

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 17 June 2008

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.J. Snelling)** took the chair at 11:00 and read prayers.

LEGAL PROFESSION BILL

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Croydon—Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (11:02): I move:

That the sitting of the house be continued during the conference with the Legislative Council on the bill.

Motion carried.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (11:03): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move a motion for an apology to the child victims of abuse while in state care and to enable the Leader of the Opposition to respond forthwith.

The SPEAKER: There being an absolute majority of members present I accept the motion. There being no dissenting voice the motion to suspend is carried.

Motion carried.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the Premier, I advise the house that I have authorised the filming and broadcast of the proceedings on the motion of apology to the Old Chamber in Old Parliament House and for a camera to be positioned in the chamber, but beyond the bar of the house for the purpose of these proceedings.

CHILDREN IN STATE CARE APOLOGY

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (11:04): I move:

That this parliament recognises the abuses of some of those who grew up in state care and the impact that this has had on their lives.

Only those who have been subject to this kind of abuse or neglect will ever be able to fully understand what it means to have experienced these abhorrent acts.

For many of these people, governments of any persuasion were not to be trusted. Yet many have overcome this mistrust.

You have been listened to and believed and this parliament now commits itself to righting the wrongs of the past.

We recognise that the majority of carers have been, and still are, decent honourable people who continue to open their hearts to care for vulnerable children.

We thank those South Australians for their compassion and care.

We also acknowledge that some have abused the trust placed in them as carers. They have preyed upon our children.

We acknowledge those courageous people who opened up their own wounds to ensure that we as a state could know the extent of these abuses.

We accept that some children who were placed in the care of government and church institutions suffered abuse.

We accept these children were hurt.

We accept they were hurt through no fault of their own.

We acknowledge this truth.

We acknowledge that in the past the state has not protected some of its most vulnerable.

By this apology we express regret for the pain that has been suffered by so many.

To all those who experienced abuse in state care, we are sorry.

To those who witnessed these abuses, we are sorry.

To those who were not believed when trying to report these abuses we are sorry.

For the pain shared by loved ones, husbands and wives, partners, brothers and sisters, parents and, importantly, their children, we are sorry.

We commit this parliament to be ever vigilant in its pursuit of those who abuse children.

And we commit this parliament to help people overcome this, until now, untold chapter in our state's history.

When I tabled the report of the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry in early April, I made a commitment to the people of South Australia that there would be an apology to those who were abused as children in state care. Today this government and this parliament honours that promise.

Once the parliament has formally apologised to children who were abused in state care, we will gather in the chamber of Old Parliament House to meet with survivors. With them as our witnesses, the Minister for Families and Communities and I will join with representatives from the Anglican, Catholic, Uniting and Lutheran churches and the Salvation Army to sign a shared apology to those people. Together we represent those who should have provided the best care to children who were in need of it. Instead we accept that some of those children suffered under our care.

Today we stand together to illustrate our commitment not just to acknowledging our past but also to working together to take every reasonable step to ensure our most vulnerable children—those in state care—are protected from sexual abuse.

The findings of the Mullighan inquiry were nothing less than shocking. I commend Commissioner Mullighan and his team for their outstanding but most difficult work done well. Some 792 people came forward to the inquiry and said that they were victims of child sexual abuse. The inquiry determined that 242 of those people were children in state care at the time of their alleged abuse. As I have previously stated, these children's narratives of their abuse make sickening reading for anyone.

Victims of abuse bravely came forward to Commissioner Mullighan to lift the curtain of silence on abuse. These courageous individuals have spoken and through their actions we now know of these tragedies, but also through the telling of their stories, and the way in which those stories have been respected and honoured by Commissioner Mullighan and his team, there has undeniably been significant healing for many of these people. For instance, in his preface to the report the commissioner tells of the family of a woman who gave evidence to the inquiry. The children discussed her evidence the night she gave it and, as one child told the commissioner, 'We had always felt sorry for our mother; now we feel proud of her.' Today is mainly about that healing process. We need to show these courageous people that the government and the parliament, on behalf of all South Australians, acknowledge what they have been through and say sorry.

The fundamental importance of this apology to the survivors of abuse in state care cannot be overestimated. I again met with a group of these people recently to get an understanding of precisely what the apology would mean for them. I was told how important it is to survivors that a formal apology be offered to begin the healing process. I also heard about the anger that governments of the past of all political persuasions had not listened, and people asked why it had taken so long to be believed and acknowledged. Also, there was mention from survivors I met last night for us to acknowledge in this place those who did not survive, those who are no longer with us and who lived with terrible tragedy but were unable to tell their story or have it believed.

This apology is not only about acknowledging the past, but must also involve a commitment about the future. We must commit ourselves to doing everything we can to protect children entrusted to the state's care. As evidence of that commitment the Minister for Families and Communities will today table the government's response to the recommendations of Commissioner Mullighan's inquiry. Further evidence of our commitment to the care and welfare of our children is our recent budget, which allocates an extra \$190.6 million over four years to keeping children safe. This represents the largest ever investment in protecting children in our state's history and provides the resources to enable us to carry out the inquiry's recommendations, in particular appropriately placing children in care and better supporting children in care and their carers.

We will also provide additional resources to the Guardian for Children and Young People to strengthen her role and independence as advocate for children in care and monitor of that care. We will expand the screening processes in respect of people involved in child-related work and strengthen our child safe environments. For those children in care who frequently abscond and place themselves at high risk, we will create a specialist team to provide assertive specialised therapeutic services, and we will provide for secure care.

To ensure perpetrators are brought to justice, this government has already committed an extra \$2.4 million to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. We will also pilot a scheme to fast track trials involving child complainants of sexual abuse. These commitments, along with the others we table today, constitute a comprehensive package to help ensure that the horrific events that Commissioner Mullighan has uncovered do not recur. This is an important commitment to those who had the courage to speak out to Commissioner Mullighan. We have also accepted those recommendations aimed not so much at prevention but at healing. Today I make the commitment that this government will work together with survivors of abuse in care to promote the healing process. We will provide free counselling and support services to those who were sexually abused while children in state care. We will establish a task force to examine arrangements adopted in other states for redress schemes, and we will apologise to the victims of abuse in care.

In moving this apology I acknowledge that nothing any of us say here today will take back the pain these children have carried into their adult lives. Nothing that we say will be able to change the past actions, the past abuse that was experienced by some of those who were placed in state care. There is nothing to change the fact that people stood by and failed to act to prevent these tragedies from happening, but to say to the survivors of sexual abuse in state care that we believe you, that we understand the hurt done to you, that we accept our past failings and that we are sorry is a powerful step forward. Today's apology is for all of those in state care—the homies, wardies and care leavers, and those from the institutions, the orphanages and the homes. To those who are with us, those who are far away and those who sadly are no longer with us, on behalf of this parliament and previous parliaments, on behalf of this government and previous governments, I offer you this apology.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (11:16): In the last 16 years Australian and South Australian society has had an awakening. For decades the abuse of children in schools, in orphanages, churches and government institutions had been whispered about but swept under the carpet of social embarrassment. Then, in 1992, the ABC screened the documentary *The Leaving of Liverpool*, which told the story of two boys who were part of the child migration scheme and the deprivation, hardship and abuse they encountered as orphans in a strange land. What followed was an extraordinary national and international social controversy, which encouraged real-life victims to break the cone of silence that had enclosed them for nearly half a century.

By 1994 we had undeniable evidence that child sexual abuse had been a scourge amongst almost all institutions involved in the care of children whose own family lives had, for a range of reasons, broken down. For many hundreds of South Australians, many of them now in their 40s, 50s or 60s, their own childhood experiences resembled those of other children in institutional care. Many began to come forward to tell their stories. They told their stories to churches, welfare organisations, state officials and to the media, but still there were those who would not listen to these stories.

Despite a growing body of evidence, there seemed an official reluctance to admit that such horrors could be visited upon children in care. It was at this point that some of those victims decided to continue to tell their story until someone listened. We are fortunate that those victims had the courage to stand up. My first apology today is to the people of South Australia for this parliament's 10-year delay in recognising the need for self-examination of the state's own actions and responsibilities. I apologise to the victims who knocked on doors, who wrote letters and who made phone calls for a decade before their time would come. In doing so, I acknowledge the untiring efforts of many members of parliament who carried the torch for the need for a commission, a wide-ranging inquiry, and who never gave up on the cause.

