hospital funding, when looked at by itself, is not an adequate part of the picture either, because the public hospital system in South Australia—and I suspect elsewhere—is being caught in a pincer movement orchestrated entirely by the commonwealth government. That is, first of all, you starve the states of funds generally, and you starve them of grants for public hospitals but, at the same time, just to make it more difficult, you choke off general practice to the point where the number of people who are able to get timely and effective services from general practitioners is reducing.

Those people ultimately present in a more serious condition than they otherwise would, and many of them are presenting to the public hospitals. Instead of presenting to their GP on day one of their illness, and getting timely treatment, they are presenting into week two or three of their illness and clogging up the emergency departments of the public hospitals; or, they wind up being admitted to the public hospitals and occupying beds that could otherwise be allocated to people who might, for example, require elective surgery.

The question about GPs is something that needs to be considered. The issue of provider numbers for general practitioners—in other words, a licence to operate within the Medicare system—is entirely within the gift of the commonwealth government. For reasons of its own, the commonwealth has decided to choke off provider numbers. The effect is to reduce the number of GPs in the community. This is a very serious problem. Every member of this parliament knows that there are people in their electorate who cannot get ready access to a general practitioner. Why is that? The answer is very simple. The answer is that the commonwealth government has restricted the number of provider numbers available to the point where general practices are now universally operating under strain. This even extends to foreign doctors, who are permitted to come into this country and be given provider numbers only if they operate in certain regional areas. I do not necessarily have a problem with regional areas being serviced by GPs, but they cannot get access to city areas, because provider numbers are not being supplied to them.

Not only is the commonwealth government choking off access to GPs by its persistent restriction of provider numbers but also commonwealth government policy in relation to the universities means that our university system is now basically a sausage machine churning out graduates for money. Many of those graduates are overseas paying students. I am not a xenophobe and I do not have a problem with overseas students coming into this country but, if they are displacing Australian residents who would otherwise complete medical degrees and be given a provider number, that is not good for this intractable problem we have presently of a lack of general practice staff to actually do the job on the ground in a timely way.

So, let us not just consider what the commonwealth government is doing in terms of starving the public hospital

system of adequate funding to do its job. Let us also consider what it is doing to clog up the public hospital system with unnecessary admissions to emergency departments and unnecessary stays in hospital beds by people who otherwise would have been looked after in a timely fashion by their general practitioners, because of a combination of its education policies through the universities which make it more and more difficult for Australian citizens who want to go on and do a medical degree, first, to get a place and, second, to get a provider number if they ever finish their course.

This is lunacy. The whole system is being choked at both ends and the state is winding up wearing the mess, with less money from the commonwealth. So, with the greatest respect for the member for Bragg who wants to talk about inquiries into various shortcomings of particular cases, yes, those things happen. There are tragedies that happen every day all over the place. Some of them are avoidable and some are mere accidents that cannot be anticipated in advance. But what can be anticipated with absolute mathematical certainty is that, if you choke off the number of graduates completing medical degrees in Australia and choke off the number of provider numbers given to those graduates to enable them to get out and operate in general practice, you will inevitably apply pressure to the public hospital system. It is absolutely obvious. And, until something is done about this—which is, again, entirely within the control of the commonwealth—it will get worse and worse. In a sense, the motion put forward by the member for Reynell is addressing the icing on the cake—the ultimate insult, which is that not only do you starve the general practice of graduates and provider numbers but you then also starve the hospitals of money to deal with the mess you have made.

The commonwealth government should hang its head in shame over this. If it wants to control cost blowouts under the Medicare system, the way to do it is not to go through this grubby exercise in cost shifting, which is to make people get sicker and sicker and shovel them into the state public hospital system and say, 'There you are, state government; it is your problem and, by the way, we are not going to fund you for it.' It is disgusting. After all, we are all Australians. I would have thought the commonwealth government, instead of sitting there like some sort of Uncle Scrooge collecting his money and flicking the gold coins around the Treasury all afternoon and saying, 'Isn't this good; we have a \$19 billion surplus,' could at least address itself to finding opportunities for Australian citizens to complete medical degrees and opportunities for Australians who complete medical degrees to get a provider number, and doing something about the chronic shortage of GPs, particularly in areas such as the area I represent, where elderly people, people with chronic illness and people with mental illness are finding it almost impossible to get timely medical intervention.

This is a very important issue, and I am much heartened by what I read in the newspapers which suggests to me that, within a matter of months, we will have a new government at a federal level which will cast a fresh eye over this problem and, hopefully, come up with some solutions which will improve it considerably. I think it is to the credit of the member for Reynell to have put this matter before us. Unfortunately, it is even worse than she foreshadows in her motion, and I urge all members to support the motion.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher): I think it is accurate to say that you could spend all the tax revenue, and any other

revenue you have, on our public health system and our private health system by way of subsidies or whatever but you would never have enough money. In essence, it is a bottomless pit and it will continue to be so until, I guess, there are some fundamental changes in the behaviour of the citizens of this country—and I will come to that point in a moment.

The first thing I want to say is that the public health system in South Australia is an excellent one. It is not perfect—no system is—but I can say from personal experience two years ago that the level of care in the public health system is fantastic. I had an opportunity then, within the space of two weeks, to experience both the public and the private hospital systems and, whilst the public system does not have a lot of the bells and whistles or fancy colour TV screens (although you can hire one if you want one), and you do not get a glass of wine with your meals, in my experience the standard of medical care is nevertheless fantastic. People often point the finger at public hospital treatment and highlight the occasional deficiency, but I can tell you that they have shortcomings in the private system as well; it is just that they are often protected by the threat of legal action. I know of a case at one of our large private hospitals where someone had a colonoscopy, but that private hospital had forgotten to sterilise the equipment for conducting that procedure. They paid out the patient and others, but suppressed it under a legal agreement. So, the idea that our public hospitals are the only ones that have problems is completely inaccurate.

The important thing about our public hospital system is the fact that we need to remember, and the people running it need to remember, that the system is there for the benefit of the public: it is not there for the benefit of the medical profession or any other staff, whether full-time, contract or whatever. I sometimes think that the hospital system revolves around what suits the medical profession rather than what necessarily suits the patients or the wider public. People are reluctant to criticise those in the medical profession because they know that one day they may come under the care of someone in that role; however, that should not deter us from raising legitimate concerns. I guess it is a bit like the fact that many of us are reluctant to criticise judges and magistrates because of the fear that one day we may front up and incur their wrath.

The member for Enfield made mention of medical training. I know that the AMA has consistently resisted any concept or implementation of bonding of medical students—and I do not mean that in the 'flesh' sense. I see no reason why we cannot support more local students through their medical degree on the basis that they will work in country areas. The argument is put forward that they are not experienced enough, so we would not really want them, on graduation, going out to country areas. Well, that can be got around by building into the contract an arrangement that they do clinical experience in a larger setting before they go out to those country areas.

I am puzzled as to why the AMA keeps opposing the concept of paying students while they are at university in return for serving time in a country location after the students have had suitable clinical experience, because the army has been doing it for a long time. I have two nieces—one who is a dentist in the army and one who is a pharmacist still in training—and they have a fantastic scheme. You join the army and they pay you while you are at university. You get better books and better equipment than most of the other

students and you are guaranteed employment when you graduate; however, that is on the condition that you have to serve, possibly in a war zone or remote area. It was a very successful scheme that used to operate in relation to teachers, and I believe it should be considered in relation to the training of medical students. However, as I have emphasised, I believe there should be a proviso that they get adequate clinical experience before they are put out into, say, a country area where they are going to be essentially and largely working on their own.

We have heard much discussion lately about the need to improve dental health. I have always understood that teeth are part of the body, but maybe I have read the wrong textbooks. For a long time we have had this inadequate approach to dental health. I believe both the federal government and the federal opposition have made commitments along the lines of helping to deal with what is a crisis, particularly for the poorer people in the community who cannot afford to get adequate and appropriate dental care. So, when we are talking about public health, I trust that adequate focus is being given to the need to provide good dental care because, if your teeth and gums are in a poor condition, it is obviously going to affect your wellbeing and ability to function. The problem with our health system is that it has been an ideal situation for the blame game, so that the states can blame the commonwealth and vice versa. The idea of running our health system from Canberra does not appeal to me. It is quite easy to transfer money from Canberra to the states, but the idea of bureaucrats in Canberra running our health system does not inspire me with any confidence at all. In fact, I think that all it would do is boost the profits of Qantas because you would have bureaucrats going back and forth in great numbers.

The point I alluded to at the start was that spending on health equates to a bottomless pit. I would like to see a lot more emphasis put on preventative measures. In fact, I wrote recently to minister Hill and also to the Premier suggesting that they take the lead in this regard and ensure that all public servants have the opportunity to be involved in an in situ health assessment, initially focusing on such things as blood pressure, blood sugar, skin cancer checks and so on, as a way of setting an example to the rest of the community in terms of preventative health measures; not only would it be good for the individual but it would also eventually be good for the taxpayer, and it would be good for the public and private health systems as well.

Some of our councils, such as Marion council and the City of Onkaparinga, and many of our corporations, such as the ANZ Bank and others, already have this sort of program. I was talking recently to the CEO of the City of Onkaparinga, Jeff Tate, and he told me that their preventative health programs have already provided great dividends, not necessarily in saving lives, although he hinted at that, but, really, in doing some great things in relation to the health and wellbeing of the staff at that council. The City of Marion has been a leader in this regard as well. That council not only does things such as blood pressure checks, but it also has its staff checked for skin cancers, and it provides support if someone, for example, has a stressful situation involving their family. All of that not only lifts the morale of council staff but also spins off into savings in a reduction in sick time, time off, and also, ultimately, a reduction in cost to the taxpayer.

Unfortunately, the Minister for Health has not agreed to my proposal at the present time, but I trust he will have a look at that issue again. I was contemplating a scheme like that when I was Speaker, but I was told that it would set a

precedent. Well, so what; good initiatives deserve to be implemented. Here in parliament, we do a bit of that in relation to 'flu injections, but we could be doing a lot more in terms of detecting health issues long before they reach a point where they become life threatening. Just on that subject, I will conclude by saying that recently a close relative of mine was diagnosed with breast cancer. The state system of mammogram screening was excellent and, within a month, she had had the operation and had dealt with that very serious matter—and that was done through Flinders Medical Centre.

Mr PICCOLO (Light): I will make a small contribution in support of this motion. I think it is very important, particularly in electorates such as mine, which are on the fringe of the metro region where the impact of the doctor shortage is greatest. I would like to compare, for example, what the state government has done in this area to improve health services in my electorate, and contrast that to what the federal government has done, which will not take me long to mention. First, the state government, under a recent agreement with local GPs, has invested enormously in an accident and emergency service at the local hospital. New programs such as GP Plus, nurse practitioners, and the major upgrade of Lyell McEwin are having a positive impact on the delivery of health services to my community. If you contrast that to the actions of the federal government, you see the ad hoc decision in Tasmania where poll-driven responses do nothing to actually improve health services.

In my electorate, for example—and I am sure that this is a problem that the member for Goyder would find in his electorate—the shortage of doctors is a major issue. For example—and I do not get any special treatment—two weeks ago I rang to make an appointment with my local doctor, and I am seeing him tomorrow. It took me two weeks to actually see a doctor because of the shortage of doctors—

Mr Goldsworthy: You should plan your health better.

Mr PICCOLO: I should plan my ill-health better. The reality is that doctors are under enormous pressure, particularly in country regions. The main reason for the doctor shortage partly concerns a lack of provider numbers. The federal government does not provide enough provider numbers. The issue is that, if you do not have provider numbers, you cannot access the Medicare system. You can get doctors, but their patients cannot access Medicare. So, without provider numbers, you cannot get the doctors you need. A number of practices in Gawler—and I have had some discussions with the northern division of general practice also—say the issue is now not so much one of attracting doctors, because they have been successful in recruiting them, but it is actually getting doctors in the region, because they cannot get the provider numbers.

We all have to suffer in the Light electorate, because the federal government sticks to the ratio of doctors per head of population, which clearly is not working. If you have to wait two weeks to see a doctor, it would suggest that perhaps there are not enough doctors in the region. Can the federal government see that? No. It does not see that at all. The lack of doctors is putting pressure on GPs, and it is also putting pressure on our public health system, because there are not enough doctors. People who go in for routine things go to the accident and emergency department. If the federal government was interested in actually making a difference, it would review that decision. Rather than making ad hoc decisions, it would support our local GPs and allied health workers by allowing more federal money to be put into the system.

We have a federal government and a state opposition that say that they support regional Australia. They could help regional and rural Australia by increasing the number of provider numbers, which would increase the number of doctors available, which would be a major initiative for the area. With those comments I support the motion.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): I cannot let this motion go without some comment about the fact that it is actually a state responsibility to fund and provide health services. Whilst it was a difficult process for the last Liberal government because we had such a huge state debt, do not keep blaming others for your own incapable mismanagement of the current position. We had the member for Light saying that he has to wait two weeks to see a doctor. That may be because those doctors are extremely busy. Why? Because there are so many people getting sick. Why? Because primary health care in this state is being neglected. You just have to look at the current health programs in this state. You are going to spend \$1.7 billion on a new box full of new toys for some of the boys, instead of spending it where it should be, on primary health care. You obviously have not read the Menadue report on what should be happening with primary health.

If this government does not pay some attention to the state of primary health care in South Australia—and it does not matter whether it is Liberal, Labor or a coalition of any sort—it will never cope with health demands. It is about time that people started facing up to the fact that we have to keep people out of hospital and doctors' surgeries, and we will then make sure that the people of South Australia who do have to go to hospital receive what is, without any doubt whatsoever, one of the highest standards of health care, not only in Australia but also in the world.

This government takes cheap shots at the federal government, when it knows full well that this is a state responsibility. If it did not waste money on blow-outs in other infrastructure and put it back into a properly managed and planned health system, the people of South Australia would not have to wait two weeks to see a GP: they would be able to see a doctor within an appropriate time. They would not have to wait for hours in A&E. The nurses and doctors would be there and would be properly funded and looked after, and the equipment they used would be the latest and the very best. It is just so disappointing. Of course, we have an election coming up. Let us ask Kevin Rudd what he will commit, and see what his plans are for primary health care. You cannot keep putting it into the tertiary end of the market and just provide more and more doctors: it should be invested in people's health.

When I present cheques to various sporting groups around the place, I take great pleasure in saying that they are participating in keeping people out of hospital. They are part of the primary health care system. It is not just health; it is also sport and recreation and the whole social milieu that is out there. Yet this government is trying to say, 'It is the federal government. It is not giving us enough money or provider numbers.' Give me a break. You people should look at what you have been doing for the past six years and what you did for all the years before you broke the State Bank. You did absolutely nothing. Do not blame the federal government for your mismanagement.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Madam, I have a point of order. The member for Morphett persists in referring to members of the government in the second person plural, and

I ask him to address his remarks through the chair and address us by our electorate names.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms Breuer): I uphold the point of order.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, Madam Acting Speaker. I know that you care for you constituents in Whyalla—and you can put that in your election pamphlet if you really want to. However, as for the rest of your colleagues over there, I cannot be as frank, because this government has let down the people of South Australia. They have a long history of doing it, and they will keep doing so as long as they are able to disguise their mismanagement with furphies of announcements. I should add that, because there are so many other issues, unfortunately, health is now second to water as the number one issue on people's minds. However, without water, people's health will go down the tube. I will finish my comments with those remarks, because it is beyond the recognition of any sensible person in this house—

An honourable member interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Dr McFETRIDGE: —or out there in the public to recognise the fact that health is a state responsibility and that the federal government should be commended for what it has done.

Mr VENNING secured the adjournment of the debate.

HOSKIN, Mr K.

Mr VENNING (Schubert): Before I move this motion, I want to inform members that Ms Leslee Robb has been making good progress today, and I thank them for their care and consideration. I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes the Department of Education and Children's Services treatment of Mr Hoskin, a teacher at the Nuriootpa High School;
- (b) regrets the personal hurt to Mr Hoskin caused by the department's method of investigation;
- (c) recognises the diligence and professionalism of Mr Hoskin in relation to the pioneering of wine, aquacultural and agricultural courses at the school; and
- (d) recognises that teachers in general should be given the benefit of the doubt until any vexatious allegations are substantiated.