In particular, I acknowledge the efforts of a former premier the Hon. Rob Kerin who spent years arguing the case for a state inquiry, and I acknowledge the retiring upper house Family First MP the Hon. Andrew Evans, who successfully moved for the lifting of the immunity from prosecution of pre-1982 sexual offenders. I acknowledge the parliament of 2004 for finally committing to an inquiry.

The process of self-examination is always difficult. You can expect to discover things that will astound you, shame you and challenge you. Retired judge Ted Mullighan pinpointed this when his interim findings included this observation:

Nothing prepared me for the foul undercurrent of society revealed in evidence to the inquiry—not my life in the community, or my work in the law as a practitioner and judge.

If nothing prepared a well-educated and experienced judicial officer for these stories, consider the impact of them on an eight, 10 or 12 year old child. Consider the impact on a child who is traumatised by the act of removal from their family and the stark institutional surroundings that replaced it. Consider the impact on the child when he or she is used, abused and then silenced. I doubt whether we can ever fully understand the searing emotional pain that these children felt. The Premier has told the house the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry took evidence from 792 people and detailed 826 allegations involving 922 perpetrators. We may wish to consider those numbers for just a moment. They represent a mountain of human heartache.

It has been my experience in dealing with this issue in the past five years that there is one thing most important to victims of abuse. It is the one thing they have craved for decades. It is not compensation, yet they deserve it; it is not the prosecution of offenders, yet justice demands it; it is being believed. For 50 years, and more, in Australia abused children were unable to tell their story for fear of being punished, humiliated, or just ignored. To those victims who are here today, and those who could not be here, and to those victims who are no longer with us, I say this to you: we believe you, we understand you, and we apologise to you.

We also apologise to the victims' families and friends—friends of today who could never comprehend what inner demons their loved ones battled day in, day out, and year in, year out. We apologise to the parents whose children we promised to care for but, in so many cases, failed.

I told the house four years ago the tragic story of a young man in state government care. A constituent came to see me—the mother. Today I want to remind you of this story as we begin to repair the damage and find a way to stop it happening again. The mother wrote to me urging the state government to hold a royal commission into the abuse of children who were not necessarily in full-time state care but who happened to become involved in state-run programs for troubled teenagers. Her letter told how her son was abused in 1993 by a man who was at the time a church organist. On the promise of a paid opportunity to deliver junk mail, the boy's trust was cultivated and then abused. The courageous mother convinced her son to go with her to the police and the man was charged and convicted of child sexual abuse.

During the court proceedings, this man (then aged 67) admitted he had been abusing children since he was 21—that is 46 years. He was given a two-year suspended sentence. Traumatized by the experience, the teenage boy sought comfort in the health department program, Second Story Youth Centre, in the city. The mother was later told by her son that the people who ran the centre would take him to the now defunct gay nightclub the Mars Bar. Still a minor, he was introduced again to older men, drugs and alcohol abuse.

The mother felt helpless as authorities told her they could do nothing about the behaviour. This was not a mother who had neglected her son. This was a mother who had simply watched as her son became the victim of a breach of trust, firstly, by the church, and then by the state. Of this we should be ashamed.

The challenge before us is to put in place the protective mechanisms to reduce the possibility that there will be future victims. We need to do more than prosecute offenders. We need to provide a society where fewer parents face the family stresses that cause them to lose their children. We need to provide a society where parents can send their children to state-run programs confident in the knowledge that they are safe. We need to be alert to those who would prey on children they see as vulnerable.

This is a whole of government, whole of society responsibility. It includes policing and prosecution. It includes emergency, social intervention and care. It includes the encouragement of stronger and happier families. This will take time.

I acknowledge today the work of Justice Ted Mullighan and his team. Many of them have heard distressing stories as a regular part of their daily workload and then headed home to their own private lives. It is a difficult, emotional burden to carry, and I thank them for it. I acknowledge the men and women of the South Australian Police Paedophile Task Force whose job it has been to investigate the cases referred to them by Justice Mullighan. I acknowledge the men and women of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions who work to ensure the fair assessment and trial of these cases.

Our society has come a long way in 16 years. In that time, the Anglican Church, the Catholic Church and others have confronted their mistakes. They have set a path of repair, defined compensation and improved codes of conduct. This is now our task. We must rebuild the broken bridge. No longer should an abused child feel there is no-one to listen. For the victims of the

50 years that preceded the national awakening, the pain continues. No-one can replace a childhood lost; no-one can erase the memories.

On this day in 2008, let us admit to ourselves that we made a mistake. The mistake was to not listen—and now let us make this promise: we will listen. To those assembled here today, you should be proud of your actions in coming forward. Without your stories and your courage, we would not be where we are today.

The state now recognises the errors of the past. The state believes you. Today is the day we apologise to you. It is the day we plan for a safer future. It is the day we embrace the truth and move ahead together, better equipped to build a caring society. For the sake of our children, I commend the motion.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.W. Weatherill.

CHILDREN IN STATE CARE INQUIRY

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (11:30): I seek leave to make a brief ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I refer to the Premier's remarks that we have just heard concerning the response to the report of the Children in State Care Inquiry and, of course, I concur with those remarks. As foreshadowed by him, I now table the response.

The inquiry report makes 54 recommendations. This government accepts 49 of them. Four require further consideration and only one, involving the extension of our innovative Sexual Behaviour Clinic in prisons to all child sexual offenders at any point in their sentence, is not accepted. We will continue to target the clinic to those prisoners assessed as at risk of reoffending, and provide it to them in the two years before they are released into the community.

Given that the inquiry related to children in state care, the majority of the recommendations apply to the Department for Families and Communities, and we accept all of them. As the Premier has just stated, the recent budget committed an extra \$190.6 million expenditure over four years on keeping children safe. From this substantial investment we will implement measures to place children in care more appropriately and better support children in care and their carers.

As the Premier has just stated, we will put in place a range of measures to meet the recommendations, including additional resources to the Guardian for Children and Young People, expanded screening processes and strengthened child safe environments, assertive specialised therapeutic services and secure care for children in care, a pilot scheme to fast-track trials involving child complainants of sexual abuse, free counselling and support services for those who were sexually abused while children in state care and a task force to examine redress schemes.

I now table the response to the Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry Report—Allegations of Sexual Abuse and Death from Criminal Conduct, as required by section 11A of the Commission of Inquiry (Children in State Care and Children on APY Lands) Act 2004.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

[Sitting suspended from 11:33 to 14:00]

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (BOARD OF AUTHORITY) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

FIREARMS (FIREARMS PROHIBITION ORDERS) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. M.D. Rann)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Mutual Recognition (South Australia)—Temporary Exemptions—Drug paraphernalia
Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition (South Australia)—Temporary Exemptions—Drug paraphernalia

By the Deputy Premier (Hon. K.O. Foley)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Firearms—Fees
Mines and Works Inspection—Fees
Mining—General and Fees
Opal Mining—Fees
Petroleum—Fees

By the Treasurer (Hon. K.O. Foley)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Land Tax—Fees
Petroleum Products Regulation—Fees

By the Minister for Transport (Hon. P.F. Conlon)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Development—Fees
Harbors and Navigation—
General and Fees
Variation
Motor Vehicles—
Accident Towing Roster Scheme Fees
Fees—Offences
Fees—Registration
National Heavy Vehicles Registration Fees
Passenger Transport—
General—Taxi fares
General Fees
Road Traffic—
Inspection—Fees
Miscellaneous—Fees

By the Minister for Infrastructure (Hon. P.F. Conlon)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Roads (Opening and Closing)—Fees
Valuation of Land—Fees

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

Regulations under the following Acts—
Associations Incorporation—Fees
Bills of Sale—Fees
Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration—Fees
Business Names—Fees
Community Titles—Fees
Co-operatives—Fees
Coroners—Fees
Cremation—Fees
Criminal Law (Sentencing)—Sentencing—Fees
District Court—Fees
Environment, Resources and Development Court—Fees
Fees Regulation—Public Trustee Administration Fees
Magistrates Court—Fees
Partnership—Fees
Public Trustee—Fees
Real Property—

Fees
 Land Division—Fees
 Registration of Deeds—Fees
 Security and Investigation Agents—Fees
 Sexual Reassignment—Fees
 Sheriff's—Fees
 Strata Titles—
 Fees
 Fees—Erratum
 Summary Offences—Dangerous Articles and Prohibited Weapons Fees
 Supreme Court—Fees
 Worker's Liens—Fees
 Youth Court—Fees