I move this motion with some regret, because I have previously mentioned this matter in the house and, after 4½ months, nothing has apparently happened. Mr Kevin Hoskin is a teacher at Nuriootpa High School, and I feel he is being very unfairly treated by the department of education. He is being investigated for an apparent misdemeanour and he has been removed from the school, with no justification or reasoning being provided. Mr Hoskin, after 4½ months, is still unaware of what he is being accused. Mr Hoskin was the agricultural coordinator at Nuriootpa High School until the Department of Education and Children's Services took action in early April to remove him from the school.

In his position, Kevin has achieved many great things for the school, including establishing a first-class school wine program and programs in aquaculture, including barramundi breeding. He also worked with the late Mr Colin Hayes, arranging for students to work at Lindsay Park to learn about the racing industry. The wine course for secondary students was pioneered by Mr Hoskin and is now used as a model for similar courses Australia-wide. There has even been much international interest. With little help from state government funds, Kevin coerced many thousands of dollars from local

sponsors to get the wine program up and running and has built a very solid foundation for the future. He even represented his school with the principal in Parliament House, having two receptions and dinners at which the school's achievements were showcased—and we all enjoyed the barramundi and red wines on both occasions.

Mr Hoskin was notified by the department that inquiries and investigations would be undertaken regarding his handling of Nuriootpa High School's agricultural program. Mr Hoskin was not given any valid reason for this course of action to be taken by the department. Now, almost five months later, he still has not been told. That is absolutely disgraceful. Who is responsible for this? The Department of Education and Children's Services then removed Mr Hoskin from his teaching duties at Nuriootpa High School and reassigned him to Eudunda High School. Again, in doing so, DECS gave no reason for this and still has not accused Mr Hoskin of any misdemeanour. Mr Hoskin did not accept the new teaching post assigned to him by the department and, instead, is now taking stress leave. I have to say that I do not blame him. The treatment he has received thus far from the department is unwarranted and appalling.

The length of time the Department of Education and Children's Services has taken with its investigations, without any valid reasons being presented—and an investigation that remains incomplete—is an absolute disgrace. I find it totally unsatisfactory that a professional teacher such as Mr Hoskin can have his career affected in this way. Is there no better way of dealing with those pending investigation, rather than the drastic and very public action of removing the teacher from the school? Yes, I can understand if the accusation was of a very serious nature that could be justified—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Tell us what it is.

Mr VENNING: I don't know, but I am pretty certain that this is not the case here—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You don't know.

Mr VENNING:—far from it, but I don't know—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr VENNING: I don't know—I have said that. I do not know. Even after the police fraud squad's investigation found that Mr Hoskin had no case to answer, the education department has decided to continue its own investigations. Still no accusations or justifications have been provided to Mr Hoskin as to why the investigation is being continued. I have written to the Minister for Education and Children's Services twice regarding this matter and have had no satisfaction at all regarding my inquiries. The response I was given did not provide any detailed explanation for the treatment to which Mr Hoskin was being subjected. The minister informed me in her response that the audit into the viticulture and agriculture programs run by Mr Hoskin had raised issues which are currently being investigated by the government's investigation unit. The minister said that the police had referred the Department of Education and Children's Services to this course of action.

However, in a letter sent to Mr Hoskin in May from the Special Investigations Unit, he was told:

DECS will now initiate its own investigation to determine whether there are grounds for a formal disciplinary action inquiry into whether any misconduct has occurred.

Too bad about Mr Hoskin's welfare while all this drags on. No reference was given anywhere in a subsequent letter to Mr Hoskin stating that the DECS' inquiry was the course of action the unit would take. Many in the community are asking why Kevin has been made to stand down at Nuriootpa High

School when he has not been found guilty or even been formally accused of anything. Locals are asking, 'If he is guilty, why has he been reassigned to another teaching post? If he is not guilty, why is he not back teaching at Nuriootpa High School where he belongs?' There is a strong suspicion amongst many of the staff of Nuriootpa High School that Kevin has been singled out because of comments he made in the media late last year. Essentially, Mr Hoskin suggested that most of the support for the wine program has come from the federal government and the local sponsors.

Mr Hoskin may not do everything to the letter of his instruction manuals, but he has the support and respect of his students, co-workers and the local community generally. Two past principals of Nuriootpa High School could not speak any more highly of Kevin Hoskin, saying he was one of the best teachers they had ever worked with. His efforts went well above what was required and he often worked out of hours without pay to ensure the quality of the school's wine and aquaculture programs.

Totally independent of my action here today, the staff of the Nuriootpa High School and members of the Education Union sent a letter to the local press which outlined their support for Mr Kevin Hoskin. The staff and members state in the letter (and, on their behalf, I will say that this is very brave stuff):

We are dismayed at the length of time DECS has taken to complete the investigation. We regret the attitude DECS has shown towards Kevin and the whole school community, including his colleagues. We strongly urge DECS to act as quickly as possible to resolve this matter in a way that is both transparent and fair.

Mr Hoskin, the staff, students and local community are all suffering as a result of the treatment Mr Hoskin is receiving from DECS, and concerns are mounting as to whether this issue will affect the long-term credibility of the school. I am informed that there are up to three other staff members who are currently on stress over this matter or matters allied to it. The department must ensure that all investigations are undertaken in a timely manner, that they are justified and do not subject the person being investigated or those within the school community to undue stress and long process. The Department of Education must immediately substantiate or even outline its specific allegations against Mr Hoskin, or drop them completely and reinstate him immediately.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr VENNING: After 4½ months, what do you think? For the sake of all concerned this matter must be resolved as a matter of urgency so that the school can return to normal and do what it does best: teaching our young leaders of tomorrow, and working hard to regain its permanent position as one of the best public schools in South Australia. It is risky for MPs to get involved in internal departmental matters such as this, but I could not not get involved in it.

As I said (and it is on the public record), I hold Nuriootpa High School up there with the best in Australia—or I did—including the best private schools, and the courses and the curriculum offered by Mr Hoskin is but one of the reasons. No other issue has raised more public sympathy, in my time as an MP, as this one, with weekly calls, letters and comments as I meet people when going about my duties.

At a casual meeting called by a teacher to support Kevin, 40 teachers attended. That, in itself, should have rung the alarm bells some weeks ago. Also, the calibre of the people contacting me—people from all levels of the Barossa and the region—moves me to take this action. This sounds to me like a classic case of professional envy and someone making a

vexatious and erroneous accusation—from a person in a position of responsibility. Mr Hoskin has not been given the benefit of the doubt, has not been told what he is accused of and has very publicly been found guilty by the act of being expelled from the school he loves—a very public execution in a small country community.

I have tried to do the right thing: I have discussed this with the department superintendent many times, the minister twice, the department's chief executive (Mr Robinson), and others but, after almost five months, still nothing. I think it is fair and reasonable that, if Mr Hoskin cannot be told what his misdemeanour is, or what the accusation is, he should be immediately reinstated at the school and a formal letter of apology given. I cannot see how this sort of thing can happen but, in Nuriootpa High School's case, this is not the first time. Apparently, approximately 2½ years ago, another teacher was similarly accused and moved from the school, but nothing was ever resolved after 2½ years. Apparently, the accusations came from the same person.

This matter could become very difficult before it is finished. I hope it is resolved quickly. I do this in the name of fair play. For the record, Mr Hoskin is not a personal friend of mine; I know him as a supporter of the school and through its wine program, etc. I can be accused of being an admirer of his. Apparently, all accusations have been discounted. First, the wine licences were questioned and all was okay; secondly, the wine budget came under scrutiny and there was no problem; his trips overseas were investigated, but the minister had given approval for those; and then there was a question of where he made his own wine, and a credible witness discounted that. This whole saga would be amusing if it was not so serious. Apparently four people are now on stress about this and associated problems at the school. What has all this cost the school? Did the person making the accusation have a good record at a previous school?

At the end of the debate, after the minister and others have had the opportunity to rebut or refute the allegations I am making, I would like to move an amendment to the motion that Mr Hoskin be immediately reinstated. How many teachers in the system across South Australia have been treated like this? I look forward to the minister's response. I regret moving this motion but it is a matter of last resort. I urge the house to assess what has happened and support all our teachers. After all, they have the most important job of all—teaching our children and tomorrow's Australians. I urge the house to support the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Schubert, will you clarify whether you were moving an amendment or flagging that you would move an amendment?

Mr VENNING: No; I deliberately did not do it now.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder): I speak in support of the motion by the member for Schubert. I do not know Mr Hoskin, but I have been contacted by a well-respected retired gentleman from Nuriootpa who is equally concerned about what has occurred to Mr Hoskin. The greatest thing that any person can possess is their reputation. In this case the reputation of a person, who, I am advised, has contributed enormously to his community and generations of students within that school, has been tarnished. The person who wrote to me about this matter is very aware of the accusations that have been made, even though he had a higher role in the community and is now retired. I have spoken to the member for Schubert about this motion. They want the issue to be

investigated and not be allowed to roll on for many months, while not only a person and his reputation is tarnished but also the school in some ways is at threat.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Do you know the allegations?

Mr GRIFFITHS: No; I do not know. I am only interested in ensuring that the house is aware of the fact that this gentleman has had allegations levied against him but he has not had the opportunity to defend himself because it has not been investigated to an appropriate level. I have been privileged in my life to live in regional areas for all but four years. I realise the importance of the role teachers play within any community. Teachers hold a very high standing within regional South Australia. People put their absolute faith in them to ensure their children are educated to the best degree possible.

Overall, the quality of the teachers in our schools is excellent. I have been told that Mr Hoskin is one of the absolute best people. He has tried to find solutions and innovative approaches to ensure that his kids—and I presume he treats them as 'his kids'—actually learn the skills they will need to become worthwhile members of our community and have a chance to develop in an industry that is important to the Nuriootpa area and the wineries it services.

I urge the house to ensure that this issue is brought to the attention of the minister, not just fobbed off. As the member for Schubert said, he has spoken to the minister at least once, possibly twice. Written correspondence has been directed to the Minister for Education and Children's Services, and the Attorney-General indicated that he, too, has received a letter from the member for Schubert. Let us hope that Mr Hoskin has the opportunity for justice to be undertaken here, that the accusations against him are investigated as soon as possible and that a determination is made so that everyone can get on with their life.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

DROUGHT

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes the effects of the current drought on the lives of all South Australians; and
- (b) explores options that can be undertaken by governments at all levels, now and in the future, as a coordinated drought response to help lessen the drought's negative effects.

My offices at Ceduna and Port Lincoln are being overwhelmed by issues related to the current drought and past droughts and exacerbated by the high Australian dollar. It is no surprise to me that other bodies throughout the state are having the same experience. On Monday, I, along with a number of my Liberal colleagues, attended the annual general meeting of the South Australian Association of Rural Counselling Services Incorporated, established in 1986, where reports painted a grim picture. The general manager, Kay Matthias, reported problems in all agricultural sectors.

These longstanding rural counselling service committees, which have done such a wonderful job over many years, are all winding down, with most now in caretaker mode and dispersing their assets. The Rural Financial Counselling Service South Australia Incorporated has replaced the longstanding rural counselling services and is funded by the Australian and state governments, replacing the former Rural Counselling Service that was a product of the 1980s interest rate burst.

Don Blessing, the Chair of the Rural Financial Counselling Service South Australia, commented at the meeting, 'The committees are tired. They have been doing a great job for 20 years.' They are going to be terribly missed, particularly at the current time. However, I can understand why they are undergoing a change and I thank the members who have put their heart and soul into these jobs for the work they have done. Over the years my office has made hundreds of referrals to their service.

I have been advised that at the Regional Facilitation Group meeting, held in Port Lincoln on Tuesday, most staff confirmed that they are coping with drought issues. The Regional Facilitation Group consists of the local state government departmental leaders.

Port Lincoln Health Services and Family and Youth Services spoke of the problems they are having in filling positions for crisis care workers of various kinds, particularly mental health. While funding is essential, getting professionals is also an issue, possibly an even bigger issue. But just as staff are redeployed in an obvious crisis such as a bushfire, so the option of redeploying professionals, perhaps on a temporary basis, must be investigated as part of the drought response.

The federal member for Grey, Barry Wakelin, this week announced 'a new round of Australian government funding to help rural communities overcome psychological trauma caused by the drought'. Local divisions of rural medicine will each receive around \$100 000 to employ community support workers. So, with much of the money there, a way must be found to get the people to fill the positions.

The Department for Environment and Heritage is being drawn in—an unlikely partner to drought problems—as farmers call on DEH because they are facing unusual pest species due to the conditions.

The drought effects are evident in children and schools, with one school principal asking parents, through the school newsletter, to be careful of their 'language and actions' around their children, as they were noticing that 'some students are starting to exhibit unusual behavioural characteristics'.

Primary Industries and Research South Australia, naturally, are seeing the problems first-hand as they move among the rural communities.

At this stage, possibly only the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure indicates that it has nothing to report on the drought. Possibly with the cost of fuel and the distances needed to travel anywhere, people are staying at home to reduce costs, which itself is not a good thing. During the last drought crisis I knew of women who, because of fuel costs, were not going to their doctors to have medical checks that they were due for. This is an even more acute problem now that many local hospitals no longer have doctors and, of course, specialists are located so far away.

I am aware of five property foreclosures across the upper Eyre Peninsula, and this is just the local ones that I am aware of. Members of the Drought Task Force, Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board, Eyre Regional Development Board and many constituents are giving my staff and me an insight into the complexity of some of the financial conditions forced on so many farmers.

For a variety of reasons, including financial pressure, farmers have locked into forward grain contracts. For example, early in the season, which looked so promising, some locked in at \$160 to \$230 per tonne, which seemed a

very fair price. However, as the season has progressed prices have doubled and are still rising.

The real concern now is that the farmers will reap little, if any, grain at all, and so they will be doubly penalised. They are committed to contracts and so are forced to purchase grain at the higher price to fulfil (that is, wash out) the contract while not having any, or little, grain to sell themselves, which anyway is locked in at the lower price.

I give the background to just one farming operation that is in trouble. The property has been in the family for 50 years. The father, who cleared the land, died seven years ago and the mother is still in partnership with her son. A financier took him on in August 2006, valuing the land at \$700 per hectare. However, he was shut down a few months later, in December, with his land suddenly being revalued at \$300 per hectare. The takeover will occur at the end of March 2008. The farmer disputed the appraisal and paid for an independent valuer, who valued the land at \$500 per hectare. This made him viable, but the financier refused to refinance him. He sold some of his mother's shares in order to put in a crop for her. However, at this stage it looks as though there will be no return, not even seed. He spoke with his accountant about what the financier might do; probably, they will try to sell the property and then wipe off the remainder of the debt. He has not had a return for three years: last year was a drought and, before that, poor commodity prices. He is surviving on Centrelink exceptional circumstances payments. At the moment, he has not been able to get past his present issues even to think about the future.

It is people like these who need one-on-one help to plan their future. They either need to extricate themselves from the farm with some dignity or, if possible, be assisted into other jobs in the mining or perhaps the fishing industry, where they are excellent workers with good skills. In the interim, their farms could possibly be leased to other more profitable farmers.

A number of the issues that compound the drought are totally outside the control of anyone in the industries that are affected. For instance, the value of the Australian dollar makes a tremendous impact on our farmers, who rely on exports for the majority of their income. The South Australian Farmers Federation President, Wayne Cornish, earlier this year warned that the ongoing rise of the Australian dollar would hit farmers particularly hard, with lower income and higher input costs, and was a double blow to those battling drought. He said that the 70¢ mark was traditionally seen as a point where exports started to become unprofitable and that the surge in the dollar to 80-plus US cents was a significant worry.

There is a need to ensure that a third person goes with the farmer when negotiating with financial institutions. I have been advised of situations where less than ethical tactics were used but, when an independent person sat in, negotiations proceeded well, even without the third person having to intervene. This support is of great help when farmers are negotiating what they can take from the business in cases where financial institutions are foreclosing. Currently, some people are being left high and dry at this stage, when they have to make decisions under pressure about where they will go and what they will do, all the while coping with the mental, emotional and psychological trauma of seeing their whole life and career as a failure and the future as a black hole.

However, more people, small businesses as well as farmers, must apply for the interest rate subsidy available

under the Australian government's exceptional circumstances drought assistance. Rural financial counsellor Tracy van Loon of Wudinna said that banks in general have been very supportive. She has negotiated for clients who have been successful in gaining carry-on finance. This has usually involved the revaluation of properties and an increase in borrowings.

The Chairperson of the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Committee, Mr Brian Foster, along with the Eyre Regional Development Board Chairman, Jeff Pearson, and the CEO, Mark Cant, and others, were members of last year's drought task force that put together the successful application for Eyre Peninsula to be included in the Australian government's exceptional circumstances program. However, Mr Foster said that the Eyre Peninsula Natural Resources Management Board cannot put in the effort to the same extent that it did last year without adequate resources, since the work and time involved impacted negatively on the EP NRM and volunteer board members. I understand that the board has already approached the state government asking for the appointment of a full-time person to assist in this area. Bringing the season very much into perspective, it is likely that some of the volunteer EP NRM board members themselves may not have a crop this year.

There is an urgent need for a mentoring system for farmers and their families, especially those who must accept that they will be unable to continue farming. Farmers have a different psyche to most people, since their whole life and industry depends on self-help and personally overcoming obstacles. There is a need for alternatives to be presented realistically. Just as Roxby Downs provided a lifeline for many farmers in the 1980s, mining ventures can be a lifeline for many in the present era. Some families in the past found a new life while others used the off-farm income to stabilise their farming operations so they could continue in the industry. Oxiana has already come to the party and indicated that it is keen to employ farmers.

There is a need for a facilitator or facilitators to work with farmers and their families to assist with transition arrangements as the move is made from farming to mining, fishing or some other employment. The facilitator needs to be based in a central point so that those who need the service know about it and can access it easily and cheaply.

The Eyre Peninsula Community Alliance, the Rural Finance Counselling Service and other organisations, such as Family and Community Services and Centrelink, are all involved in one way or another, but the mental, emotional and psychological assets need to be addressed so that we are not faced with more problems in the future and at a greater cost.

The South Australian Farmers Federation is interested in the package that Country Health SA and the Eyre Peninsula Community Alliance have put together, and there is growing urgency for their project Staying Strong. Staying Strong is a pilot project that may be copied throughout Australia where it is needed. The basic format is to have a family barbecue and positive speakers—a non-pressured day where families can find joy in being alive and find hope for the future. Michael Wallis of Eyre Mental Health Services—who did such tremendous work with families affected by the 2005 Black Tuesday bushfire on the Eyre Peninsula—is one of the driving forces. Staying Strong is to hit the road at Kimba on Sunday 16 September; Ceduna, Friday 21; Rudall, Saturday 22 (in the late morning to finish on time for those who want to watch the AFL preliminary final on the big

screen); Wirrulla, Wednesday 26; and Friday 5 October at Cowell.

One-on-one counselling needs to be undertaken to get families and individuals through the crisis.

Some of these families will leave the industry, and appropriate assistance now will ensure that the state is not burdened with people experiencing ongoing health and mental problems in the future. The latter scenario was one of the results of the rural crisis in the 1980s when the need to assist people holistically was not recognised. Many options could be put in place—such as temporary or short-term projects—to provide an income for families while benefiting the state. The removal of pests, flora and fauna from national parks is one that comes to mind. A plan to accelerate the sealing of roads and upgrading of highways is another that would benefit all South Australians for years to come. The Glendambo to Wirrulla road in particular would give a great boost to tourism and the mining industries while providing work for the locals.

The benefits of work done under the RED scheme in the 1970s are still visible today. To do this, state and federal governments need to provide local governments with community infrastructure funding that can be applied to roads, district halls or other projects that will benefit the community and provide an income and employment for families to get through the current crisis. This will also keep people in their regional areas so that populations do not fall below the critical levels required to maintain the viability of small businesses, schools, services and towns.

We have the ingenuity and the entrepreneurship. What we need is the government's will to act constructively and quickly. We also need long-term plans. South Australian Farmers Federation (SAFF) CEO, Carol Vincent, said that SAFF is deeply concerned about the sustainability of the rural sector and rural communities and believes that governments need to act now with a well thought out plan. While the immediate focus is on the grains industry, she has also had calls from intensive livestock producers who rely on grain to feed their animals (principally pigs and chickens) who believe their industries are on the verge of falling apart due to the high cost of grain and the potentially limited amount that will be available.

It is ironic that, while so much agriculture and horticulture is stopped because of a lack of water, we have abundant water within a short distance of all the districts where these industries are the mainstays of those regions. The water, of course, is unusable in its present form. However, technology and science provide plenty of answers for turning unusable water into useable water. Long term we should be developing desalination plants. A drought does not change the soil from something that grows crops to something that will not support crops. Long-term climate change may so alter rainfall patterns that what we now call drought becomes a permanent aspect of our climate. The soil will still be good for growing things, however, we must provide water some other way than depend on rain. Here, again, desalination comes into the picture.

Time expired.

Mrs GERAGHTY secured the adjournment of the debate.

DESALINATION PROJECTS

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): I move:

That this house condemns the state government for spending \$48.6 million to pipe 1.4 gigalitres of water from the River Murray to Eyre Peninsula, rather than investing in water initiatives and encouraging private investment into water solutions that will benefit all South Australians.

I am often accused of being too passionate, with a capital 'P', and I know this irritates some people. No-one in this chamber would be in any doubt that my passion is my electorate of Flinders, and promoting our value to the rest of the state and beyond. This wonderful state and Eyre Peninsula are only being hampered by the short-sightedness of our leaders and people who are in a position to make decisions to truly make a difference. We were broke as a state in 1993 when I came into parliament, not even able to pay the interest on our state debt from its income. Now the debt is largely paid off, there is money from GST, the world wants our minerals and it is willing to pay the price. All we need is infrastructure, particularly power and water, but the Labor government is hung up on private enterprise and borrowing, so it will not allow business to invest in infrastructure, nor will it borrow to do the construction itself, resulting in a huge loss of opportunities for South Australia.

Much to my amazement, the only infrastructure PPPs this government is investing in or allowing are non-income earning assets such as pipelines to Eyre Peninsula for \$48.6 million, police stations and courts. These projects produce no return on investment to pay off the debts and should be left until the engine room of the economy is producing profits to pay for them, and this they will do much better if they have the necessary infrastructure.

The Premier yesterday attempted to ridicule the Leader of the Opposition about the desalination announcement made by the former leader months ago. I am not a mathematician, but I think the Premier might have his sums incorrect, particularly when you consider the delays in getting the project going, adding to the costs, and the government's reluctance not to tender with private enterprise, which can build much better and more quickly than can the government. The Premier stated that costings were actually five times the \$450 million suggested by the opposition. My maths say that five times \$450 million is \$2.25 billion, and the Premier's price stated yesterday is \$1.4 billion, so what is the additional \$850 million in the Premier's costing? A BOO or BOOT project would have seen the desalination plant for Adelaide almost running by now and, if the Penrice salt flats and wind energy were used, no waste would be going out to sea or greenhouse gases being emitted from the coal-fired power. The 95 per cent dividend the government is presently taking from its wholly owned SA Water, plus taxes, put \$300 million back into state coffers last year—money which could have in one year gone a long way to paying for the desalination plant and which should have been put back into water infrastructure and not into general revenue. I cannot understand why the people who pay this money are not angry about this misuse and the threat to charge higher water rates to pay for the desalination plant, particularly when they have effectively already paid for it.

A proposed desalination plant for Ceduna is modular and can be scaled up so that the water costings used can be extrapolated to provide a comparison for the possible cost of an Adelaide desalination plant. It is expected to cost

\$22 million for just under one gigalitre per year and can be built in two years, which equates to about \$1.1 billion.

Debate adjourned.

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

LEGAL PROFESSION BILL

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

WATER RESTRICTIONS

A petition signed by 27 668 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to act immediately to allow the sensible use of drip irrigation in the gardens of South Australia was presented by Mr Hamilton-Smith.

Petition received.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that written answers to questions as detailed in the schedule I now table be distributed and printed in *Hansard*: Nos 67 to 70, 73, 74, 77, 78, 176, 178 and 209; and I direct that the following answers to questions without notice be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

INDUSTRY AND CAPABILITY NETWORK

67. **Dr McFETRIDGE:**

1. How much does it cost to operate the Industry and Capability Network SA and what resources have been provided in 2007-08 to support the Network?

2. What is the dollar value of investments and outcomes delivered by this Network and what benefits have been obtained for the State?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

1. In the 2007-08 State budget \$590 000 was approved for the Industry Capability Network SA. ICNSA has 7 FTEs and utilises the wider resources of the Department of Trade and Economic Development on an as-needs basis.

2. In 2006-07 the Industry Capability Network SA facilitated \$47.4 million worth of contracts for local companies. Without the assistance of the Industry Capability Network this work may have been sourced from interstate or overseas.

Based on a national ICN statistic of 13 jobs per million dollars, this represents an additional 616 jobs within SA.

An additional \$40 million in contracts from other States has been placed with SA based companies through ICN involvement in the originating States as a result of the national network.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PROGRAM

68. **Dr McFETRIDGE:**

1. What are the details of the \$270 000 in proposed payments to consultants for the Investment Attraction Program in 2007-08?

2. What will be the total cost of the 'Whole-of-State Marketing Strategy' and how will it impact the Investment Attraction Program?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

1. The \$270 000 in proposed payments represents the budget that has been allocated for consultants in 2007-08 for the Commercial Division of DTED. Consultants will be engaged where independent advice is sought beyond the level of skills contained in DTED.

2. Costs for the 'Whole-of-State Marketing Strategy' will be incurred on the basis of an agreed business case that supports the investment strategy for attracting investment to South Australia. This will be an integral part of supporting the investment attraction with a view to realising the benefits relating to opportunities such as the resources and defence boom period.

HAVE YOUR SAY—TALKING TARGETS**69. Dr McFETRIDGE:**

1. What was the total cost of holding the 'Have Your Say—Talking Targets' Conference and how much was spent on advertising and promoting this event?

2. How many non-Government Agencies and broader community groups were involved in this conference?

3. How many of the State Strategic Plan targets have been revised as a result of this conference?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

1. The Talking Targets – Growing Prosperity and Fostering Creativity Forum was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre on 2-3 May 2006. The Forum, organised by the Department of Trade and Economic Development, was the first of a series of objective based consultation sessions that contributed to an extensive state-wide community consultation aimed at informing the update of the South Australian Strategic Plan. This consultation culminated in a Community Congress held on 08 July 2006.

The total cost of the forum was \$131 928. There was no direct advertising or promotion of this event. Attendance at the Forum was by invitation and participants were drawn from governmental and community sources.

2. The conference was attended by approximately 230 people including leading academics, business leaders and association representatives, community and union leaders, welfare groups, local government and federal government agencies as well as senior South Australian Government officials.

There were representatives of over 75 different individual non state government, academic, welfare, local government community, business and federal government organisations at the Forum.

MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM FUNDING

70. Dr McFETRIDGE: Why has funding for the Market Assistance Program been reduced by \$200 000 in 2007-08?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

The Market Access Program for 2007-08 is allocated a fund of \$1 000 000, the same amount as was funded in 2006-07. There is no reduction in funding for 2007-08.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**73. Dr McFETRIDGE:**

1. Why has there been a \$175 000 overspend on consultants for the Economic Strategy and Policy Development Program in 2006-07?

2. How many consultants were employed, how much did they receive and what projects were undertaken in 2006-07?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

The increase in consultants of \$165 000 (incorrectly stated as \$175 000) between the 2006-07 Budget and the 2006-07 Estimated Result is due mainly to increases in the Greater Edinburgh Parks and Competitiveness Council projects. The objective of the Greater Edinburgh Parks project is to create a world class precinct that will underscore future industrial development in South Australia, while the objective of the Competitiveness Council project is to identify, develop and champion practical measures and reforms to enhance South Australia's competitiveness, in particular reducing business red tape.

Consultants were engaged to undertake 13 projects. Details of the consultants paid during 2006-07 are as follows:

Consultant	Description	Amount \$'000
SGS Economics & Planning	Report on Housing Affordability & Migration in South Australia	48
SA Centre for Economic Studies	Develop an annual measure of productivity for South Australia	13
SA Centre for Economic Studies	Economic impact assessments as part of the Innovation and Investment Fund of South Australia.	8
Alba Consulting	Consultancy Services for planning and establishment activities for the Minerals Resources and Heavy Engineering Skills Centre	49
Connor Holmes Consulting Pty Ltd	Consultancy Services to undertake the development of a strategic development plan for the Greater Edinburgh Parks area	121
EconSearch	Economic impact assessments as part of IIFSA evaluation to undertake the development for eight various projects.	11
University of South Australia	Gather and analyse data about the performance of small to medium enterprises in Adelaide	11
Master Plan SA Pty Ltd	Key issues and recommendation report on native vegetation and development	14
Rural Solutions SA (PIRSA)	Analyse the current regulations, and processes involved in undertaking a Development Application; undertake an audit of what information/referrals need to be considered and included in a Development Application; undertake a workshop with representatives of the involved agencies to commence mapping of the process; visually map the pathway	5
Neville Woodcock Consulting	Provide advice on priority areas for reform of government procurement processes from a supplier perspective and provision of supporting documentation.	1
Griffin Hilditch	Legal advice on documentation relating to Developer Levies	1
Eric Olsen Consulting	Preparation of Guidelines for agencies in costing savings for business from red tape reduction initiatives	To be expended in 2007-08
JK Wine Tourism & Hospitality Services	Preparation, development and presentation of a step-by-step café & restaurant guide	15

ECONOMIC STRATEGY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

74. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** Why is there a difference of \$181 000 in 'other' income between the 2006-07 estimated result and budgeted amount for 2007-08?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

The difference of \$181 000 in 'other' income between 2006-07 estimated result and budgeted amount for 2007-08 in the Economic Strategy and Policy Development program is due to once off revenue received in 2006-07 relating to the Greater Edinburgh Parks project.

DEPARTMENTAL PURCHASE ORDERS

77. **Dr McFETRIDGE:**

1. Are proper procedures in place regarding the raising of Departmental purchase orders and approving the receipt of invoices from creditors and if not, why not?

2. Do all staff who process expenditure transactions now have a signature register to verify transactions that are authorised by officers with delegated authority and if not, why not?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

1. DTED has policies and procedures regarding the raising of invoices and approval of invoices for payment in accordance with relevant governance requirements.

2. DTED has a Service Level Agreement with the Department for Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA) whereby payment of invoices is performed by PIRSA. PIRSA has been provided with a list of the DTED expenditure delegates and specimen signatures and have been instructed to process invoices for payment only where a signature of a delegated officer exists.

GENERAL LEDGER EXPENDITURE

78. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** Is all expenditure on leasehold improvements now capitalised and reconciled to the General Ledger rather than the Fixed Asset Register, as recommended by the Auditor-General and if not, why not?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has advised the following:

DTED has policies and procedures in place per the department's Fixed Assets Policy to capture and capitalise leasehold improvements. DTED's Fixed Assets Policy states a capitalisation threshold of \$2 000. In addition, a reconciliation of the General Ledger to the Fixed Assets Register is performed on a monthly basis to identify discrepancies between the two systems with variations investigated immediately.

CRIME STATISTICS

176. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** What are the statistics for car thefts, house breaks and property damage in each of the following postcode areas: 5040, 5044, 5045, 5046 and 5048, in each year since 2003-04?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Minister for Police has provided the following information:

The crime statistics below indicate the number of victim reported offences and offences detected by police across categories requested.

Oaklands Park and Marion Shopping Centre constitute the Collection District of 091507, which is part of the postcode area of 5046. This Collection District accounts for a number of offences within the 5046 postcode area and the data specific to Collection District 091507 is reproduced in the second table. Figures for 2006-07 are preliminary data, which may be subject to further validation and quality control processes.