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

Southern Adelaide Health Service—Report 2006-07
 Southern Adelaide Health Service Financial, Workforce and Environmental Report 2006-07
 Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Act 2002 Quarterly Report
 1 January 2008—31 March 2008
 Regulations under the following Acts—
 Ambulance Services—Fees
 Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium—Fees
 Controlled Substances—
 Pesticides Fees
 Poisons Fees
 Crown Lands—Fees
 Environment Protection—
 Beverage Container Fees
 Fees and Levy—Fees
 Heritage Places—Fees
 Historic Shipwrecks—Fees
 National Parks and Wildlife—
 Hunting—Fees
 Wildlife—Fees
 Native Vegetation—Fees
 Natural Resources Management—
 Financial Provisions Fees
 General Fees
 Pastoral Land Management and Conservation—Fees
 Public and Environmental Health—
 Notifiable Diseases—Chikungunya virus
 Waste Control Fees
 Radiation Protection and Control—Ionising Radiation Fees
 South Australian Health Commission—
 Compensable and Non-Medicare Patients Fees—New Fees
 Private Hospitals Fees
 Tobacco Products Regulation—Fees

By the Minister for Industrial Relations (Hon. M.J. Wright)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
 Dangerous Substances—Fees
 Employment Agents Registration—Fees
 Explosives—
 Fees
 Fireworks Fees
 Security Sensitive Substances Fees
 Fair Work—Representation—Fees
 Fire and Emergency Services—Fees
 Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare—Fees
 WorkCover Corporation—Claims Management Contractual Arrangements—
 Variation

By the Minister for Finance (Hon. M.J. Wright)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Freedom of Information—Fees and Charges
State Records—Fees

By the Minister for Families and Communities (Hon. J.W. Weatherill)—

Regulations under the following Act—
Adoption—Fees

By the Minister for Housing (Hon. J.W. Weatherill)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Housing Improvement—Section 60 statements Fees

By the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Hon. R.J. McEwen)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Branding of Pigs—Fees
Brands—Fees
Chicken Meat Industry—Fees
Fisheries Management—Fees
Livestock—Fees
Primary Produce (Food Safety Schemes)—
Citrus Industry Fees
Meat Industry Fees

By the Minister for Water Security (Hon. K.A. Maywald)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Fees Regulation—Assessment of Requirements—Water and Sewerage Fees
Sewerage—Fees
Waterworks—Fees

By the Minister for State/Local Government Relations (Hon. J.M. Rankine)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Local Government—General Fees
Private Parking Areas—Fees

By the Minister for Consumer Affairs (Hon. J.M. Rankine)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Building Work Contractors—Fees
Conveyancers—Fees
Land Agents—Fees
Liquor Licensing—
General Fees
Goolwa
Hallett Cove
Millicent
Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Electricians—Fees
Second-hand Vehicle Dealers—Fees
Trade Measurement Administration—Fees
Travel Agents Act 1986—Regulations—Fees

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

Regulations under the following Acts—
Construction Industry Training Fund—Construction Industry Training Fund

By the Minister for Gambling (Hon. P. Caica)—

Regulations under the following Acts—
Authorised Betting Operations—Fees

Gaming Machines—Fees
Lottery and Gaming—
Fees—Schedule 10
Fees—Schedule 3

BHP DESALINATION PLANT

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations) (14:04): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: On 4 June, the Leader of the Opposition asked whether the state had backed away from its commitment to BHP Billiton's desalination plant. The state government remains in positive discussions with BHP and we have been involved in those discussions since 2006. I said, in answering the question on the day, that I would check my answer and, if there was anything incorrect, I would correct the record; therefore, I seek to clarify my previous statements regarding the quality of water being produced by BHP through this single-pass process.

BHP Billiton has recently confirmed that it is proposing to produce water which, on average, will be at salinity levels of around 500 total dissolved solids. I am advised that, in terms of drinking water, this is well within the World Health Organisation guidelines and, for the most part, meets Australian water guidelines.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: Just listen.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: However, SA Water has advised that, in keeping with most other major desalination plants in Australia that supply water for local populations, a second-pass treatment will be required to ensure that the best quality of water is available to the Upper Spencer Gulf community. This additional second-pass requirement, should the government choose to proceed as a partner, is estimated to have a capital cost of approximately \$50 million; hence, the answer I gave the other day that we are looking at the impact of that additional cost to it.

The issue does revolve around definitions of 'potable' and what is acceptable for BHP in Roxby but what SA Water advise government is appropriate for the communities. Of course, we are yet to embark upon the EIS process, at which time this requirement and the requirement for the type of water will be flushed out, so to speak, well and truly. Discussions with BHP are continuing and, as I have said, there has been no decision to abandon these discussions.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw to members' attention the presence in the chamber today of students from Sunrise Christian School, who are guests of the member for Reynell.

QUESTION TIME

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question is to the Premier. When will he accept responsibility for the state of our education system and the health system and meet personally with teachers and doctors and their unions about their concerns?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (14:13): I am absolutely delighted to answer this question, and I hope that my response does not in any way upstage your address to the parliament this afternoon. On the issue of the doctors' industrial dispute, the state government has made a \$260 million offer to the doctors' union. This offer will place South Australian Public Service doctors among the best paid in the nation.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I am answering the question the way I want to answer it, just as I am sure that you will give your address with great flamboyance and maybe an international satellite

audience. We will watch it on CNN. We will not clutter up the chamber: we will turn over to CNN or Sky News—or maybe even Fox News: you might get a better run there.

The offer will place South Australian Public Service doctors among the best paid in the nation. A senior doctor currently earning a remuneration package of about \$199,000, I am advised, will receive an increase to about \$325,000 under our arrangements. That is an increase of \$126,000, or around 63 per cent, over three years. Who else in the community is getting a wage rise like that? Under our arrangements, an extra \$126,000 is being offered.

Also under our arrangements, a senior emergency department doctor would earn a package of about \$356,000. A senior anaesthetist without private practice could earn a package of about \$325,000, or up to \$392,000, with private practice. In comparison, the doctors' union is seeking an increase in remuneration packages for emergency department doctors in excess of \$424,000 (an increase of over \$110,000); for anaesthetists without private practice an increase to \$453,000 (an increase of \$184,000); and for anaesthetists with private practice, an increase of up to \$552,000 (an increase of \$186,000). So, that is what they are after.

They have been made an extremely generous offer, but what they are doing is totally exorbitant and absolutely out of kilter with the rest of the community. The government's package is fair and generous. It rewards doctors for the hard work they do, and it is competitive with other states. So, we call upon the doctors' union to withdraw the resignations and return to the negotiation table. I know that the member was a minister for five minutes—how long was it?

An honourable member: Four weeks.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Four weeks, a glittering, shining four weeks. It was the light on the hill of the previous Liberal government. He was there for four weeks, but he might have learnt something about industrial relations if he had—

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. The Premier will take his seat.

Ms CHAPMAN: Thank you. Clearly, the Premier is not answering the substance of the question.

The SPEAKER: Yes; the Premier must return to the substance of the question.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: We call on the doctors' union to withdraw the resignations and return to the negotiation table. If they are not happy with the outcome of negotiations with the government, they can have the matter resolved by the Industrial Relations Commission, which is the independent umpire. Why should anybody be afraid of the independent umpire? We in the government are not afraid. Why should anyone be afraid?

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: The deal has always been that, if you cannot reach—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The deputy leader will come to order.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —finality in terms of negotiations, you go to the independent umpire to make a ruling. Those who will not go to the independent umpire, in my view, do not have a decent case. So, what the opposition leader needs to explain to the public is: would he pay the union the extra money demanded or not? Is that what he would do? After his four weeks' experience in government—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —he would simply put his hands up and surrender, run up the white flag, the first time anyone has tried to extort money out of him. Is that the kind of premier that the Leader of the Opposition wants to be—someone who will surrender at the first opportunity, someone who will run up the white flag in terms of negotiations? The Leader of the Opposition as premier—if he got to that position—has to represent the interests of the whole state. What we have heard from this Leader of the Opposition is that he would give in to every demand. That is the gutless way. That is not leadership: that is the Neville Chamberlain approach to political leadership.

That is basically, 'I'll give you what you want as long as you say nice things about me.' You have a different premier on this side of the house, because I have a different concept of leadership.

There are about 699 more doctors in the system now than there were during the Leader of the Opposition's magical period in the cabinet. There are 699 more doctors. People talk about overcrowding. Billions of extra dollars are being spent in our health system and we have 699 more doctors, I am advised, than when the Leader of the Opposition was in cabinet, when he did not give a damn about the health system.