Post Codes 5040, 5044, 5045, 5046, 5048

Post Code	Offence	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
5040	SCT - residence	23	29	20	6
	Theft /Illegal use of MV	10	7	1	6
	Property damage – arson	2	0	2	1
	Property damage – non arson	65	61	46	27
	Total	100	97	69	40
5044	SCT - residence	91	97	93	85
	Theft /Illegal use of MV	54	50	40	42
	Property damage – arson	13	17	12	10
	Property damage – non arson	196	198	180	166
	Total	354	362	325	303
5045	SCT – residence	143	184	162	111
	Theft/Illegal use of MV	154	145	119	122
	Property damage – arson	18	14	22	26
	Property damage – non arson	532	556	605	584
	Total	847	899	908	843
5046	SCT - residence	70	59	75	59
	Theft /Illegal use of MV	125	119	92	107
	Property damage – arson	16	13	24	15
	Property damage – non arson	337	353	362	354
	Total	548	544	553	535
5048	SCT - residence	111	109	129	94
	Theft /Illegal use of MV	142	76	46	59
	Property damage – arson	16	23	39	15
	Property damage – non arson	393	434	349	387
	Total	662	642	563	555

Marion Shopping Centre Collection District

Collection District	Offence	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
091507	SCT—residence	0	0	0	0
	Theft /Illegal use of MV	79	69	60	70
	Property damage – arson	2	2	3	1
	Property damage – non arson	127	130	132	115
	Total	208	201	195	186

MORPHETT ELECTORATE CRIME

178. **Dr McFETRIDGE:** How many reported car break-ins, home break-ins and assaults occurred in the electorate of Morphett during each year from 2003-04?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: The Minister for Police has provided the following information:

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Serious Assault	43	51	71	30
Minor Assault	221	211	214	275
Serious Criminal Trespass (Residence)	266	309	299	221
Theft/Illegal Use of Motor Vehicle	244	222	174	179
Illegal Interference of Motor Vehicle	80	110	68	91
Theft from Motor Vehicle	437	502	400	454
TOTAL	1248	1354	1155	1220

FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES CHIEF EXECUTIVE

209. **Ms CHAPMAN:** What are the details of the Department's Chief Executive Officer in 2004-05 and 2005-06?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: You have requested details for the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities. Ms Vardon's total remuneration package during 2004-05 was \$294 975 per annum. Ms Vardon commenced by assignment on 15 December 2004.

Ms Vardon's total remuneration package was increased to \$305 299 per annum on 1 July 2005 as a result of the Cabinet approved 3.5% wage increase awarded to all Executives in the South Australian public sector.

MOTOR ACCIDENT COMMISSION

In reply to **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH** (31 May).

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: I have been advised that the Motor Accident Commission (MAC) sold its 850 Woodville Road, Villawood property for \$10.06 million in May 2007. This was not a speculative development but a fully leased bulky goods retail centre on a major main road in inner western Sydney purchased by MAC in May 2002 for \$14.5 million. Prior to purchase it was subject to a full due diligence process as are all other properties purchased by MAC. MAC made a \$4.44 million loss on the original purchase price, but a \$0.56 million profit on the 30 June 2006 carrying value.

The property value was progressively written down over the years due to localised market conditions, which deteriorated unexpectedly and associated tenancy issues, triggered by planning issues similar to those, which generated significant publicity about two years ago in Sydney. Following detailed investigations and consideration of converting the centre to industrial units for reletting, it was decided to sell the property. The property was sold to a developer that will convert the property to another use and assume the risks of reletting the property.

MAC's in-house, direct property portfolio currently consists of eleven buildings diversified in four states across the commercial and industrial sectors. The performance of the Villawood property is offset by the other four properties held by MAC for the same period as the Villawood property. The capital growth of \$32.75 million on these four properties has vastly exceeded the loss on Villawood that was publicised in the Australian Financial Review shortly after the sale contract was signed.

This financial year MAC has sold one other property as part of its strategic portfolio restructuring, 50 Pirie Street Adelaide, for \$15 million. This represented a profit of \$5.2 million compared with its valuation in June 2006, \$12.1 million over the June 1998 valuation and \$8.8 million over the June 1995 transfer consideration from SGIC.

Overall, MAC's Direct Property Portfolio has continued to deliver strong performance with a five-year return of 14.0 per cent compared with benchmark of 12.0 per cent and is showing an unaudited return of 18.9 per cent for the year to 30 April compared with 12.5 per cent returned by the benchmark.

MAC's current solvency levels are very strong. As at 30 April, based on unaudited accounts, the fund had a surplus of \$410 million, compared to the audited net funds of \$40 million five years ago on 30 June 2002.

The crime statistics below indicate the number of victim reported offences and offences detected by police across the categories requested. The figures for 2006-07 are preliminary data, which may be subject to further validation and quality control processes.

ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

In reply to **Mr HAMILTON-SMITH** (20 June).

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: A process is currently underway to identify the most appropriate procurement methodology for the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital project. Until this decision is made, it is not possible to determine the level of commercial sensitivity of the costing documentation. When this procurement methodology is determined, release of the documentation can be considered.

ROYAL VISIT

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement. I seek leave to make this statement today, not on 18 October. The Leader of the Opposition has just given notice of a motion about water that he intends to move on that date. I can understand why the leader needs so many weeks of—

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Okay. You had every ability to move that today; I do not know why you need six weeks' preparation. Maybe that is because you are still trying to work out your costings.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I wish to inform the house of the details of the first South Australian visit by a member of the British royal family in more than five years. In just over a fortnight, on 1 October, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent will be arriving in Adelaide for a six-day stay, focusing on science, education and defence. The Duke of Kent, of course, is President of the Royal Institution of Great Britain—the flagship of science and science education in the United Kingdom for more than two centuries. I am delighted that, in that role, he will be officially launching the Royal Institution Australia, the first time in the institution's long history that it will have a twin institution based outside London, servicing the nation of Australia, but established right here in Adelaide.

I understand that it will also be the first time a royal charter has been granted to an Australian institution in many years. It will be housed in the heritage Stock Exchange building at the rear of the Grenfell Centre, which the state government has purchased and which is being refurbished. It is a stunning building with great heritage and history. The Royal Institution Australia, like its London partner, will create a focus for science awareness activities not only in South Australia but nationally. It will be a national hub for science education, developed in conjunction with former

Thinker in Residence Baroness Susan Greenfield. It will be like the university for all, but without degrees. I expect it to become a dynamic national hub of scientific endeavour for scientists, technologists and engineers, as well as for families, students, educators, media, government and industry.

A series of science projects will be run from the RI Australia, many of them initiated by Baroness Greenfield during her Adelaide residences. The Australian Science Media Centre—servicing the needs of the nation's media, with a database of many hundreds of the nation's top scientists—will also be housed in the new RI Australia building, just as Britain's Science Media Centre is based at the RI in Mayfair, London. Two South Australians—Nobel Prize winners William and Lawrence Bragg—were previous directors of the RI in London. So, this is not only in recognition of their association with the RI, it also honours their work in science.

As members would be aware, the Duke of Kent also has a very distinguished military career that has spanned decades. The Duke still holds a number of service appointments in the British Army. He is also an official visitor of Cranfield University in the United Kingdom, the primary academic institution for the defence industry of the UK, and also one of the most famous in the world. Cranfield is the second international university to establish a presence in Adelaide, along with the US-based Carnegie Mellon.

As part of his official duties during his trip, His Royal Highness will officially launch the Cranfield University Development Centre in Adelaide. Cranfield, as the leading UK and world centre for postgraduate studies and research in defence, is a natural partner for South Australia, with its burgeoning defence industry and growing reputation as an education exporter. Obviously, there is a number of British institutions with defence links already here, or coming, such as BAE Systems, which has been established in South Australia for many years. There is also a range of other companies, such as Weir Strachan & Henshaw, Ultra and also, of course, Rolls Royce, which is involved in the building of the ship lift at Techport.

Earlier this year, Cranfield delivered short courses in Logistic Engineering and Integrated Logistics Support, and Introduction to Electronic Warfare. As Cranfield develops a suite of defence degrees and courses tailored specifically for the Australian market, it also intends to take part in broader Australian research programs and partnerships with institutions, such as the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, the Defence Materiel Organisation and local universities.

I met with His Royal Highness while in the UK in May, having met him for the first time the previous year, and I am delighted that he has agreed to come to Australia specifically for these and other engagements. He will spend six days in Adelaide, and has told me how keen he is to see as much as possible while he is here (I think his previous visit was in the 1960s). He will visit the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the Edinburgh RAAF base, as well as recognising the Bragg family's contribution to science at a special reception at the University of Adelaide. He will also be laying a wreath at the commonwealth war graves at Centennial Park and meeting with RSL veterans. We are honoured to have the Duke of Kent visiting us, and I look forward to his involvement in furthering our push to make Adelaide and South Australia not only a university city and a defence state but also a centre for science education.

PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education (Hon. P. Caica)—

Flinders University—Report 2006

University of Adelaide—Report 2006

University of South Australia—Report 2006.

VISITORS TO PARLIAMENT

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the presence in the chamber today of students from Burnside Primary School, who are guests of the member for Bragg, and students from St Michael's College, who are guests of the member for Colton. I believe that later on there will be students from St Mark's College, who are guests of the member for Frome.

QUESTION TIME

WATER SUPPLY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. If the drought continues for one to two years and the Murray deteriorates to a trickle, what plans does the government have to protect and enhance Adelaide's water supply before its long-term plans are completed? The government has indicated that it will be five years before a desalination plant can be completed and 10 years before an expanded Mount Bold reservoir will be in place.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Minister for Water Security): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. South Australia, along with the commonwealth government, New South Wales and Victoria, has, since November last year, been involved in contingency planning into the future for the dry inflow sequence that we are currently experiencing. The leader may recall that the Prime Minister called a drought summit on Melbourne Cup Day last year (I think it was 7 November) where this planning process began.

We are working in the interests of the nation, collaboratively at a national level, and opposition members would do well to be involved and get on board with what their federal colleagues are doing. As part of that process we are carefully considering the options available for the three states that are dependent upon the Murray-Darling Basin. We are also continuing the work on the Wellington weir in case that scenario does eventuate; and should that scenario of dry inflows continue into next year and beyond, then an emergency weir at Wellington could well be necessary to keep South Australian pumps working. Those—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: Those processes are being undertaken at the moment. I might add that that was one of the recommendations of the Dry Inflow Contingency Planning Report that the Prime Minister has endorsed—indeed, he has written to our Premier suggesting that we endorse them as well, which we have done.

The state government is also currently undertaking work to lower the pump off-takes below lock 1 to ensure that our

pumping stations can stay in water should the low inflows continue. The government is also disconnecting a range of wetlands to minimise the losses in the system and keep the smaller amount of water that we have in a smaller area. The Leader of the Opposition knows all of this but he conveniently forgets, on a frequent basis, that this work is being undertaken.

Mr Pengilly: Who are you voting for?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I am voting for the National Party, by the way—I just thought I would let you know. As the leader of the National Party in South Australia, you would expect me to do so.

Getting back to the important issue of water and how we are undertaking contingency planning, in partnership with the federal government and the New South Wales, Victorian and the ACT governments, there is a body of work that is continuing. We are looking at 2008, 2009. We have negotiated to set aside dilution flows to ensure that South Australia can manage and mitigate salinity spikes that may occur as a consequence of the low flows. I can assure members that everyone at the national level is working together collaboratively to do the best that we can in a very difficult time.

Our communities need all of our support. They do not need political wedge playing on the drought. We need our communities to understand that the leaders of all sides of politics understand the difficult situation that we are in, and that we work together nationally in the interests of our communities exactly as we are doing with the federal government. We are working very closely with the federal government. We expect the next dry inflow sequencing report to be presented to the Prime Minister and premiers in the next couple of weeks.

RIGHT BITE GUIDE

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell): My question is to the Minister for Education and Children's Services. What additional support will preschool canteens gain to ensure they are informed and assisted when the ban on junk food in canteens begins next year?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services): I thank the member for Reynell, who rightly points out that we have a role to play not just in schools but also preschools, because so much of obesity begins before children reach school, in fact. That is why the Minister for Health has implemented support and help for child-care centres as well, in the knowledge that very often those habits formed early in the child's life affect their weight and well-being throughout their adulthood. This morning at the Royal Show, the health minister and I launched the new Right Bite Guide, which will help schools and preschools identify those foods that best can be used instead of the junk food, which is being banned from school canteens from the start of next year. These can be seen in what might be regarded as a new generation of school canteens, which is on display in the education centre within the showgrounds. It demonstrates not just a menu board without junk food but also gives guidance as to how those foods might be prepared and sold.

The Rann government has invested \$1.55 million in promoting healthy food in schools and preschools as a way of phasing out junk food which is still currently on sale in some of our school canteens. The Right Bite Guide is a pivotal element in this campaign, because it makes an understanding of food values much easier, using the traffic

light system that rates food and drinks according to their nutritional value and their healthiness for children. The three categories, as one would imagine, are like a set of traffic lights: green, amber and red.

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: As the member says, it is much easier than looking at the nutritional value in very small print on the back of packages. The guide is designed so that the green foods are those foods which should be in abundance and are the best choice in school and preschool kitchens. The amber foods are those which should be selected carefully, and red foods are those that should only be had occasionally because they are very high in fat, salt and sugar. It is, of course, the red foods, that are banned from school canteens as of the beginning of next year.

By ensuring the food available to students at school is healthy, the schools and preschools within our system will help lead the way to a healthier community by educating young people about the benefits of healthy diet and exercise. Clearly, their experience will go home with them, and it will be easier for parents to understand nutritional values of food, because their children will be talking about the green, amber or reds in terms of what they might be eating. It is true to say, of course, that children in schools will occasionally be allowed to try some of the less healthy food on special occasions and during school celebrations or fetes. Schools, of course, will not be prevented from fundraising through cake stalls or fetes on special occasions, but, of course, we encourage them to use alternatives. There are healthier food option alternatives: there are walkathons, quiz nights and raffles that could raise funds without high fat or high sugar foods.

With the disturbing figures of obesity, with one in five four-year olds reaching kindergarten overweight or obese, the state government is acting at the grass roots level to encourage South Australians to adopt healthier lifestyles. Of course, we encourage parents to be part of this process, to support their schools to get children more active, and to swap soft drinks and junk food for water, fruit and vegetables. Controlling obesity of course does not stop at the school gates. Parents play a very important role in giving children healthy food at home, but the Right Bite campaign also will make it easier for parents to give the right kind of food to their children and ensure our young people get the best start in life.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Premier. How can the people of South Australia have confidence in his government's ability to deliver major water infrastructure projects when, within months of announcing the Mount Bold reservoir project, the cost has doubled? The government has acknowledged to the house a blow-out in the Mount Bold reservoir project from \$850 million to \$1.1 billion in September, with a possible further blow-out to \$1.6 billion. The Premier has also told the house that his desalination proposal will cost \$1.4 billion but, at the same time, has confirmed in parliament that he does not have the costings information or advice to substantiate the claim and that his plans are incomplete, with no location, no environmental impact information and no construction or financial data available.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): The Leader of the Opposition is simply not telling the truth.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

STUDIO 2000

Mr PICCOLO (Light): Will the Minister for Consumer Affairs inform the house what action is being taken to protect consumers from allegedly unfair practices by photographic business Studio 2000?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation between members.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Minister for Consumer Affairs): I can inform the house that late yesterday afternoon I issued a public warning in relation to Studio 2000, a photographic business here in South Australia. This is not a step that I took lightly, and it was taken after the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs was flooded with new complaints about the allegedly unfair sales tactics following the airing of two stories on *Today Tonight* this week. I understand that *Today Tonight* was also inundated with calls after the airing of these stories.

The reports included interviews with several people who felt they had been pressured into signing up for photos at a cost of thousands of dollars when they simply could not afford it. It appears Studio 2000 has been targeting young people and parents of young children with offers of free sittings. Once the photographs have been taken, many customers have complained of being subjected to very high pressure sales tactics. The allegations include a claim that people have been kept in negotiations for up to five hours in order to secure a sales agreement. Complaints to Consumer Affairs about Studio 2000 include the following claims:

- people incorrectly being informed that they had won a competition;
- discounts offered to entice clients to sign up were never honoured;
- prices were not disclosed to the customer until after a contract for a photo sitting was signed; and
- being offered a \$100 discount voucher but learning only after the shoot that the voucher was conditional upon a minimum amount being spent.

While at the Royal Adelaide Show this week, I was offered the chance to go into a free draw for a photo shoot by Studio 2000.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: It was.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: That is right. It appears everyone is a winner. After probing the sales assistant, I learnt that every person who entered is most likely to be contacted as a winner of a so-called free photo shoot. I also learnt that, while the sitting is free, people have to pay a booking fee to see the photographs. I have asked the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs to contact Studio 2000 and request that these practices cease immediately.

The allegations against Studio 2000 are serious enough for me to have issued this public warning. Section 69 of the Fair Trading Act states:

A person must not use physical force or undue harassment or coercion in connection with the supply . . . of goods or services to a consumer or the payment for goods or services by a consumer. This section carries very substantial penalties. Before agreeing to a glamour photo shoot, people need to be on the

lookout for any catches, such as hefty charges for a supposedly free photo session, even if they choose not to buy any prints. They should also make sure that they have a full price list before signing anything. Anyone who has experienced problems with Studio 2000 is urged to contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs.