There are about 2,500 more nurses in the system. That is the difference: we are putting massively more into health and we are recruiting doctors, but we are not going to give in to extortion, we are not going to give in to blackmail, and if the union does not like it then it has redress in the Industrial Relations Commission. Let the umpire decide.

I move on to the issue of the teachers' union claim. I am so pleased I was tipped off about this. I mean, they leak like a sieve. I know they have had some problems with their preselection.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Apparently the Liberals think that the government's slogan for the next election is 'Action now for the future'. That was actually the slogan for the budget. However, we now know what the Liberal slogan is for the next election: Martin Hamilton-Smith says, 'I surrender.' That is a different kind of leadership from mine. The Australian Education Union's claim has been costed at approximately \$2.8 billion over three years—over \$1 billion in the last year of the agreement.

An honourable member: Put it on Bankcard!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: That is right. The Leader of the Opposition would give in; he would put it on Bankcard. Everyone knows that if there is any slogan that will be attached to my name it will be 'fiscal rectitude', but the Leader of the Opposition will have two slogans at the next election: 'I surrender' and a fiscal policy of 'borrow and hope'. Again, we are the ones who brought the AAA credit rating back and we are the ones who deliver a surplus every year.

The union claim includes a salary claim of 21 per cent, 28 weeks' maternity leave, reduced teacher duty days from 207 to 202 (five fewer days) and six extra pupil-free days. I just heard members opposite agreeing on the issue of the maternity leave. When the opposition was in government, when the Leader of the Opposition was part of that magic period in the history of this state, the Camelot four weeks, there was two weeks' maternity leave, not the 14 weeks that there is now: two weeks' maternity leave under the Liberal government.

The government offer is worth \$309 million over the life of the agreement; approximately \$141 million per annum once fully implemented in 2010-11. The government has put forward an offer of 9.75 per cent over three years, which is 3.25 per cent per annum for three years. The government offer also includes a per capita funding model, extra support for beginning teachers, workload protections and increased paid maternity and adoption leave to 14 weeks—14 weeks versus the two weeks under the Liberals.

The Australian Education Union is demanding a new government offer and is claiming to want to meet only with ministers Wright, Lomax-Smith and Caica. We will be responsible and we will be fair. We have shown enormous generosity in terms of our investment in the health system, as well as in education—massively more per student in our schools by this government compared to the last government.

But you cannot be a leader by surrendering at the first whiff of grapeshot. I am happy to give some Churchillian advice, because we will walk towards the sunlit uplands of prosperity by working in partnership, not by giving in at the first battle.

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (14:24): Can the Premier inform the house of the status of the Carnegie Mellon University in Adelaide and the progress of the government's University City project?

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (14:25): I thank the honourable member for his question and for his interest in education.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I know that; I have been aware of that for a very long time. The presence of Carnegie Mellon University has a vital role in the growth and future of South Australia as a university city. The bold, bipartisan vision started several years ago during discussions that I had on a train heading north with the then foreign minister, Alexander Downer, the then head of Santos, John Ellice-Flint, the then head of the Economic Development Board, Robert Champion de Crespigny and others. We all agreed to work to support our existing universities and to attract world-class new universities to help Adelaide become an internationally recognised university city. Let me quote Alexander Downer, someone for whom I have a great deal of respect and, if I can say, affection:

If Adelaide genuinely became a university city, it would change the character of the city...It would build its intellectual life; it would subtly change its lifestyle; it would spawn new industries, particularly at the high end of technology; it would attract investors who at present may feel Sydney or Melbourne offer more intellectual diversity than Adelaide; it would make our city more cosmopolitan because, as a university city, it would be a magnet for students and staff alike from Asia, the United States and Europe.

Alexander Downer also noted:

To make Adelaide a university city demands establishment of new institutions.

Carnegie Mellon is Australia's first foreign university, and we are fortunate to have this world-class educational institution in our state. Ranked 20th in the world overall, Carnegie Mellon University is also ranked seventh in the world for technology, according to *The Times* (London report '07). In addition, their programs, information and technology management and public policy analysis are ranked first and fourth—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —in the United States, respectively, according to the *US News & World Report* and *Times*. This exceptional university has produced 15 Nobel Prize winners. In the overall world rankings, Carnegie Mellon is ahead of all but one of the Australian universities. Just two years after its Adelaide launch, the Carnegie Mellon Heinz School has completed three major student intakes. Enrolments have increased 30 per cent since 2007 and the December 2008 graduating class is estimated to be 48 alumnae. By August 2008 I am told that enrolments will be 112 students, and by 2010 the number is expected to double. To date, Carnegie Mellon in Adelaide has attracted a student body from 19 different countries.

It is time to look at the hinterland of greatness in terms of support for this. The project has placed Adelaide at the vanguard of Australian cities. As former prime minister John Howard (who was made an AC with my strong support at the weekend) stated to me in a letter of 1 September 2006—we became pen pals:

Please convey my best wishes and congratulations to all those who worked tirelessly to bring the Carnegie Mellon Campus to Australia—it is indeed a milestone in the history of our country's tertiary education.

John Winston Howard. And the name Winston rings true as well. In supporting changes to commonwealth law to allow Carnegie Mellon to establish a campus in Adelaide, the commonwealth education minister at the time—who was it?

Mr Koutsantonis: Brendan Nelson.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Brendan Nelson said:

The introduction into the sector of such a highly regarded international university will increase diversity and choice within the Australian higher education sector making Australia more globally competitive and part of the global higher education marketplace and attract students from around the world who are seeking a high quality education experience.

If members opposite do not believe me, or the Nobel Prize Committee, or the world rankings of universities, at least listen to Alexander Downer, John Howard and Brendan Nelson, because I am in such great company.

Of course, this has required a financial contribution from our state. The financial agreement between South Australia and CMU was capped at \$19.5 million and set up over a four-year time frame. The funding was allocated to assist with start-up and establishment costs that would assist Carnegie Mellon as well as benefit the greater university city project. Alexander Downer said:

Government funding should be transparent and debated. But the critics are wrong. Taking the seed funding and dividing it by the number of students currently at the university is absurd.

Alexander Downer said that. I want to say this and, if he wants to use it in the next election campaign, let him do so: Alexander Downer is right. One does not judge the success of a project such as this after two years but, rather, after 10 years. For example, dividing the cost of infrastructure improvements by the first two years of enrolments fails to acknowledge the prospects for future growth and how much the cost per student will fall into this growth.

The next phase of the university city project will be the establishment of an international university precinct based in Victoria Square. The camera is still running! Cranfield University, part of the UK's defence academy, has already established a business development office next to Carnegie Mellon in the historic Torrens Building. Cranfield University is one of Western Europe's largest academic centres for strategic and applied research, development and design. The Leader of the Opposition should know this, given his military background. Cranfield Defence University is one of the world leaders in defence-related education.

While in the United Kingdom recently I signed a terms sheet with University College London, and negotiations are underway for the establishment of a UCL branch campus in Adelaide. Apart from all the Nobel Prize winners that the University College London has produced, graduates include other political leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi. University College London is one of the world's top 10 universities. In South Australia UCL will deliver a masters of science in energy and resources management. Do members opposite know why it is doing that? It is because we have a big mining boom coming.

It will also provide research places for doctoral students. The courses offered by UCL will complement programs provided by our local universities, focused on the rising needs of our resources sector. They will also complement new initiatives, such as the Institute for Minerals and Energy Resources (which I announced in May). This institute will be based at the University of Adelaide and will draw on the niche expertise of universities (such as the University of Nottingham) to provide an integrated approach to complex systems and problems confronting the mining and resources sector.

By the way, apparently we failed in attracting overseas students—and I will get onto that in a minute. The benefits of having a university city vision are already around us. International education is now the state's largest service sector export and, after wine, mining and manufacturing, our fourth largest overall export, accounting for 3,250 local jobs. The international education industry brought \$648 million into the South Australian economy in 2006-07—a 17 per cent increase on the 2005-96 total of \$553 million.

Let us get onto the question of whether we have failed to attract overseas students. Record numbers of international students are coming to Adelaide. This dramatic increase is a direct result of our efforts to promote Adelaide as a destination for international students. In the year 2000, who was in government? Members opposite were—and only 6,000 overseas students were studying in Adelaide. What is the figure now under this government? We now have 23,300 students. If that is a failure let us have more of it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:34): Will the Premier advise why South Australian teachers (who are striking today) have effectively been offered a pay cut by the government in the current enterprise bargaining agreement? The current government offer of 9.75 per cent over three years is significantly less than the 13.5 per cent provided under the last enterprise agreement over the same duration, when the national average across Australia for all workers was at 4.2 per cent per annum in the public sector and 4.1 per cent per annum in the private sector. The government's offer of 3.25 per cent per annum is significantly lower and below CPI.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:35): The government has come forward with two offers during the past five months or so of negotiations. The original offer was worth \$306 million over the life of the agreement, and then another new offer contained a new per capita funding model for the education system which provided \$18.7 million for schools. We have provided funding for the wage increases, we have provided funding for the per capita funding model and we have provided funding for extra support for beginning teachers and for workload protections, as well as increased maternity and adoption leave of 14 weeks. We think that we have come forward with two good offers. During that period of

time only one claim has been put forward by the teachers' union, that is, \$2.8 billion. We have ruled that out. We will simply not be able to pay \$2.8 billion, which is the claim by the teachers' union.

What we hope for is that the teachers' union comes back to the negotiating table. We are sorry that a strike took place today. We do not think there was a need for the strike. Just last Friday the independent umpire, the Industrial Relations Commission, put forward two recommendations: first, that the strike not go ahead today; and, secondly, that the parties return to the negotiating table and, if need be, use the Industrial Relations Commission to assist the union in trying to settle some of the differences that currently exist. We stand by our offer. We think it is a good offer, and we would like the teachers' union to have another look at it.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:36): Thank you. I will explain it to my kids when I get home. My question is to—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PISONI: —the Premier (originally designed for the education minister, but I believe she is off to Perth). Under the student-centred funding model being proposed in the new enterprise agreement for teachers—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Unley's question. The member for Unley.

Mr PISONI: Under the student-centred funding model being proposed in the new enterprise agreement for teachers, why have schools been given a guarantee of being no worse off financially under the existing funding arrangement for only two years rather than simply a guarantee that they will be no worse off? Some schools—in particular, smaller schools—have calculated that, under the new funding arrangements, they could be up to \$70,000 per year worse off if aiming for the same student-teacher ratio as they have now.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:37): We are surprised at claims of that nature. If they can be put forward we will look at them, because we believe that no-one will be worse off. We have come forward with a per capita funding model which provides \$18.7 million for schools and which includes 165 more teachers. We stand by our offer. We do not think anyone is disadvantaged, but if the union wants to come forward with any of these propositions we will certainly look at them.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:38): My question is again to the Premier or the education minister. Will the minister guarantee that arrangements under the new funding model being proposed for schools are not designed to close small schools by a death of 1,000 cuts gradually forcing them to become unviable? A leaked department of education study has shown that, in terms of the 2006 enrolment levels, 175 schools will be worse off under the government's funding model. Basket Range Primary School is shown in the study to be \$78,000 worse off under the new funding model. The current chair of the school governing council has estimated a loss of one of the school's four teachers and a reduction in classes from three to two.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:39): I think that, in part, I have already answered that question. However, I ask the honourable member to table his information and, as I have said, we will look at that. To the best of my knowledge, schools will not be worse off. Certainly, in regard to the honourable member's question, and despite the fact that he is interjecting—

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: —for small schools, certainly, it is not meant to be a death by a 1,000 cuts; quite the opposite.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:40): What action is the Minister for Health going to take to address the claims that up to 50 per cent of emergency victims are at risk of adverse outcomes in our emergency departments?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: You mean 'harmed'?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: It is actually 'adverse' in the statement. Ask him—all right? Dr Bob Dunn, a senior emergency specialist at the RAH, has stated publicly that 'up to 50 per cent of patients are at risk of adverse events because of overcrowding in our emergency departments'.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:40): I thank the honourable member for her question. To start with, I know Dr Dunn; in fact, I think he is a very fine gentleman. He provided me with some emergency services on one occasion at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, and he has certainly participated in a number of arrangements that we have in place to deal with the issues facing the medical fraternity. So, I do take the things that he says very seriously.

Let me say what the government's views are about emergency services. We know that the demand for emergency services in Adelaide is increasing at about 5 per cent a year, and it has been doing that for a number of years. Over the last three years, in fact, emergency presentations in our emergency hospitals have increased by about 15 per cent. So, there is huge growth.

We need to do something about that on the supply side and the demand side. Let me go through those two aspects. In terms of the supply, we need to create more spaces for emergency work to happen, and that is why we are embarking on a \$2.2 billion capital works program to upgrade dramatically the capacity in our hospitals. We are building an extension to the Flinders Medical Centre worth \$153 million which will create extra capacity at Flinders. There are currently something like 50,000 to 55,000 presentations in the emergency department at Flinders every year. The capacity we are creating will allow Flinders Medical Centre to deal with 70,000 presentations a year.

At the Lyell McEwin Hospital, we are virtually doubling the size of that hospital. That is a hospital which has been under resourced for many years. We are going to create extra capacity and put extra staff in it and, of course, we are upgrading the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and going through a whole range of things there. The jewel in the crown, if you like, is the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital, which we will build in Adelaide. So, we are investing huge sums of money to create extra capacity and extra supply.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The second issue in relation to the supply side is that we obviously need more doctors. We know it has been difficult to recruit doctors in a range of professions into South Australia—emergency doctors are amongst them. The reason for that is that the salary and pay in other states have outstripped the amount the doctors in our state receive. We agree with that; there is no dispute about that. We want to pay our doctors more; that is why we have an offer on the table which will have emergency doctors at the senior level earn \$350,000-plus a year which, on our reckoning, will make them among the highest paid in Australia.

There is some dispute about whether in parts of Queensland they might get more, so I do not want to have an argument about that. The doctors will be the highest or the second-highest paid in Australia, and we believe if we can get that package accepted that will make it much easier for us to recruit. So, we do want to take on more doctors and, to that end, in the most recent budget, we have funding to employ an extra 20 personnel in the hospital. Most of those will be doctors, but there might be some other personnel as well, namely, nurse, practitioners and the like. We will leave that up to the people who run the emergency departments to determine. So, we are doing considerable things on the supply side.

We are also doing a lot on the demand side. We want to reduce the number of people who end up in emergency departments. People end up in emergency departments for a whole range of reasons. Obviously, where there are trauma and major incidents, the emergency department is the place to go, but a lot of people end up in emergency departments because there was no alternative for them. They cannot get to see a general practitioner. People complain about having to wait in emergency departments for six, eight, 10 or 12 hours. That is terrible. They should not have to wait

that time, but the reason they are waiting there for that long is that if they went to see their GP they would be waiting anywhere from two to eight days to get to see a general practitioner.

The great tragedy in Australia is not how long people wait in emergency departments: it is how long they have to wait to see a general practitioner, particularly in the areas that I represent and the areas to the north of the city, because there are too few general practitioners, particularly those who bulk bill. So, cost becomes another issue. People go to the emergency department because they cannot afford to pay the extra gap that the general practitioners periodically apply. That is why we have a lot of people going to our emergency departments. So, what are we doing about that? Well, I have to say that one of the best things the last government did—finally, belatedly—was to increase the number of training places for doctors in our universities. That will take some time to come through but, when it does come through, that will help address some of these structural issues.

The other thing we are doing, of course, is that we are in the process of implementing our GP Plus health care strategy, that is, to create capacity in local communities so that there is an option other than the emergency departments for patients to go to. I know that the GP Plus in my electorate at Aldinga, which has been in operation now for about year and a half, has had a very marked impact on the number of people who go from that community to the Noarlunga Hospital Emergency Department. I think, from memory, it is in the range of about 15 to 20 per cent reduction in those from my community in that area who go to the Noarlunga Hospital Emergency Department because we have created extra capacity. Our goal is to have a whole range of these GP Plus health care centres right across the state to take the pressure off the emergency departments. In addition to that, we are investing in—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: —nurses to support GPs. We have a budget for 50 practice nurses whom we are supplying to general practice to work with the general practices, funded by us for short periods of time (three or four months), to help the general practitioners develop ways of managing those with chronic diseases so that they are kept healthy and they are kept out of hospitals.

We have a whole range of other strategies in place to support that, including telephone support systems, which we have been trialling in the southern suburbs, to support people who might otherwise go to hospital, and they are having an impact.

In addition to that, we have the Health Direct telephone system, which is now in place across most Australia and is in place in South Australia, and the advice I have is that, in the time that has been in operation (since late last year or earlier this year) something like 10,000 people who otherwise would have gone to emergency departments have not needed to go there.