POLICE EQUIPMENT

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): Is the Premier aware that the South Australia Police accreditation for its laboratories and facilities by the National Association of Testing Authorities has been suspended since January 2004? This accreditation relates to its radar equipment, laser guns and breathalysers. In 2002 and 2005, the Minister for Police assured parliament that police speed and traffic offence equipment was accurate. On each occasion he stated that testing equipment was accredited with the National Association of Testing Authorities. The opposition has been advised by the National Association of Testing Authorities that South Australia Police had its accreditation suspended in 2004. This testing authority calibrates the accuracy of speed detection devices and breath testing units.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Minister for Transport): On behalf of the Minister for Police, I will seek a report. What I will say to the house is that with this member one has to be very careful with—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am just telling you the truth.

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

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: If he wants me to give examples to the house, I will give them. Most recently, unfairly attacking a public servant and naming him in this place. On another occasion, misleading the house about the state of the circumstances at a car fire. If he wants to be outraged, I will run through them all. All I will say is that I will obtain a report from the Minister for Police, but I—

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister is debating.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Sorry, sir.

The SPEAKER: I think the minister has finished his answer. Does the member for Morphett have a supplementary question?

Dr McFETRIDGE: I have a supplementary question, Mr Speaker. Given the suspension of SAPOL's accreditation, can the minister assure motorists who have been fined for traffic offences that they have been fairly dealt with?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am not giving anything until I check the facts. I will have the police minister give a report. However, I do hope that on this occasion it is accurate.

The SPEAKER: Order!

TROLLEY COLLECTING INDUSTRY

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. What government initiatives have there been to tackle the problem of underpayments in the trolley collecting industry?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Industrial Relations): I thank the member for Torrens: I know that she has an active interest in this area. Members may be aware of recent publicity instigated by the federal Office of Workplace Services concerning its prosecutions in the trolley collecting industry. I can inform the house that the government, through its industrial relations agency SafeWork SA, has been hard

at work on this matter for some time. In June this year, SafeWork SA's industrial relations inspectors began audits to determine the extent of compliance by employers under the Long Service Leave Act. In the course of that work, inspectors interviewed employers and employees of several trolley collecting companies and found many workers being paid under the minimum federal rate for casuals of \$16.16 per hour. I am advised that some workers were found to have been paid as little as \$6 per hour. Many of these companies are incorporated entities which, as members would be aware, means that they come under the umbrella of the federal system.

As a result of this audit, SafeWork SA wrote to the workplace ombudsman's office informing it of the abuses occurring by six South Australian trolley collecting companies. As a government, we are greatly concerned by the issues raised through these audits. SafeWork SA's audits have highlighted that employees working within the trolley collecting industry are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. The Howard government has spent many millions of dollars promoting WorkChoices and its fairness test. I urge the Howard government to remedy the unfairness that WorkChoices legislation has brought to our vulnerable workers.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Leader of the Opposition):

Will the Premier rule out the creation of an independent commission against corruption for so long as he is Premier?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I must say that I have made this incredibly clear on so many occasions. We have the Anti-Corruption Branch of the police and, of course, we are massively increasing police numbers compared to when you were in power. In fact, I think there will be many hundreds more. We are already at a record level of police in this state and going higher. We have the Police Complaints Authority. We have the Ombudsman. Of course, the Ombudsman is the former Auditor-General. We have Simon O'Neill, the new Auditor-General. My view is that we have our priorities and our priorities are law and order: your priorities are playing games.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I have a supplementary question. If the Premier remains steadfastly opposed to an ICAC, why did he allow his Attorney-General to tell ABC Radio on 23 August this year that the government was 'open to the idea'? He's open, you're not.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I was interested that the New South Wales head of ICAC (which costs about \$15 million a year), Jerrold Cripps QC, came to Adelaide last week and he was interviewed about an ICAC, which, of course, the Liberal Party stoutly resisted through eight years in government. They did not see any need for it. Indeed, when Christopher Pyne (the Howard government minister) was asked on the two Chris's program whether they needed ICAC at federal level, he said, 'No, we have a number of existing agencies that handle it.' So that is the Liberal Party policy on an ICAC in the only jurisdiction in which they cling to power. Let me return to Mr Cripps. He came to Adelaide, he was interviewed and he said:

We get two and a half thousand complaints a year, of which we are lucky if we have to investigate any more—go beyond merely assessing them—to go beyond even a preliminary investigation, of

more—than 40 or 50 and we will probably have no more than five or six inquiries each year—

This is for a state the size of New South Wales—

... of the original two and a half thousand it gets down to a very small number.

Mr Cripps QC goes on to say:

You've got to remember that in planning, of all the areas, there is a tendency amongst people to believe that, if they don't get their own way, the people who haven't given it to them must be corrupt.

This is the ICAC Commissioner. He goes on to say:

They may be saying, as they do often in planning particularly, I objected to this development and my objection was overruled, therefore they say the Council must be corrupt. Alternatively, some developer says I had a perfectly reasonable development and it was refused, therefore the council is corrupt.

Interestingly, when Police Commissioner Hyde was on ABC Radio, he was asked about an ICAC, and he said:

Let me say we often have politically motivated claims referred to us because what politicians and people involved in politics want to do is to be able to say that there is an anti-corruption branch inquiry into one of its opponents and they get political mileage out of it.

I cannot remember the bloke's name, but a really tall bloke went to Flinders Street. He got all the newsroom cameras down there to watch him stride into police headquarters and lay a series of lever-arch files on the counter. I wonder what became of that?

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The Police Commissioner said:

The final point: is it justified? Is it warranted? Is it worth the cost?

At the moment: no. But I do get a good laugh out of seeing the kind of people—some of them—who call for an ICAC in South Australia. I reckon they would be the first before it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

APY LANDS, HOUSING

Ms BREUER (Giles): My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. What are the latest developments in housing on the APY lands?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation): The short answer is an important breakthrough in the negotiations that have been going on for 12 months with the commonwealth. As many would be aware, overcrowding in the APY lands is a major issue and it has been one on which we have been negotiating with the commonwealth for the past 12 months. The commonwealth's responsibilities in relation to housing in remote communities is clear, but it has taken a long time for the commonwealth to acknowledge that it has a responsibility here. We have heard a lot from the commonwealth about national emergency, but, when it came to addressing one of the root causes of dysfunction in our remote communities, what we heard was a very ideological agenda—a preparedness to tack on two very ideological conditions to the housing money. First, it wanted to abolish the permit system that applies in relation to remote APY communities and, secondly, it wanted 99-year leases for non-Aboriginal people in relation to those lands.

It is difficult for us to see the connection between those two issues and sexual abuse in remote communities, yet they were being tacked onto and made a condition of the money the commonwealth was offering to address the question of overcrowding in the APY lands. We held our position because we were not prepared to trade off land rights for basic human rights. We stayed at the table with the commonwealth. I am pleased to acknowledge that the commonwealth has taken a sensible position and dropped its requirements around those conditions. So we now have \$25 million which we can apply to the housing shortage in the APY lands. The other benefit is that I will be working closely with my colleague the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education and talking about ways in which locals can gain employment as a consequence of the activities that will occur on the APY lands.

I am also pleased to inform the house that \$7.5 million will be made available for police stations, police housing and associated infrastructure at Amata and Pukatja. These facilities will include court facilities and cells.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: By the commonwealth. The commonwealth has been prepared to make that contribution on the basis that the state increases its level of commitment to policing on the APY lands. Of course, the commonwealth made much of its intervention in the Northern Territory, but the South Australian government accepted its responsibilities long before the plight of remote Aboriginal communities became a cause celebre for the federal government. We were in the APY lands intervening at every level of government activity. Every level of government activity has been reviewed. It is true to say that we received our wake-up call, sadly, as a consequence of petrol sniffing deaths and two damning Coroner's reports in 2002 and 2003.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The deputy leader will come to order. If she has a question, I am happy to give her the call.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The complaints of those opposite would resonate more loudly if they did not completely and abjectly neglect the APY lands during their last term of government. So much so that the minister for Aboriginal affairs in the then government did not allow the Aboriginal Lands Standing Committee to meet—nonetheless travel to the APY lands—to consider the appalling conditions and the crisis that was emerging during that period of government. But we have accepted our responsibilities. Things have been bad but they are getting better. We have seen in the two last reported surveys of petrol sniffing a 20 per cent reduction, a 60 per cent reduction and, anecdotally at least for the 2007 calendar year, we could be reporting on almost the complete eradication of petrol sniffing in the APY lands. That is an incredible achievement over a relatively short time. Anybody who has bothered to travel to the APY lands recently could only conclude the massive improvement in the wellbeing—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is right. They hate good news. Things are getting better on the APY lands. They just hate to be confronted with the fact that this government is making real improvements to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people on the APY lands. We will continue to work with the commonwealth. We are presently consulting about some of the changes that will need to accompany the payment of these moneys. We are going through a thorough consultation process with those communities at the moment and we are

confident that they will be successful. Soon we will be delivering housing on the ground in the APY lands.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Leader of the Opposition): Does the Premier value the advice of his newly appointed Acting Ombudsman, Mr Ken MacPherson, and if so, why is he not listening to it? At a Parliament House forum on 24 August 2007, Mr MacPherson said, 'Police and law enforcement agencies in this state don't have accountability that I think is appropriate.' He was 'frightened' every time he heard the Police Commissioner saying he was going to hold a commissioner's inquiry into an incident involving police. Mr MacPherson went on to say, in regard to investigating corruption, 'This is not a traditional role of the Auditor-General in the Westminster system.' In his only public interview after 17 years in the role, Mr MacPherson told *The Advertiser* on 20 March 2007 that South Australia needed an independent commission to effectively deal with corruption.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): The reason that I have left the door open to considering some changes in our anti-corruption arrangements is that I value the opinion of Ken MacPherson, and I hope to discuss the proposals with Mr MacPherson when I am free to do so and when the inquiry into the use of Public Relations by the Office of the DPP is at an end, and my testimony has been taken by the Auditor-General's Office. If the government wanted to an easy ride from the Ombudsman, it certainly would not have appointed Ken MacPherson as Acting Ombudsman because he will be rigorous, as he has been both on our government and the previous government. I notice the member for Davenport simpering about that proposition, but it remains true that Ken MacPherson is a person of unimpeachable integrity. I notice his appointment as Acting Ombudsman has already been attacked by the Liberal Party, commencing yesterday within hours of his appointment by Executive Council.

Mr Williams: Read the act.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Apparently, Williams QC says his appointment is unlawful, and I confirm that Liberal Party frontbencher, the member for MacKillop, says that the appointment of Ken MacPherson as the Acting Ombudsman is unlawful. If the leader would like to dissent from that proposition by the man who sits two seats down from him, let him interject now. But, Mr Speaker, I do not want to encourage interjections because, of course, they are always out of order.

On that very proposition, I direct the house to section 8 of the Ombudsman Act 1972 which provides for a person to be appointed acting ombudsman. The advice is unambiguous to the government that there is nothing in section 8 that suggests that the mandatory retirement age in section 10(1) applies to acting appointments. Just imagine if that proposition applied to the appointment of auxiliary judges and magistrates.

Just after the member for MacKillop's interjection, I thought of all the judicial officers whose appointment he now claims is unlawful because they are above the retirement age, for instance, auxiliary magistrates Gurry and Kiosoglous, acting District Court judges Wilson and Kitchen, and acting Supreme Court judges OilsoBCH2On and Matheson. Apparently, appointing someone who is beyond the retirement age to an acting position is now unlawful. I wonder

what the source of that advice is. Is the source of that advice the relevance-deprived, has-been former Treasurer in another place?

An honourable member: Hiding in a cave.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: Yes, hiding in his cave on the backbench, ready to be restored to his former glory when the opportunity presents itself. I have the highest regard for Ken MacPherson. He was rigorous in his pursuit of the former treasurer when he arranged for the taxpayers of South Australia to pay off a \$22 376 private debt incurred by the Hon. Rob Lucas. Indeed, Ken MacPherson, as auditor-general, was rigorous in investigating the payment of \$115 820.60 by the taxpayers of South Australia—a private debt incurred by Rob Lucas and paid off by the taxpayers of South Australia—and this party wants an independent commission against corruption! I don't think so. One thing that they could investigate, of course, is the payment of taxpayers' money to a woman who claimed to be sexually harassed in a particular member's office. They could investigate that payment. There are so many things that could be investigated.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The Leader of the Opposition is smiling about that one, smiling like an alligator. The government has such confidence in Ken MacPherson that we welcome him becoming the Acting Ombudsman. The Statutory Officers Committee will, in due course, appoint a permanent ombudsman but, until then, we look forward to the rigour of our Acting Ombudsman.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): I have a supplementary question, sir.

The SPEAKER: I have previously ruled that supplementary questions must be asked by the person who asked the original question. I will allow the question.

Mrs REDMOND: Thank you, sir. In light of the previous answer, can the Attorney-General explain whether the government actually obtained legal advice confirming that the appointment of the former auditor-general was lawful given that, as he pointed out, section 10(1) of the Ombudsman Act requires the Ombudsman not to be appointed after the age of 65, and the definitions section, section 3, defines the term 'the Ombudsman' to include a person acting in the Office of the Ombudsman?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I am advised that we did in fact take advice from the Crown Solicitor's Office on the very matter, and that there is an extant opinion.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

RUBY ART AWARDS

Ms FOX (Bright): Will the Premier provide details of the success of this year's Ruby Art Awards?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): The honourable member's enthusiasm for the arts is legendary, and I am very pleased to answer this question. The Ruby Art Awards grew from this government's commitment to establish annual arts awards to celebrate the brilliant contribution of the arts to life in South Australia. These awards are named after Dame Ruby Litchfield, who made an extraordinary contribution to the arts and cultural fabric of this state over a long and sustained

period. We wanted to acknowledge and honour the role of Dame Ruby Litchfield, and thought this was the best possible way to do so.

Following a successful inaugural event in 2006, further consultation was undertaken to ensure categories would be even more inclusive of all members of the arts and cultural sector, and I would like to highlight some of this year's recipients. Sculptor Tony Rosella won the award for Best New Work or Event for his work *Ikara—the meeting place*. Located at Old Wilpena Station, the artwork tells a story 40 000 years in the making. It is an extraordinary sculpture that reflects not only Aboriginal history but also, in my view, reconciliation. *Ikara—the meeting place* traces the journey of the Adnyamathanha people from pre-European settlement through the first encounters, loss, adaptation and self-determination. Working with the Adnyamathanha community, Tony Rosella created a symbolic landmark that blends seamlessly with the environment and inspires interaction and wonder.

Awards for Community Impact went to the History Trust of South Australia for South Australia's History Week 2007, and I acknowledge the Minister for Health, as Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts, and that the History Trust reports to him. The Bundaleer Forest Weekend also won an award. More than 45 000 people attended one or more of the 240 events across metropolitan and regional South Australia during this year's History Week, with almost 200 organisations participating and about 1 600 volunteers making it happen. History Week offered new historical perspectives and stories, raised awareness of local collections, and supported activism on heritage issues. It was a successful exercise in large-scale community building.

The Bundaleer Forest Weekend is regional South Australia's largest arts event. In 2007 it drew 6 000 visitors, achieved record box office sales, and featured 300 artists and musicians. Set in a natural amphitheatre with a canopy of 130-year-old trees, Bundaleer's greatest asset is its strong community focus and local participation by volunteers, students, local artists, businesses and organisations.

The award for Innovation was presented to Zephyr Quartet for its Electro-Acoustic Project. In this project Zephyr Quartet commissioned new works by young artists from different musical fields to extend the traditional string quartet medium with non-traditional forms and repertoire, merging pre-recorded manipulative sounds and visual elements with an amplified string quartet in a live performance situation. The award for Leadership in Arts Enterprise went to Fringe Benefits, an enterprise created by Adelaide Fringe in partnership with Arts SA and the Australian Council for the Arts to attract young people to the arts. Since 2006 it has attracted 4 400 members, generated 5 000 ticket sales and developed partnerships with key business retailers locally and nationally.

The Ruby Awards also recognised dancer and choreographer Leigh Warren for his sustained contribution to the arts. Of course, Leigh Warren is a famous Australian dancer—both modern dance and classical ballet—and I understand he danced with people such as Nureyev, and probably Baryshnikov as well (as I had hoped to, but unfortunately—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: No; Nijinsky was also a horse, of course. Noted for his originality, innovation and vision, Leigh has been an influential force in contemporary Australian dance throughout a remarkable career spanning two decades. Leigh Warren is one of the great cultural icons of

this state and deserves to be recognised. The Lifetime Achievement Award went to Anthony Steel. I first met him in Don Dunstan's office, and I remember that he was wearing a caftan at the time, which caught me by surprise—but, then, I was from New Zealand. Anthony Steel was a most revered festival director.