So, we are doing a range of things. Not all these things can be dealt with immediately, but we have a plan and a strategy to do all these things. However, what I can say to the house is that, while I recognise the good work that the emergency doctors do—and there is nothing I would say in criticism of them: they work hard; they are dedicated; they are servants of the public; and we want to keep working with them to resolve this matter—merely paying them more money will not fix all of those structural issues I have described. Those issues can be dealt with only over time, as we build the infrastructure in the communities through GP Plus and as we build the infrastructure in the hospitals in the expanded emergency services arrangement.

We do want to reward our doctors properly. We have a very good offer on the table, and we have said to them publicly, and I will say it again today: 'If you do not think that offer is sufficient, argue your case out in the Industrial Relations Commission and let the umpire decide. We will support whatever the umpire says through that process.'

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:48): Again my question is to the Minister for Health. How much money is being spent and for what purpose is the government undertaking a radio and print advertising campaign to sell its message on its case in relation to the current doctors' dispute?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:48): I am happy to get the information for the member. However, it is always telling, is it not, that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition rants and

raves and creates sound and fury in the media but, when it gets down to it, the questions she really asks are never about the substance: they are always about the process. Of course, what that demonstrates is that she is not really interested in the substance: she is interested only in the politics of it. The reason we are doing radio advertising is to let the public and the doctors know what our offer is.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for the River Murray. Does the minister support the government's Country Health Care Plan, published last Thursday, or does she support her party's state president in his opposition to the downgrading of 43 country hospitals? Yesterday, Mr Wilbur Klein, President of the South Australian National Party, said:

The health and wellbeing of many country people will be put at risk, and the very sustainability of these communities will also be put at risk.

He went on to say:

We don't need icon hospitals with fancy signage, we just want simple quality health services made available to all people and their families.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:50): Let me put this to the opposition: if it were to ask me, as a Labor—

Ms CHAPMAN: On a point of order, the question has been asked. It is not open to the government to ask questions of the opposition.

The SPEAKER: I will listen to what the Minister for Health has to say.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I was answering her question by way of analogy. I was saying: if the Deputy Leader of the Opposition were to ask me a question about the River Murray as a Labor Party member, I would not stand up to answer the question: the Minister for the River Murray would, because she is responsible for that, as I am responsible for health. However, once again the deputy leader asks tricky political questions, not questions that go to the substance, because she does not care about the substance.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am happy to answer the substance of this question. The Country Health Care Plan, which I put out recently, will deliver improved health outcomes to country people in South Australia.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member for MacKillop says that that is not believable. I have been reading the country press, and it is quite surprising to me how much support I am actually getting in country South Australia for the Country Health Care Plan, including support from people in his electorate.

The Country Health Care Plan will do three substantial things for people in country South Australia. First, it will maintain the existing network of emergency services. It will not take away emergency services. In fact, through the development of the State Retrieval Plan—

Mr Williams interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member's assertion is both wrong and misleading. The doctors will stay because we are providing them with a better network of health services to work within. There will be the existing arrangements—

Mr Venning: You are gross.

The SPEAKER: The member for Schubert will contain himself.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I would not call people gross if I had your dimensions, member for Schubert. If you want to be offensive, Ivan, come across to me and be offensive to my face.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Schubert!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I tried to do you a favour last week, Ivan.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: He asked me to do that. It is exactly what he asked me to do. The member for Schubert—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: On a point of order, the deputy leader is a stickler for standing orders. Perhaps she could stop interjecting for 60 seconds; let's count them.

The SPEAKER: Order! All members will stop interjecting on both sides of the house. The Minister for Health.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will return to the substance of the question. There are three parts to the Country Health Care Plan which will significantly benefit people in country health. First, the emergency services arrangements will stay in place and be strengthened through the rollout of the State Retrieval Plan, which will ensure better coordination between the major trauma hospitals in the city and the emergency provision in the country.

Secondly, a lot more primary health care services will be provided to country South Australia. This is absolutely essential, because all the indicators demonstrate that people in country South Australia do not have the same basic health provision and their circumstances are worse, particularly in relation to smoking (6 per cent more people in country South Australia smoke) and particularly as they relate to a whole range of chronic diseases. So, more primary health care is needed, and it will be delivered.

Thirdly, more acute services will be provided in country South Australia through the network arrangements we are putting in place. In fact, 85 per cent of country South Australians will have better hospital services within 60 minutes of where they live.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: They don't like the facts. I am happy to debate the facts, but you cannot dispute them. You cannot dispute the fact that, under our provisions, 96 per cent of people will have better health services and better acute services within 90 minutes of where they live.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin: Is it 60 or 90?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: It is nice to hear from the member for Frome. I said: 85 per cent of people will have better health services within 60 minutes of where they live, and 96 per cent will have better health services within 90 minutes of where they live. So, both facts are true and are complementary, one with the other.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Thank you very much for your pedantry. The Country Health Care Plan is now the subject of consultation, and I look forward to the vigorous and robust debate that will no doubt occur as we go through the discussions about the plan. But make no mistake: if people in major centres want better health services, we have to implement this plan. People in the smaller communities will have services maintained at the level that we can provide them given the arrangements that we have in place with existing doctors and our commitment to ensuring safety and quality right across country South Australia. Our plan is about improving country health services, not making them worse. Of course, that does not suit the politics of the other side, so they will make up stories about what we are planning to do.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:56): I have a supplementary question. Did the Minister for the River Murray attend cabinet when the decision was made to approve the Country Health Care Plan?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:56): I do not believe that it is my role or responsibility—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The question was put to me.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY: On a point of order, sir, I am trying to undertake some work here and I am getting a headache from the constant shouting opposite. I just wonder whether we could ask them to—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS, FOOD SERVICES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:57): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will speak nice and quietly for the Treasurer's benefit. My question is again to the Minister for Health. Has the minister introduced any change in procedures for the provision of food in public hospitals as a result of receiving the Food Services in Public Hospitals report, and will the minister now release that report?

The government has paid the Food and Beverage Institute \$81,529 to prepare a strategic review of the food services within public hospitals. The report has been refused, pursuant to a freedom of information application, on the basis that it might 'lead to confusion and unnecessary debate' and, further, 'it may create mischief'. Last week, an outbreak of salmonella at an Adelaide Hills aged care facility claimed the lives of two residents.

An honourable member interjecting:

Ms CHAPMAN: No; you have your health people up there, or don't you know?

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: And 17 others have contracted the salmonella.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:58): Well, that's not only tricky, Vickie; it's icky, Vickie. They are two separate and distinct processes which have no relationship to each other whatsoever, but the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in her usual style, combines them together to make a full set of presumptions which produce—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: So why would you believe she'd do mischief?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, why would you believe she'd do mischief? Let me go through the two issues. First, in relation to the deaths associated with the salmonella outbreak at the aged care facility at Hahndorf, I, on behalf of the government, express my sympathy to the families of those who have lost relatives. It is a tragic set of circumstances.

The health department is assisting the aged care facility. We do not actually run that facility. We do not own it and we do not provide services to it. We do not provide the food to it. We come in when assistance is required. I understand that the local council inspected the facility, or somehow or other brought it to our attention, and we attended. We are assisting that aged care facility to ensure that it goes through the strict protocols that are required to provide food to vulnerable people. What it has to do with the public hospitals system, of course, is nothing at all, because the public hospital system—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: —has nothing to do with that aged care facility. We do provide food to people in our public hospitals. The food provided in public hospitals is provided through a range of processes. Different hospitals have different arrangements, and we are looking at how we can better provide food across all of our hospitals. But that has nothing whatsoever to do with the outbreak of salmonella at the aged care facility. We have not made any changes, as I understand it. There may have been some changes that I am not aware of in the way that food is provided to our hospitals. Certainly, there have been no major changes and we are working through how we can better provide food to our hospitals.

There is a whole range of factors, of course, in the provision of food in hospitals—safety being the paramount concern—to ensure that the food is provided to people in a safe way. The second, of course, is nutrition. The third issue relates to cost effectiveness, and the fourth is, no doubt, about comfort, because when people are in hospital they want to be comforted. Trying to balance all those things—nutrition versus comfort—is always a difficult matter. We are working through this, about how we can better provide food which is nutritious, safe and comforting to patients in our hospitals.

PUBLIC HOSPITALS, FOOD SERVICES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:00): So, will the minister release the report?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:00): I am not aware if my office has received the report, but I certainly have not seen the report at this stage.