The Hon. J.D. Hill: What were you wearing?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I was more the Austin Powers look, I think. Anthony Steel has directed more international arts festivals than anyone in Australia. He was integral in establishing the Adelaide Festival of Arts as one of the world's most prestigious festivals. It was Anthony Steel who ramped up the festival and put it on the world stage. Anthony permanently raised the bar for festivals in this country, and remains a key figure in establishing arts policy. I want to congratulate Anthony, Leigh Warren and the other reward recipients, nominees, and everyone involved in this year's event, which is the arts' night of nights.

HOSPITALS, NEW

Ms CHAPMAN (Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Will the Minister for Health outline how the costing of the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital was calculated at \$1.7 billion? At a briefing earlier this week provided by representatives of the minister's office and his department, no plans were provided to us for viewing. However, we were advised, first, that the area of 170 000 square metres was proposed for the new hospital; and, secondly, that an estimate of cost to build, based on other hospitals being built around Australia, was \$10 000 per square metre. Therefore, 170 000 square metres multiplied by \$10 000 equals \$1.7 billion.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Minister for Health): I thank the member for her question. It is interesting how, over the last few months, since the government announced its massive injection of funds into public health in South Australia, the opposition has tried various tacks to attack this proposition. They are yet to find an angle: they are opposed to the hospital, they are opposed to all of the service changes, and they are opposed to every single element. I would like to ask the opposition: what is its strategy about fixing up the health system of South Australia?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have gone out of my way to provide the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with briefings and advice about all the issues in the health portfolio. When they are given those briefings, they deliberately mislead and misconstrue the basis on which the information has been provided. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was given—

Mr Williams: Get to the point.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: If you do not interject on me, I will. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition—

Mr Williams: Cut to the chase.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Mr Speaker, I am attempting to provide information of an important nature to the house, and all I get is the rabble on the other side interjecting with puerile commentary. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was given a thorough briefing last week on the planning for the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Bragg will come to order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The deputy leader was given a thorough briefing on the costing and on the proposed hospital. She seems to have the impression that a detailed architectural model has been produced down to every last nut and bolt, with floor space allocated. That is not the way that we make these decisions. As I said at the time that we released the plan, this is a general proposition, this is the size of the hospital, and this is the nature of the things that will be in the hospital. The details of how they will be arranged and how they will relate to each other will be worked through over the next couple of years with expert advice from clinicians. That is how you design a project of this style.

In relation to the basis of the costings, I can advise the house that the spatial brief for the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital was developed utilising the input of an external adviser, Mike Hartfield, of STH Architects. He is an expert in the field of health architecture working from service information developed from the Hardys modelling, using national bench-marking where that was available. The stage 4 master plan for the RAH formed the basis of time and scope determination extended to achieve the RAH equivalent brief for the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital. Costs of the railway yard relocation were provided by TransAdelaide. Davis Langdon independently undertook a review of all the costings for the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital and the Royal Adelaide Hospital options and concluded that the costing models were sound. The Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure has carried out a further cost check on the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital based on the block planning completed to this point and the costings have been confirmed. DTEI has also checked the costings on the RAH redevelopment option and has confirmed the costings to be appropriate.

The estimated costs of the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson hospital are that the construction of the new hospital by 2016 would cost \$1.67 billion, of which \$340 million is for escalation. The estimated costs for the alternative RAH redevelopment by 2021, which is some five or so years later, was estimated at \$1.367 billion, of which \$451 million is escalation.

Members and the public should understand that we are building the biggest hospital in the history of this state—an 800 bed hospital that will provide the basis of health care in South Australia for the next two generations. This is not something that is done simply, and it is not done down to the last detail at the very beginning. It requires a comprehensive process of analysis. We are now going through the detailed planning with the clinical community, and that is what people in South Australia would expect us to do. The trivial, simplistic, puerile arguments of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which are based only on attempts to achieve political advantage, will get her nowhere because they are based on nothing but political opportunism, for which she is well-known.

PREMIER'S SPECIAL APPEAL FUND

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder): My question is to the Premier. Why did the Premier use his special appeal fund for minor grants and community grants for amounts up to \$500 000 without the usual transparency and accountability required by government? Evidence given to parliament's Budget and Finance Committee by the Chief Executive of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on 27 August 2007 confirmed the existence of a Premier's special appeal fund for

minor grants and community grants which is personally controlled by the Premier. The committee heard that the Premier did not need to go through any formal committee or panel process before deciding to provide a grant to any organisation. Evidence was given of no upper limit on the level of grants the Premier could give, which in one case was reported at \$473 000.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): This fund was set up by previous Liberal premiers (my predecessors), and I believe that they acted properly in funding community activities and enterprises, but I am aware that members opposite do not like the fact that, while some religious organisations can receive funding for social welfare activities, apparently the Greek Orthodox Church is not in the consideration of the Liberal Party. I think they will soon be hearing from people in the Greek Orthodox Church, who are doing a brilliant job in a range of social services for young people. The fund was set up by the previous Liberal government and exercised by three former Liberal premiers, including the Hon. Rob Kerin.

HEALTH AND SAFETY GRANTS

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop): Is the Premier aware of any promises made prior to the last state election by any government MP, or any staff member of a government MP, to any union that, in exchange for political donations prior to the election, they would receive grants from a taxpayer-funded health and safety program after the election?

A comparison of Australian Electoral Commission records and the government's Health and Safety Workplace Partnership Program showed that a range of unions which contributed a total of \$382 000 to the state Labor Party before the election received \$2.7 million in taxpayers' funds. The AWU donated \$40 140 to the ALP and received \$330 000 in grants, a return of 720 per cent. The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union gave \$9 525 to the Labor Party and received \$333 000, a return of 3 396 per cent. The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union gave the Labor Party \$71 000 and received \$360 000, a return of 406 per cent on its investment.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Minister for Industrial Relations): The partnership program is about making our workplaces safer. What we have identified before is that those industries with the most work injuries—including manufacturing, community services, the wholesale and retail trade, construction, transport and storage—are the areas to which this money has gone. What we are about is making sure that workplaces are safer. We have put in place an independent panel. We want everyone in the workplace to be safer. It is one thing for business to be able to receive grants but, of course, when grants go to unions, the opposition squeals.

Mr WILLIAMS: Sir, I have a supplementary question for the Premier. Would not a public complaint about such matters be best investigated by an ICAC, which has the power to investigate matters of alleged corruption and malfeasance?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): I can understand why the Liberals are a bit testy today. Last night we saw the Prime Minister say, 'Vote for me and I'll quit.' That is kind of like, 'Vote for me and I'll leave, I promise. Be kind to me; be generous'—

Mrs REDMOND: Sir—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: And they wonder why—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will take his seat. There is a point of order from the member for Heysen.

Mrs REDMOND: Sir, my point of order relates to the relevance of the answer and the debate by the Premier, which has gone nowhere near anything to do with the question that was asked.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The Premier has the call.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Relevance is right. It was about the relevance for his career, not the future of Australia—and you wonder why the people of Australia have taken the phone off the hook with the Liberal Party. They are neither listening nor believing any more.

Ms CHAPMAN: Mr Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: —the Premier is clearly defying your order.

The SPEAKER: I have not heard anything that the Premier has said because of everything that has been going on on the other side. If I could hear the Premier's answer, I might be in a position to make a ruling.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I find it interesting that it is wrong, apparently, according to the Liberals, to give money and funding to help injured workers through training campaigns run by unions, but it is okay to give massive multimillion dollar payouts to companies and businesses. Corporate welfare is okay, but they do not care about injured workers. And they talk about an ICAC. If they set up an ICAC (if they ever return to government in 15 years from now), I am sure that the first thing they will look at is the water deal. We remember that two of the bids were opened before one even arrived that happened to be the winning bid. We will always remember allegations about Kazakhstan and others. We also remember the \$100 million being spent by the Liberals on the consultants that they hired to sell ETSA.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes, we remember that. We remember how they sold the TAB for a cost of less than it earned in one year—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Yes, that would be a subject for an ICAC. Then we remember the Motorola deal. I reckon they would certainly fill up a particularly vigorous period. I was given material by Liberal members of parliament—in fact, one night I had to go to a cafe in North Adelaide and walk in a zigzag fashion towards a house, where I was handed documents that brought down a minister and also helped to bring down a government. I would rather put our money into more police; that is our program.

Obviously, they will be investigating themselves, because I used to spend half the time with Liberal MPs on the phone and another one in a queue, wanting to give us material to use against their colleagues. That is the difference, and that is why, at the federal level, the public of Australia has taken the phone off the hook on John Howard's government; they are neither listening nor believing any more.

Members interjecting:

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

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens): My question is to the Minister for Science and Information Economy. How

is the government supporting the growth of South Australia's biotechnology industry?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Science and Information Economy): I thank the member for West Torrens for his question. Of course, he has an abiding interest in the activities occurring at the Thebarton precinct which is within his wonderful electorate. I am pleased to inform all members that South Australia's rapidly expanding biotechnology industry is poised to benefit further from the global surge in jobs and investment thanks to a very great extent to the state government's ongoing support and the excellent work of many organisations, for example, Bio Innovation SA. Biotechnology is a key to future medical breakthroughs, including in areas such as the development of cancer vaccines, the prevention of other diseases and treatment of genetic disorders. The industry is putting South Australia at the cutting edge of medical research, including in the fields of designer antibodies, which, I am advised, are capable of specifically targeting unhealthy cells and prenatal tests that aim to do away with more invasive procedures.

Biotechnology also plays a critical role in helping to sustain and grow our primary industries. For instance, by developing salt tolerant and drought resistant crops. Additionally, biotechnology is now driving the production of innovative and more environmentally friendly household products. The biotechnology industry is pushing us towards a new era of advanced manufacturing, which will bring enormous benefits to South Australians in terms of opening up skilled job opportunities as the state transforms its focus (as it must) from a traditional manufacturing focus. With strong support from the state government and Bio Innovation SA, the number of biotechnology companies in South Australia has doubled to more than 90 since 2001. Over 1 200 jobs in the sector and an estimated 5 000 flow-on jobs in associated industries have been generated during that time.

Recently, the size of the Thebarton bioscience precinct was tripled—an area that I know the member for West Torrens visits quite regularly—and the state government has approved the second stage of the precinct's development—and again it will monitor that growth over time—which will provide 20 000 square metres of additional space. The South Australian government has also approved \$13 million to fund the first dedicated bioscience business incubator at Thebarton. This incubator, which is being managed by Bio Innovation SA, is due for completion next year and will provide office and laboratory space for up to 16 bioscience companies at any one time. A \$35 million dedicated biotechnology venture capital program Terra Rossa has been established and is acting as a catalyst to attract more companies and overseas investments into our state.

South Australia's biotechnology industry builds on the strengths of our research centres of excellence and it is driven by innovation generating annual revenues of \$180 million and spending of \$45 million per year on research and development. The capabilities of South Australian biotechnology industry were acknowledged at the world's largest biotechnology conference 'Bio 2007' held in Boston during May this year.

The Hon. P.L. White: Did you go?

The Hon. P. CAICA: I did. It was an outstanding conference.

Mr Koutsantonis: You could have taken me.

The Hon. P. CAICA: The next one, Tom, you can come; all right. This event highlighted the way that South Australian technologies are making an impact on the international market and how global companies are recognising our skills

and, of course, this state's ingenuity. The government remains committed to fostering growth in this sector, which continues to make significant contributions to the state's economic and social wellbeing.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

VETERINARY SCIENCE COURSE

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett): As all members in this place know, before I came here I had a long history of being in veterinary practice. It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the University of Adelaide on the establishment of their School of Veterinary Science as of next year. The federal member for Wakefield (David Fawcett) is to be commended for his role in having received \$15 million of federal funding for the University of South Australia. I also acknowledge the state minister (Hon. Paul Caica) for his role in supporting this development. It is a wonderful achievement. I had to travel to Western Australia to study veterinary science, and in November my daughter, Sahra, will complete her final year of veterinary science in New Zealand. As of next year, South Australians will not have to leave the state to study veterinary science. It will be a comprehensive course set up by the University of Adelaide. It will be a double degree. The first three years will be a Bachelor of Science (Animal Science: Pre-veterinary), and then a final three years will be a Master of Veterinary Science.

So it will be a fantastic course for South Australia. It is a wonderful opportunity for the rural industries in South Australia to have a facility like a veterinary school here to advance all of their sciences. I note that the people promoting the veterinary school, from James McWha, the Vice-Chancellor, down to all the advisers who have been assisting through the Australian Veterinary Association, have retained a focus on South Australian industry, particularly aquaculture, biosecurity, and also on large animal industries. The sad fact of not having a veterinary school in South Australia is one that I certainly paid for by having to move my family to Western Australia to study over there. I understand there was an opportunity when the now Murdoch Veterinary School was going to be established, when Flinders University was looked at, but there were some petty politics played and as a result it went to Western Australia.

But what we have here is the federal government, through the federal member for Wakefield, David Fawcett, putting in big dollars, \$15 million, to establish this new veterinary school. The need to provide veterinary science is not just for dogs and cats. Veterinary science, as anybody would know, is an integral part of our rural industries. We know how hard they are doing it at the moment, with the drought, so any advice that can be given to them, any science that can be developed through a facility, a faculty, such as the School of Veterinary Science here in South Australia, to develop better techniques, better programs, better nutrition, looking at animal breeding and looking at the animal sciences, is something that should be well and truly promoted.

For the School of Veterinary Science, the first three years of study will be at Adelaide University, North Terrace campus, and after that the Master of Veterinary Science will

go out to the Roseworthy campus, and what a wonderful facility that is. I had the opportunity to visit out there a number of months ago now and was given a briefing on the establishment of the veterinary school. I mentioned the fact that my daughter, Sahra, is studying at Massey University in New Zealand. Can I just compliment the staff at Massey University for their role in the establishment of veterinary science at Adelaide University. A number of professors have been visiting from Massey. Massey University does focus mainly on large animals, although there is an extensive small animal clinic, and small animal part of the course, but certainly with the new School of Veterinary Science at Adelaide University there will be a particular focus on the larger animal side of study. It is a thing that I waited for for many, many years. It has come 27 years too late for me, but I look forward to going out there, and I understand that the Roseworthy campus will be open in 2011. I look forward to being one of the ministers who goes out there and participates in the opening of the new veterinary science faculty at the University of Adelaide.

GILES ELECTORATE

Ms BREUER (Giles): Madam Speaker, I am a bit nervous about speaking today and to see what *The Advertiser* will do with my comments. If I was venomous on Tuesday then I would hate to see what would happen if I did get stuck into someone. So we will see what they do with today's comments. First, I want to say that I was pleased to ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs a question today about developments in housing on the APY lands, because I have just spent a week up there, and overall I was very pleased with what I saw on that visit. I think things are generally improving in the lands and I think people are feeling much more comfortable about what is happening there and with what is happening through some of the state government developments there. Certainly I did not see one petrol sniffer in the whole time I was there, and everybody says the sniffers are gone, and I think Opal fuel played a great part in that. So, I was pleased to go and I look forward to going back there again.

I today want to pay a tribute to a gentleman from outback South Australia who passed away on Saturday. We lost one of our local heroes and pioneers with the death on Saturday of Mr George Bell of Dulkannia Station on the Birdsville Track, about 84 kilometres north of Marree. He was 87 years old. He arrived at the station when he was 13 years old with his family and spent the rest of his life there. He was a skilled drover and horse breaker and somewhat of an outback hero. It is very harsh territory that he lived in. He became a legend, and very well known across the outback, and certainly an inspiration to many in the outback, one of those pioneers who survived in extreme conditions, fought, managed and lived there and opened up the outback for the rest of us. He is survived by three children, a stepdaughter, nine grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. I thank him because he persevered in the hardest conditions, and we owe much to him and other pioneers like him. I extend my deepest sympathy to all his family members, especially his son Darryl and family.

I want to comment about something that has been happening in Whyalla in recent weeks. An incredible amount of noise has been coming from Cultana training area near Whyalla. We have had noises in the middle of the night and shaking houses, which is something we can expect a lot more

of in the future in Whyalla with the Army working out there in the Cultana area. The commonwealth defence forces currently have 470 square kilometres of our beautiful country out near Cultana bordering Fitzgerald Bay—one of the most beautiful areas in South Australia. They have huge tracts of land around that area and they are about to triple in size around the Whyalla township. It will be for combined arms training for large mechanised formations and larger joint live firing exercises, so they will be working in a much larger area to manoeuvre.

They are taking over this land and, to me, it is a situation similar to the movie, *The Castle*. We are really not having any say in what is happening out there. Certainly, the station owners of Roopena Station, Middleback Station and Tregalana Station will be moving out and some of them already have. Generations of pastoralists have lived at those stations, but the Army is going to take over the land. I suppose I do not have too many problems with them; we do have to train our defence forces, I know that. But I am concerned about the lack of consultation, the lack of our community to have any say in this. We have some very beautiful spots out there and, recently, I visited some of those spots.

In Whyalla, we are very isolated. There is a long way to go to get to the Flinders Ranges or anywhere else, and we have this country around our town being taken away from us without any say about what is being taken and what is going to happen to it. The area will be closed off. Many of our beauty spots around there will be closed off. I know that some people will not be able to see that Whyalla has beauty spots around it, but we really do. We live in the desert next to the sea and there are some incredible desert formations out there, including hills formations, trees, mallee country, mile country, sandhills and all sorts of beautiful country, but we will not be able to access that. We really will be trapped, I think, by the Army working in that area.

I am really concerned about this; it is not fair that we have no say in it. We are not being consulted. I think that we need a lot more discussion and consultation about some of the areas that are being taken. I believe that we could isolate some of those areas. I have concerns for the future that what is happening could restrict industrial development. Certainly, it will restrict our town boundaries, and we are poised to become the hub of the mining industry in the north. I hope that we are able to resolve some of these issues with the Army, sit down and talk to them about this.

Time expired.

SMALL BUSINESS CHAMPION AWARDS

Mr PISONI (Unley): I was recently honoured by an invitation to present awards at the South Australian Small Business Champion Awards ceremony. This outstanding program, sponsored by the federal government and the business community, recognises and highlights the achievements of small business, the efforts of their operators and the entrepreneurial spirit which drives them. These awards also serve to raise awareness of the value and impact of small business on the economy, assisting their development and promoting even higher standards of product and service. The hard work and innovation of small business creates the employment and generates the output which drives the wheels of our economy. This is especially true in South Australia where small to medium enterprises are the state's largest employers.

The Small Business Champion Awards serve to underline the fundamental economic and social importance of small business to the wellbeing of our community at state and national level. The Liberal Party recognises this importance. We understand that small business needs to be encouraged, valued and assisted in its vital role in generating wealth and employment within our community. It did not go unnoticed that, while I attended representing Martin Hamilton-Smith, and Senator Mary Jo Fisher attended representing the federal minister, there were no representatives from the Labor Party, despite both the Premier and the Minister for Small Business being invited. This should, of course, come as no surprise. The Rann Labor cabinet is a business experience free zone, as is the frighteningly union-dominated front bench of the federal Labor opposition. At its core, Labor is not interested in business and would be about as comfortable at a small business awards evening as I would be serving the chardonnay and canapes to union heavyweights at the ALP State Convention. Of course, if Labor has no interest in small business awards, then at least it will not suffer the fate of so many other programs and be rebadged 'The Premier's Small Business Champion Awards'. Winston Churchill famously said:

Some see private enterprise as a predatory target to be shot, others as a cow to be milked, but few are those who see it as a sturdy horse pulling the wagon.

This analogy could certainly be applied to the differing attitudes of the Liberal and Labor parties towards small business. While paying off \$96 billion in Labor debt, the Howard government has been instrumental in nurturing a booming economy and delivering reforms in taxation and in the labour market, which have encouraged business to grow and employ. This has reduced unemployment levels to the current low rate of 4.3 per cent, in stark contrast to the double-digit unemployment delivered under Hawke, Keating and the unions.

Liberal reforms have deregulated the workplace, delivering workers more jobs and higher wages. Businesses—in particular small businesses—have renewed confidence to employ through the widespread use of AWAs, dismantling of unworkable unfair dismissal legislation and by removing the threat of union interference and intimidation. However, in South Australia, Labor is happy to continue milking the cow of small business, reaping the taxation benefits of excessive payroll tax, land tax and stamp duty regimes, while at the same time giving contracts to small businesses interstate which operate under more business-friendly taxation conditions than are found in South Australia. This was highlighted recently by the revelation that local clothing manufacturers are losing DECS contracts to supply school uniforms. Those contracts are being lost to a Queensland firm which imports much of its range.

It is very reminiscent of Premier Rann spruiking for IKEA when it opened a massive warehouse of fully imported furniture while local manufacturers and employers went to the wall. While Premier Rann dodges the issue of water security, he is fully engaged in federal Labor's election campaign, and plans to initiate policies which would be a disaster for South Australian small business: the reintroduction of the unfair dismissal laws, tearing up AWAs and putting Labor union paymasters back in control. Our small business minister, the National Party minister in a Labor government, has said nothing.

I would like to congratulate the entrants and, of course, the successful winners in all categories at the Small Business

Champion Awards. They are the sturdy horse pulling the wagon of our state economy, whose efforts are as recognised and appreciated on this side of the house as they appear to be ignored and dismissed by Labor.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Ms PORTOLESI (Hartley): In 2006, the Howard government used its majority in the Senate to push through changes to the federal Electoral Act, changes which undermine the very strength of our democracy, and changes which seek to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of Australians. It has changed the laws so that electoral rolls will close earlier, I believe. The research says that it will disadvantage young people, people who rent, people who frequently change address and, of course, indigenous Australians in remote communities.

Ms Bedford: And prisoners.

Ms PORTOLESI: And prisoners, says the member for Florey. The old provision, section 155 of the Electoral Act, provided for the rolls to close seven days after the writs for an election have been issued. Under the changes, there are a number of new provisions. If a person is enrolling for the first time, they have until 8 p.m. on the same day the writs for election are issued. If they are 17 but will turn 18 years of age between the day after the issue of the writs and election day, the deadline is 8 p.m. three working days after the day the writs for the election are issued, or, if they will become an Australian citizen. The list goes on. There are many changes. Basically, the government has abolished this period of grace where voters previously had an opportunity to get themselves onto the electoral roll.

At the 2004 federal election, 78 908 Australians enrolled to vote, and 255 000 voters changed their details during this period. Under Howard's new laws these voters will be disenfranchised. The federal government has claimed that it is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that they are on the roll and, while those in this chamber never have voting very far from their mind, for most South Australians it is something they only think of every few years. Although (of course) I believe it should be, remembering to enrol for the first time may not be a priority for young South Australians completing their year 12 exams. Likewise, those moving house could be excused for forgetting to correct their enrolment. Unlike the state electoral system, the federal electoral system does not have a set election date. If John Howard called an election tomorrow—and I wish he would—it would be unexpected (although perhaps not so much in this case), and therefore many thousands of South Australians would be caught out and unable to vote.

Let us assume that there is a significant problem with the integrity of our roll. The facts tell a different story. In the last six federal elections the Australian Electoral Commission discovered just 72 cases of false enrolment with around 12 million Australians voting at each election. Those advocating early closure of the rolls cite that a surge of late enrolments would lead to electoral fraud, with the AEC swamped with enrolment forms. The AEC, in a submission to the Joint Standing Committee for Electoral Matters in 2004, stated that every component of the enrolment form is checked for any anomaly and to ensure that it complies with the provision of the Electoral Act prior to the form being processed and the elector's named being entered on the roll. This occurs during closure of the rolls and in non-election periods. So the government's argument of the possibility of

fraud holds no weight, being contradicted by its own electoral commission as well as the statistics showing the low incidence of fraud that I cited earlier.

Political scientist and Australian electoral commissioner from 1984 to 1989, Colin Hughes, has stated that a reasonable estimate of blocking last-minute enrolments by young voters is worth about 150 votes to the coalition in each electorate. At the last federal election the seat of Hindmarsh was won by the incredibly hard-working Steve Georganas by 108 votes—so you can see that changes like this have the capacity to significantly influence elections. The federal government, through this legislation, is also working to exclude as many renters or frequent movers as possible—another group made up of a high proportion of younger voters.

The only possible explanation for the coalition's long-held obsession with early closure of the rolls is for the political benefit it will receive. A period of grace is essential to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to get on the roll and have their say. Before the recent changes these voters, who have things other than the electoral law on their mind, have had seven days to enrol; at the coming federal election these people will be disenfranchised. I urge all South Australians to get themselves on the roll and have a say in the future of this country.

NAIRNE PRIMARY SCHOOL CROSSING

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I wish to raise an issue today that is of a long-standing nature; not only has it been raised by me in this house on numerous occasions, it is also a long-standing issue in the community that it affects. I speak of the ongoing road safety issue with the Nairne Primary School crossing and the adjacent road intersection. This has been an issue of real community concern for generations now. It has been raised with me by ladies in the local community who said that they had issues with this school crossing when their children attended the school, and it is now a generation on from that and their grandchildren are attending the Nairne Primary School—yet the government continues to ignore this vitally important road safety issue.

To its credit, the previous Liberal government undertook a consultancy initiative and four options were presented in relation to resolving this issue; however, it lost government in 2002. Unfortunately, the Rann Labor government has done nothing to address this important issue, but it cannot hide from it now. Recently, a welcome announcement was made by the federal Liberal government and the local council, the District Council of Mount Barker, that a total of \$625 000 had been committed to improving the school crossing and the adjacent intersection. Where is the state Labor government in this? It is in hiding. I have raised this issue on numerous occasions with the various ministers for transport over the time that I have been in this place. Unfortunately, I have received only lengthy, bureaucratic responses along the lines of, 'Well, there have been no reported incidents, so we're not going to do anything about it.' What will it take for this state government to act on this issue? Will it take a serious accident involving a school child or, even worse, a tragedy where somebody loses their life? Is that what it will take for this government to act? If it does happen, the responsibility will be laid fairly and squarely at the feet of the Premier, the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Road Safety.

Members opposite can have a silly grin on their face, but this is an absolutely serious issue relating to the safety of our

school children. If they do not think it is important, they have a lot to learn. Responsibility lies fairly and squarely at the feet of the state government. The other two tiers of government—the federal government and the district council—have met their responsibility. Now the state government has to meet its responsibility; it cannot shirk it any longer. There is nowhere to hide, no more excuses to be made; it cannot pass the buck to anybody else in relation to this matter. What will it take? Will it take a tragedy for the government to act? I call on the state government to meet its responsibility, provide the necessary funding, engage with the federal government and the District Council of Mount Barker to see a proper and satisfactory resolution to this long-standing road safety issue involving children within our local community, and to act now.

FOSTER CARE WEEK

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta): I rise today to draw the attention of the house to the fact that this is Foster Care Week. Several functions will be held throughout the state to celebrate foster, relative and kinship care. I am not positive, but I think I am the only current member of this place who has been actively engaged in fostering young people. I must commend to all members the rewards for both myself and my own children in getting to know and support all the young people who have come across our path. Last year more than 12 000 South Australian families opened their hearts and homes to care for children in difficult and stressful circumstances. Currently, on any given day in our state, approximately 850 South Australians provide foster, relative or kinship care to children under the guardianship of the minister.

It is important to note that foster carers are often relatives of the children needing care. Grandparents or aunties are often the first port of call for these children. Although this has often been the case, it is important that these carers are now recognised as the primary carers of these children, and are able to claim the financial support they need to provide the care that children need. Foster, relative and kinship carers are the backbone of our system. They come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, all ages, some with children of their own, some without, and some are empty-nesters with grown-up children. Some families are able to provide a home in a long-term placement, but others provide short-term care, respite care to help families who may be in crisis, or they are emergency carers who can take on children at very short notice, even if it is only for a few days. This care can be just as valuable.

I know of one family in South Australia with a young family of three children aged six months, two and three years. The husband was away overseas working when the mother was taken suddenly and seriously ill. Finding a placement for these three children until dad could get back into the country was very difficult, but achieved because of our emergency care system. These short-term and emergency carers provide a service just as valuable as long-time care.

However, the majority of children in care come stressed and traumatised from family circumstances beyond their control. Their foster family might be the only family that our children in care will ever know. They need inordinate amounts of care, support, love and structure in their lives. In June this year I was proud to be at the launch of this government's blueprint for the future of alternative care, *Keeping Them Safe—In Our Care*. A major part of the blueprint has been to strongly support carers and to cut through some of the

needless bureaucracy associated with caring for children. Despite the fact that Prime Minister Howard has told the nation that families have never had it so good, the reality of what we are experiencing is that there is growing pressure on families. There has been a 10 per cent increase of children in care every year for the past five years. Currently 17 per cent of children in this state are under the guardianship of the minister, which is the highest ever number. We are in significant need of more foster carers who are willing to open their hearts and homes to children in need.

In the last budget, this government committed a further \$100 million over the next five years for foster care. A large proportion of that money is to ensure that all carers receive ongoing training to support and assist in the important role of looking after children. These important South Australians need all the help and support that we can give them. I commend to the house the work of foster carers and celebrate with them this important week.

MEMBER'S LEAVE

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): On behalf of the Minister for Transport, I move:

That the member for Davenport (Hon. I.F. Evans) be granted leave of absence from 25 to 27 September 2007 to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in India.

Motion carried.

BUCKLAND PARK

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the release of guidelines for Buckland Park (Declared Major Development) made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Police.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Hon. P. CAICA (Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to freedom of information made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Minister for Police.

EDUCATION (COMPULSORY EDUCATION AGE) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Minister for Education and Children's Services) obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Education Act 1972. Read a first time.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Education (Compulsory Education Age) Amendment Bill will amend the Education Act 1972 to ensure that all young people in South Australia are in school, training or work until they have completed a qualification or turn 17 years of age. The bill is a key part of the government's commitment to better prepare all young people for the future, and an

important plank in the government's broader reform of the state's education care legislation. This government made history when the school leaving age was raised from 15 years to 16 years from the start of 2003.

To support this legislative change, the government injected \$28.4 million into the school retention initiative, working to improve the outcomes for young South Australians. This new legislative reform is the next step in the government's \$84 million 'school to work' package of education reforms to give every young South Australian the best chance of success in life. It is part of a plan that includes 10 new trade schools for the future and a new SACE certificate for senior students, which is being developed with all three schooling sectors to provide a certificate that is more flexible and rigorous.

The government is committed to supporting every young South Australian to be engaged full-time in school, training or meaningful work. It is well recognised that the positive engagement with education and training and the achievement of formal qualifications markedly increase young people's opportunities and increase their chances of success in later life. At age 16 some students, for example, are motivated to learn practical trade skills. Young people may also wish to take advantage of other education and training activities beyond the traditional school that provide pathways to their chosen careers. This bill will provide for this broader range of learning opportunities and experiences matched, as far as possible, to each student's learning needs and, together with the future SACE certificate, will give the necessary flexibility to allow for a greater range of activities, in addition to traditional schooling, for 16 year olds.

As members will be aware, the government will also be introducing shortly a bill to amend the Senior Secondary Assessment Board of South Australia Act 1983, which will underpin changes to the SACE that are fundamental to achieving our vision for the state's young people. When the changes enabled by these measures are implemented from the start of the 2009 school year, 'schooling' for 16 year olds could include traditional school lessons, TAFE courses, part-time work, apprenticeships, university studies, alternative education programs and community volunteer work.

It is estimated that there will be approximately 2 000 16 year olds who will be embraced by the new legislation who might otherwise not have been attending school and at risk of falling through the cracks. These young people will be required to enrol and participate in full-time education or training, or a combination thereof, until they have completed the SACE, achieved an equivalent qualification or turned 17 years of age. Young people under the age of 17 who are already employed or who wish to take up full-time employment will be able to seek an exemption from these requirements. Exemptions may also be granted where students have special circumstances that preclude them from participating in full-time education or training.

The passage of the bill now will provide the necessary lead time to enable Catholic, independent and government schools, and other parts of the education and training system such as TAFE, time to plan and develop further opportunities for senior students, including those at risk, as part of our investment in the future SACE. Cross agency work has already commenced on transition planning for the changes to support and enable a smooth implementation from the start of 2009.