FLOREY ADELAIDE MALE AGEING STUDY

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:01): My question is to the Minister for Health. Can he advise the house how the Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study is helping health professionals understand the challenges involved in improving health outcomes for men?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:01): I thank the member for Light for his question. I acknowledge his and the member for Fisher's great interest in the issue of men's health. It is a well-founded interest. Men, sadly, are more likely to die prematurely from a wide range of causes. As I tell my male colleagues here, male life expectancy is five years less than female life expectancy. Men are likely to die at the age of 78, compared to women at 83. Male deaths are greater across all age groups, and the discrepancy begins at infancy.

The leading causes of premature death amongst men are: ischemic heart disease, that is heart attack and angina; suicide; land transport accidents; and lung cancer. The truly alarming extent of health problems amongst men is highlighted by the preliminary results of the Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study. Among the study participants, aged 35 to 80, who attended a clinical exam, these are facts that members might like to know: 47 per cent of men in that category had high cholesterol levels, and 14 per cent of those men were unaware of that fact; 14 per cent had diabetes, but 4.4 per cent were unaware; 60 per cent had hypertension, but 29 per cent were unaware; 18.5 per cent had depression, and 6 per cent were aware. Equally concerning were the findings that 78.5 per cent were either overweight or obese, 44 per cent got no exercise, 61 per cent had insufficient exercise and 57 per cent reported some degree of erectile dysfunction.

The Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study was established six years ago to provide new population-based evidence on the biological, psychological and social determinants of health and health-related behaviours amongst males. The study now covers almost 1,200 randomly selected men aged between 35 and 80 who live in the north-west regions of Adelaide. It is one of only three studies internationally tracking the health of large groups of men over a long period of time to try to understand the key drivers of men's health and how we can best intervene to improve it.

A grant from the Premier's Science and Research Council has enabled the enrolment of a regional cohort in Whyalla and facilitated links with other relevant cohort studies. I am pleased to announce today that, through SA Health, the state government is contributing an additional \$100,000 towards the Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study. I have invited all members of parliament to a briefing on Thursday at 4 o'clock by Professor Willis Marshall, the Director of the Freemasons Foundation Centre for Men's Health, for further information on the centre and broader issues around men's health.

I am also delighted to announce today, in what could be a world first, that Professor Willis Marshall and his team have offered all male members of parliament a quick health check to identify

risk factors for chronic disease. The health check will be performed by the qualified clinical staff of the Florey Adelaide Male Ageing Study immediately following the briefing and will include: measurement of height, weight and waist circumference, blood pressure, blood glucose and blood cholesterol.

In addition, MPs will be provided with general information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, screening for bowel and prostate cancer and other male health concerns. This quick health check is a great opportunity for all male members of parliament to take a positive step towards improving their own personal health, and to show their constituents, by direct example, the importance of regular checkups to prevent more serious health problems in the future. I suggest to male members seriously, if they wish, to come along and have a check; bring a camera with you, we can have a photograph taken and you can use it—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: For a blood pressure check. You will get a nice photograph of yourself, which you can use in your newsletters to promote male health checks among your constituents.

TRAMLIN EXTENSION

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (15:05): We will leave the colonoscope at home. My question is to the Minister for Transport. How many traffic lanes will be lost on Port Road after the construction of a tramline to the Entertainment Centre?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Elder—Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Energy) (15:05): It is interesting that the budget has been well received. The information on the tram extension electrification was, I think, well received everywhere except, of course, within the Liberal Party, which has already criticised the tram extension to the Entertainment Centre.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am going to answer your question. They have already criticised it. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition refers to it as 'the tram to nowhere' but, of course, that is what he said about the previous extension, which had a 15 per cent increase in patronage.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Not on the shuttle—after we cancelled the buses. He comes in, like a tommy ruff. No, I was referring to the main line: the line from Outer Harbor, not on the free shuttle. The free shuttle is about 40 per cent.

An honourable member: Glenelg.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: On the main line from Glenelg, sorry—a 15 per cent increase. It just goes to show that he gets it wrong every time. Thankfully, other people understand this better, because the Liberal Party the other day on their website (something very relevant to this) asked about our plans for transport, and they were push-polling on their own website.

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: The question was very specific: how many lanes will close? It was not a criticism.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will listen to what the minister has to say, but he must answer the substance of the question.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The Liberal website asked people if Mike and Kevin had spent their taxes wisely and they lost it 52 per cent.

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order. How can that possibly—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Ms CHAPMAN: I ask you, Mr Speaker, to rule on this, because how can that possibly have any relevance to the number of lanes that will close?

The SPEAKER: Order! I agree. The minister will turn to the substance of the question.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: But the point I make from that is that, yes, there will be design challenges in the tram extension; there always will be. This project is one that is difficult. If we had set out to do something easy we would not deserve to be the government, and we richly deserve to be the government.

The Hon. M.D. Rann: I'd like to ask a question. When will the first stage of the—

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will not interject.

Ms CHAPMAN: The Premier is not here to interject, thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Transport.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Yes, there will be challenges. The final design is still—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: But they still do not like it. What I say to the opposition is: get with the 52 per cent who said it was a good idea. You asked the question; you push polled and you lost, so get with the strength.

TRAMLINE EXTENSION

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (15:09): We do know what 97 per cent of people thought about the Minister for Transport. My question is to the Minister for Transport. Has the minister or his department investigated the impact on traffic flow, waiting times and ring route access at the Port Road/Hindmarsh Bridge intersection resulting from the construction of a tramline, and what were the findings of those investigations?

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Elder—Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Energy) (15:09): There is no doubt that we are going to hear a lot of criticisms, but the criticisms lack a lot of consistency, don't they? I heard the Leader of the Opposition on the very same subject; he said, 'It's too little too late. It cost too much. It was all my idea anyway, and it's not a good idea.' He said, 'It's my budget and I will whinge if I want to.' He also said, 'It was all my idea and it is a terrible idea.' What we will hear from the opposition is some way of undermining this idea and some way of complaining because that is what they are. They are whingers in furious pursuit of a complaint.

Ms CHAPMAN: I rise on a point of order, Mr Speaker. The question was not about a complaint: it was a simple question about whether an investigation had been done. The minister is clearly debating.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. The minister must not debate.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I make the point that there will be challenges in setting out to do the most important things that have ever been done in the public transport system in South Australia. There are challenges.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: A lot of work has to be done to maximise the return and to get the best design. We will have early contracts.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for MacKillop!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Apparently, members opposite have been working on this for six years. Unfortunately for them, I have their election policy in front of me. I am sure if I go to it they will take a point of order that it is not relevant. I can go to their election policy from 2006. Would members like me to do that? Would members opposite like me to look at it? Apparently, it was all your idea.

There will be a lot of challenges. It is difficult. I note already that the opposition has come out and opposed the tram extension to the Entertainment Centre—an extension to an 800-car park—which gives us enormous potential to take those people out of the city. Members opposite are wrong again. I say to them: keep asking questions and we will provide details and briefings. I hope members opposite take the briefings when they are offered, because my experience is that members opposite much prefer to stay in ignorance so that they can ask ignorant questions. We will provide briefings.

The Premier has been behind this thing from that first glorious day in 2002. It will reshape the city of Adelaide and give it its shape for decades to come. They are some of the most important things we have done. If there are little difficulties along the way which the opposition wants to pick on or undermine we will take that, because this is such an important thing.

Hopefully, I will be out there somewhere around 2010 opening the tram extension with the Premier—in line with the festival or something like that would be good. I will be there and I will be reminding people, no matter who the leader of the opposition is then, of the position of the opposition and our position—because it will be a success.

ABORIGINAL INTERPRETERS

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (15:13): Will the Attorney-General inform the house about what is being taken up by the government to improve access to Aboriginal language interpreting services in the South Australian courts?

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Croydon—Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (15:13): On 2 June I was pleased to announce, as part of the state budget, that more than \$500,000 will be invested in improving Aboriginal interpreting services in South Australian courts. I am confident that this measure will ensure that Aboriginal people in the court system—whether they be victims, witnesses or offenders—will have better access to an important tool for the delivery of justice. About \$520,000 will be spent over four years to attract as interpreters suitably skilled people who are already employed within the South Australian public sector.