The proposed changes have been the subject of extensive public consultation, and feedback has indicated overwhelm-

ing support for these measures. In developing the bill, valuable input was received from educators, community members, parent and professional associations, the Catholic and independent schooling sectors, the Independent Education Union, the Australian Education Union and the Department of Further Education, Employment and Training, particularly the Office for Youth. Key features of the bill include:

- retaining the current requirements for children to attend school full-time until they turn 16;
- establishing a new class of young people (those aged 16 years), namely, children of compulsory education age;
- requiring that a child of compulsory education age be enrolled and participate in approved learning programs until they achieve the SACE or an equivalent qualification, or turn 17;
- provision for an exemption from these requirements to be granted where a young person wishes to take up full-time employment, or if they have special circumstances;
- defining the following activities as constituting approved learning programs:
 - courses of secondly education, e.g., SACE;
 - approved university degree or diploma courses;
 - TAFE courses;
 - accredited vocational education and training offered by other registered training organisations;
 - apprenticeships and traineeships;
 - other learning programs approved by the minister.

Workforce forecasts suggest there will be a demand for more people with formal, higher level qualifications. We must not let young people fail to meet their full potential at a time when South Australia and the rest of the nation demand people with practical skills for real jobs.

The bill will ensure that young people in South Australia remain engaged in flexible schooling and training options to provide them with the best foundation for future success. I commend the bill to members. I seek leave to have the explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

EXPLANATION OF CLAUSES

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

3—Amendment provisions

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Education Act 1972*

4—Amendment of section 5—Interpretation

This clause inserts the definition of *child of compulsory education age* used in the measure, and is defined to mean a person who is 16 years of age.

5—Substitution of section 8

This clause substitutes a new section 8 into the Act, replacing the current provision with a power of delegation reflecting current drafting practice.

6—Substitution of section 13

This clause substitutes a new section 13 into the Act, replacing the current provision with a power of delegation reflecting current drafting practice. The proposed section also provides for a Deputy Director-General to act in the absence of the Director-General.

7—Substitution of heading to Part 6

This clause makes a consequential amendment to the heading of Part 6 of the Act.

8—Amendment of section 74—Interpretation

This clause inserts definitions of terms used in Part 6 of the Act as amended by the measure.

9—Amendment of section 75—Compulsory enrolment of children

This clause amends section 75 of the Act, reflecting the amendments made by the measure to require children of compulsory education age (ie, a child of 16 years of age) to be enrolled in an approved learning program, and makes related procedural provisions.

10—Amendment of section 75C—Appeal against direction of Director-General or Minister

This clause deletes an obsolete reference in section 75C of the Act.

11—Insertion of sections 75D and 75E

This clause inserts new sections 75D and 75E into the Act.

75D—Approved learning programs

This proposed section establishes and defines *approved learning programs*, which is the substantive part of the measure. The type of programs specified in the clause provide a range of education alternatives to traditional secondary education for, primarily, children who are 16 years of age.

75E—Report on operation of Part

This proposed section requires the Director-General to prepare and provide the Minister with a report in each year on the operation of Part 6 of the Act as amended. The report must include information in relation to compliance. The clause also addresses procedural matters related to the report.

12—Amendment of section 76—Compulsory attendance and participation

This clause amends section 76 of the Act to require participation on the part of a child of compulsory education age in the approved learning program in which he or she is enrolled. To that extent, the provision reflects the current requirement of compulsory attendance at school for children of compulsory school age.

13—Substitution of section 78

This clause substitutes a new section 78, reflecting the inclusion of the concepts of children of compulsory education age and approved learning programs in the Act.

14—Amendment of section 79—Attendance

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

15—Substitution of section 80

This clause extends the powers of authorised officers to take into account children of compulsory education age and/or approved learning programs. The old section 80 is split, for clarity, into the 3 proposed sections, and penalties for breaching the sections updated reflect modern standards.

16—Amendment of section 81—Evidentiary provision

This clause makes a consequential amendment.

17—Amendment of section 81A—Exemptions

This clause amends section 81A of the Act to enable the Minister to publish certain guidelines (related to the granting etc of exemptions under that section) by notice in the Gazette.

18—Amendment of section 107—Regulations

This clause amends section 107 of the Act to allow regulations to be made relating to the collection, recording and collation of information on any matter relating to the administration or enforcement of Part 6 and the provision of the information to the Minister or other body determined by the Minister.

19—Amendment of long title

This clause amends the long title of the Act to reflect the inclusion of the provision of approved learning programs within the purposes of the Act.

Mrs REDMOND secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (VICTIMS OF CRIME) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 24 July. Page 611.)

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen): I do not intend to hold the house terribly long. This bill is a corollary of the bill which we dealt with earlier this week regarding the appointment of the Commissioner for Victims' Rights, and essentially makes amendments to some other acts of this parliament relating to victims' rights in some way and brings all those into line, in

light of our appointment of the Commissioner. I thought I might begin my comments by referring to the news release of the Attorney-General from 2 July in which he announced the government unveiling these historic victims' reforms. He started out by saying:

The greatest leap forward in South Australian legislation affecting victims of crime has been announced today by Attorney-General Michael Atkinson.

Whilst I would agree that he has made some progress in issues of victims' reforms and victims' rights, I would have thought that the introduction of the Victims of Crime Act in 2001 by the former Liberal government might have credited us with having had the greatest leap forward, but the Attorney-General says that it was artistic licence.

The other thing that confused me a little about his comments was that he said that a proposed amendment would give a victim, their next of kin or their advocates the ability to make a victim impact submission at the sentencing hearing in Magistrate Court cases that result in death or permanent incapacity of the victim. I suspect that the only real change is that the next of kin of the victim or the advocate of the victim has the right, because, as I read the current Criminal Law (Sentencing) Act, section 7A on victim impact statements provides that a person who has suffered injury, loss or damage resulting from an indictable offence committed by another may furnish to the trial court the written statement (which is a victim impact statement) about the impact of that injury, loss or damage on the person and his or her family.

It goes on in subsection (3) to provide that, when the court is convicting the defendant of the offence, it will, if the person has so requested, allow the person an opportunity to read the statement to the court and, if the person has not requested reading it themselves (in any other case, that is), cause the statement to be read out to the court. I suspect that again in his media release, although technically it may have been correct, the average reader might have been forgiven for thinking that this was absolutely innovative in the way that it was couched. In fact, there was already within the legislation—and I concede that it is section 7A and therefore was not in the original 2001 act but was obviously inserted at a later point—a provision in relation to victim impact statements, and the victims in those cases of certain indictable offences already had the right to have their victim impact statement either read on their behalf by the court or to read it themselves.

But as I said, this bill essentially is a corollary to the original bill that we dealt with earlier this week appointing a commissioner for victims' rights, and its most substantial amendments are to the Victims of Crime Act. A number of the amendments which appear as quite small basically have the effect of ensuring that consideration of victims' interests apply across all government agencies, whereas at the moment, strictly speaking, those interests are only dealt with within the criminal justice system. I welcome that development, because I think that it is appropriate for all government agencies, and many government agencies do come into contact with victims at various stages. So it is appropriate for all government agencies to have that obligation to take into account the interests of victims.

I note also that there are some new definitions which are added in to basically include offenders who are detained due to mental illness. So again we have broadened the scope of the existing legislation, because clearly in our community we have increasing numbers of offenders who largely are offending because of their mental illness, and that can

sometimes mean, of course, that they are beyond the criminal justice system. We therefore need to ensure that the victims of those people are equally entitled to the benefit of the victims' legislation.

If I can just go through the various clauses of the bill. Clause 12 provides that a victim has a right to have their perceived need for protection from the offender taken into account in bail proceedings. As I understand it, that obligation already actually applies but, like many of the provisions in this legislation, it applies only in a guideline or internal mechanism rather than by way of statutory obligation. Largely what this legislation does is create as a specific statutory obligation a number of things which already apply in the case of victims, and that is one of them, that the victim has the right to have their perceived need for protection from the offender taken into account in bail proceedings.

Coupled to that, and in fact coupled to a number of provisions, is the fact that there is to be a broadened scope for the register of victims. At the moment, as I understand, the register of victims has only the name of a victim, whereas under the new arrangements not only will their contact details be available, and they will be updated from time to time, but the victim can also, should they choose, nominate a person to receive information on their behalf and to represent them and stand in their stead, effectively, as if that person had been the victim. I think that that is an innovative and quite appropriate thing to do, because, having dealt with victims over a number of years, I would have to say that often, although they want justice and they want certain things to happen, it is very difficult for them, quite traumatic sometimes for them, to have to deal in person with any of it, even with being notified that an offender may be being granted bail. That can really cause a great deal of stress for someone who has been a victim.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: As the Attorney points out, they might not even register because of the stress caused by being notified. The new arrangements broaden the scope so that the person who is nominated by the victim can receive that information. That will enable, for instance, a family member to be nominated, who could receive the information, make submissions on behalf of the victim, and, if appropriate, tell the victim, but in a way that might be a little less abrupt and a little less threatening than perhaps a phone call from a government department saying that they about to release this person on bail. So, I welcome that provision.

Clause 13, in essence, fleshes out and places into a statutory obligation what already exists largely in terms of the victim's rights to information. Similarly, clause 14 inserts what appears to be a new clause 9A and a new clause 9B but, as I understand it, those clauses are in fact simply collecting in one place what already exists under our current system.

Clause 9A is the DPP's policy with respect to consulting with victims and, as I understand it, there is already a policy in operation in the Office of the DPP, which has been there for some months if not a few years now, which obliges the DPP to consult with the victims. As I think I mentioned the other day in relation to the appointment of the commissioner, I think it is appropriate for the commissioner now under these new arrangements to be able to engage legal counsel for those discussions with the DPP because of the likelihood that lawyers sometimes, whether they are intending to be overbearing or complicated or use jargon and whether they are actually trying their best to communicate, fail to communicate in common language and in a way which is not

threatening and which invites participation. I think the best lawyers, in fact, in whatever field they are dealing with, made their clients and the people they dealt with participants and partners in going through the legal processes but, sadly, that was all too rare.

Clause 9B, I understand is ensuring in what might be described as a pre-emptive way, because I am not sure there is actually a problem, that a person could be present in court. I gather that at least in other jurisdictions there may have been cases where the defence has argued that a victim impact statement or even a victim's identification of an accused has been in some way prejudicially enhanced by their attendance in the court and their observation of the proceedings. So, in an effort to ensure that that argument does not even get to first base in this state, as I understand it, clause 9B basically will ensure that, if you are a victim, you will be able to be present in court.

I think I touched on clause 15 in my comments on the commissioner's bill. It inserts a new section 10A which gives the victim the right to request but not compel an appeal of a result with which the victim is dissatisfied. It specifically provides that that request must be made within 10 days, and for good reason as I understand it. Indeed, I think the Commissioner for Victims' Rights who attended the briefing indicated that, on occasion, people have come to him complaining that after the judgment was received they had made some sort of request to the DPP to appeal the result but that they had made that request well outside the time during which an appeal could even be initiated, so the imposition on the victim is simply that they have 10 days to make that request, and I think that is probably a reasonable time.

It still allows the DPP or other prosecutorial office to proceed to make arrangements after considering whether an appeal would be in order but, on the other hand, it is not required of the victim immediately the judgment has been brought down. As I said the other day, it is common for victims to be somewhat dissatisfied, but I think it is probably less common in the cases of those lawyers who managed to communicate and make their clients and the people—and, in the case of the DPP, the victims—participants and partners in the process because, if they are truly partners in the process, by the time the matter gets to judgment they will have a fair idea of what they might expect as an outcome and whether the outcome is within the range of possibilities that one would consider to be reasonable given the circumstances of the case.

The other amendment to the main legislation—that is, the Victims of Crime Act—is one which I certainly welcome, and that is the grief payment for parents or spouses in which there is a differential at the moment. If you lose a child as a result of a homicide you get a lesser amount for grief and it is only something like \$3 500 whereas if you lose a spouse, it is slightly more but, in either case, it is a very nominal amount. In both cases, the legislation increases the amount to \$10 000. So, just to be absolutely clear, currently, the parents of a child killed by homicide get a maximum of \$3 000 and the spouse gets a maximum of \$4 200. Both of those figures are being increased to \$10 000, and I welcome that and I consider it quite reasonable to (a) increase it and (b) make both amounts identical. The other part of clause 16 is to increase the funeral expenses from \$5 000 to a \$7 000 maximum payment. I certainly welcome those things.

The other amendments involved in the bill are relatively straightforward. The amendment of the Youth Court Act allows the victim to stay in court even if other related matters

are being dealt with. Of course, the Youth Court is normally a closed court so that if you have a youth who has one victim, you would normally only have the magistrate, police prosecutor, the youth, the youth's lawyer and the victim potentially in court. Obviously, if there is more than one victim, things could get a bit complicated. In fact, the example that was given at the briefing indicated that apparently there was a ruling that two victims could not be present because of the breach of privacy in one victim hearing the punishment meted out in relation to the other victim's offence. But the reality is that, generally, there would not be an identification by a magistrate in bringing down a judgement, a summary judgement particularly, to say, 'You're going to have this much penalty for this offence and that much penalty for that offence,' if those offences were indeed related and had ended up in court together.

As I said, the amendment basically ensures that something which may or may not be a problem at the moment is not going to be a problem. It will not be open to the court to say, 'You can't stay in the court because it's a breach of privacy.' I agree that privacy legislation should not overrule the rights of victims to be present in court for the dealing of their problem with a young offender.

The Bail Act has a minor amendment which extends the circumstances which currently exist in which there will be a reversal of the usual presumption in favour of bail. I come across people who think that people who are arrested should not be granted bail. Essentially, we operate under a system where people are innocent until proven guilty. The Bail Act quite rightly states that, in the absence of a reason not to grant bail, you will be allowed bail. The government has already introduced a presumption against bail in certain circumstances, but the amendment adds a new one, and that is where there has been a contravention of a condition imposed in an earlier bail agreement.

I do not intend to go into committee on this bill. However, during the passage of this bill between the houses, I invite the Attorney to think about this issue of the contravention, because it is something that the Liberal Party has considered. We have a quite detailed policy about circumstances in which we believe the Bail Act should be amended. One of the things that we considered was that it is a little bit dangerous to simply say, 'where there has been a contravention of the bail agreement', because a bail agreement might involve a curfew, for instance. If someone is on a curfew where they must be inside their home by 9.30 at night, would it be a sufficient contravention of that bail agreement if they come home at 9.40, 9.50 or 10 o'clock, or something like that?

So, we thought that we needed to try to spell out that it needed to be either persistent or a significant breach of the bail agreement rather than a bail agreement breach which was really of little or no consequence. I would invite the Attorney to consider that between the houses, because I think that our intentions would be the same. There is no great harm in the sense that all that is happening is that the reversal occurs. So, if there has been a breach, even if it is only a minor breach, if they are then put to the bother of proving to a court their entitlement to bail instead of having a presumption in favour of bail, hopefully a court would consider it a minor enough amendment.

The next amendment is to the Correctional Services Act. I have already mentioned that that amendment broadens the scope of the register that already exists, from simply containing the victim's name to including the victim's contact details and, indeed, an alternative person's details. One of the

problems to date has been that victims have not necessarily stayed where they were. Indeed, if they have had offences against them in a particular house, a lot of victims feel so uncomfortable in that house that they decide to move. I know of an old couple who, many years ago, were forced to move because of the injuries that they sustained in a Saturday morning assault in the Blackwood Shopping Centre. They were in their 80s, living in their own home but, because of the injuries that they sustained in a broad daylight attack on a Saturday morning, they could not stay in their own home any more, and they had to move.

There are circumstances where victims can become hard to locate but, if all you are starting out with is a name, it is even more difficult. So, I think it is a good idea that we extend that. I trust that people will be made quite aware of the benefit of not only being registered but notifying of any move that they may make so that they can be contacted and be given the opportunity to put submissions in relation to bail.

The last of the amendments is the amendment to the Evidence Act. It seems to me that the amendment reflects what is already in the Victims of Crime Act, but it is made explicit that the court has to consider the circumstances of the victim. The second reading explanation indicated—as did the

meeting that we had for advice—that there is a comparable section in the Victorian Evidence Act. The amendment which allows the victim to have their circumstances considered, I think, is really just reflective of what happens already. For the most part, this bill does simply give legislative weight and statutory authority to the existing arrangements. It broadens the victim's entitlements to some extent, and to that extent I welcome the changes. I think I have sufficiently covered what the bill does. I indicate, of course, that the Liberal opposition will support the bill. I thank the officers for their assistance in the briefing, and for the benefit of a better understanding of some of the more detailed issues that arose.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Attorney-General): I promise to think about that which the member for Heysen has asked me to think about.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.18 p.m. the house adjourned until Tuesday 25 September at 11 a.m.