From July 2007 to February 2008, only 70 per cent of court requests to the Interpreting and Translating Centre (ITC) for interpreters of Aboriginal languages were met, compared with 97 per cent of requests for other languages such as Vietnamese and Italian. I am hopeful that through this program we can improve the proportion of court requests that are met. In one example of how the shortfall in meeting requests affects the courts, late last year Supreme Court Justice Nyland highlighted the lack of suitable and available interpreters in Aboriginal languages for a matter before her when sentencing an Aboriginal elder to eight years gaol for trading petrol to sniff for sex with three underage girls. Extra Aboriginal language interpreters in our courtrooms mean that cases can be dealt with more swiftly and with less stress for everyone. It could also lead to modest savings, because in cases requiring interpreting skills delays will be reduced and resources will not be wasted because trials will be abandoned less often.

There will be a focus on providing additional interpreters in the APY lands, Port Augusta and Adelaide. There are existing employees in fields such as nursing, social work and teaching who have the language skills. They will be encouraged to do interpreting work as it arises with a generous attraction allowance. With three additional interpreters, the ITC has told me it could close the gap of unfulfilled requests for interpreting services. Under the plan, the interpreter's primary agency will be reimbursed by the ITC for the salary equivalent of the time each employee spends on interpreting tasks.

HOME SUPPORT SERVICES

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:16): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: On Thursday 5 June this year the member for MacKillop asked me about a 65 year old resident of his electorate whose home support services had been progressively reduced and finally terminated in the first half of this year. I asked the honourable member whether he had written to me on the issue. He said, 'You have correspondence.' I responded, 'From you?' 'Yes,' he said, nodding to the deputy leader. A thorough search by my correspondence officers found no correspondence on the matter described to me by either the member for MacKillop or the

deputy leader. I have however received a letter from their federal colleague the member for Barker, Mr Patrick Secker, to which I replied in February.

The individual in question had received domestic help for a period of almost five years through Home and Community Care funded services. The need for this help is continually reassessed; and in this case a functional profile test conducted in January this year demonstrated that the individual had scored 30 out of 31, which indicated a level of independence. Consequently, the domestic help was terminated. If he did write to me, the honourable member might like to give me a copy of his letter so that I can check it up directly.

PLANNING REFORM

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Elder—Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Energy) (15:17): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to planning reform made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Hon. Paul Holloway.

WANGARY CORONIAL INQUEST WORKING PARTY

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:17): I lay on the table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to the Wangary Coronial Working Party made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Hon. Carmel Zollo.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:18): I wish to take a few brief minutes this afternoon to talk about the Country Health Care Plan, and I am pleased that the Minister for Health is still in the chamber. I think it is fair to say that there has been enormous concern in regional South Australia since the release of the Country Health Care Plan on 5 June. I know that, in my electorate office, I have received numerous telephone calls and emails. Letters have come in and people have come to see me. Whenever I am in the street talking to people it is all about, 'What is happening to our hospitals?' People want to know.

It is interesting that, during question time today, the Minister for Health in answer to a question asked by the member for Bragg made an accusation that the Liberal opposition was interested in only the politics of the matter. I can assure the Minister for Health that we are not interested in the politics: we are interested in the services on the ground to our communities that we serve. We are all here because we want to make sure that our hospitals remain open and that they receive the widest possible range of services. However, there is a great concern that the people will not get that with the Country Health Care Plan.

In the Goyder electorate, the proposal is that the Yorketown, Maitland and Balaklava hospitals (which have existed for many years and which have done tremendous work in those communities and for the communities that surround those towns) will become GP Plus centres. We have used the term 'bandaid centres', and that is a fairly true description. It is that sort of expression that really is concerning people, and that is why we are all getting calls about it.

The Wallaroo Hospital in my electorate will retain the focus of a country community hospital, which, as I understand it, will mean that people will be admitted only for observation within the GP Plus centres but then will be required to be transferred to either Wallaroo or Adelaide. That just does not always work. I want to emphasise a few sentences from a letter I received late last week from a person from Stansbury.

Unfortunately, her husband died in March earlier this year. He had been ill for some time. He had been in and out of hospital and, when he finally went into hospital for his last days, it made the world of difference to her, her husband and their family that he was in a hospital where staff knew him, cared for him and showed true devotion in attending to his needs, and it was close enough for her to visit her husband on a daily basis.

This lady lives at Stansbury, which is only about 20 kilometres away from Yorketown. If this man had had to be admitted to Wallaroo Hospital—or even worse, Adelaide—it would have meant either that she would have to move to those communities to be with her husband or that she would have to make daily trips to see him. She pointed out to me that it is just impossible when you are a pensioner, as was their case, to be able to afford to travel that distance.

I do not think that the Country Health Care Plan will work. The people who I am speaking to are not interested in it. They recognise, though, that while the emotional argument will come out all

the time—and people use emotion when they are concerned about the devolution of services in their area—any possibility of changing will involve having to look at the facts, too.

I had some interesting telephone calls from people in my electorate last night about this. One man from Warooka, whose wife is an ambulance volunteer, told me that his wife has been a volunteer for only about two years. She also works as a nurse at the hospital. The concern at the moment is that, when she is called out for an ambulance requirement, there is probably about a three-hour turnaround from when she leaves home to when she returns.

If they suddenly find that those people have to be called out to transport people from southern Yorke Peninsula to Wallaroo Hospital or to an Adelaide hospital on a regular basis, where they can be admitted, it will be something like an eight-hour turnaround. His comment to me was that she would resign immediately. These ambulance brigades in regional communities are struggling to have the numbers they need to provide services now. We need to make sure that we put in place health care plans that allow services to be available locally and for volunteer services, like the ambulance service, not to have to spend a full day transporting people to hospitals that they should not have to go to.

Yorke Peninsula is a growth area extending from the Adelaide Plains. People are moving there because they are making the seachange choice. Retirees are moving there, but a strong focus for the reason to move there is the fact that the range of services is good. The health services and hospitals that are provided are an important factor. If you do not have those, what will happen to the regions? Why are people moving to these country towns? They will be fearful that, if they get sick, they will not be close to a doctor and they will decide not to come. Already I have had comments about the fact that GPs will leave the area and that it will be impossible to recruit GPs and keep the trained staff. There are so many concerns here.

The rally tomorrow on the steps of Parliament House will be an opportunity for regional South Australians to make known to the government of this state what they think about the proposal. I am holding a public meeting in my electorate on Tuesday of next week. I am expecting a lot of people to attend and, hopefully, I will have some GPs speaking. I am giving Country Health SA an opportunity to present the country health plan and, more importantly, an opportunity for them to be told very clearly what the people in the regions want. I can tell you it is not the plan. They want the retention of their hospitals; they want to make sure that the doctors and nurses are going to be there. They want to make sure that the full range of services they currently receive are continued; otherwise they will not accept the plan. I think that, with one stroke of the pen, the government has made a crazy decision, which will react against it enormously.

TWO WELLS GOLF CLUB

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Taylor) (15:23): Today I inform the house that recently I handed over a cheque on behalf of the state government to the Two Wells Golf Club. It was money provided under one of the programs run by the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing and, although only a rather small amount of money in the scheme of things, I want to let the parliament and the minister know about the value of these small amounts of money in the hands of our sporting and recreation clubs.

You could say that the Two Wells Golf Club runs on the smell of an oily rag. It is quite a good course—all run by volunteer effort—and the \$2000 or \$5000 cheques that come along from time to time from the state government make such a difference to clubs like the Two Wells Golf Club. As I said, it is a lovely course. People do not often think of going to a course like the Two Wells golf course, if they are used to the metro courses, but it is not only a peaceful, delightful and varied terrain to play golf: it is also a club that is involved in a lot of activities.

Back in 2005, I presented a cheque to this club (it was a very small amount of money), and the club carried out some renovations to its clubhouse and, since that time, club membership has doubled. So, it has been a very effective resource from the state government. The latest money granted to them was for more golfing equipment and the like.

Something that did surprise me when I last visited the golf club a few weeks ago was that the golf club is involved in a whole range of activities of an environmental nature as well. For example, the club is involved, along with the South Australian Urban Forest Biodiversity Development Program, in trying to prevent the extinction and provide protection of the potential habitat of the yellowish sedge-skipper butterfly.

Until I visited the club recently, I did not know what that was, but it is a yellow and brown butterfly that is very, very rare and regarded as endangered by the Conservation Council of South

Australia. The habitat, the larval food plant, is a particular thatching grass called *Gahnia filum*, I understand, that used to be prevalent on the Northern Adelaide Plains. There used to be a very small colony of this type of butterfly on Yorke Peninsula as well, but it has since become fairly extinct.

Back in March 2000, the South Australian Urban Forest Biodiversity Development Program put some money into coming up with a local recovery plan for South Australia, and we have gone from a situation where there had not been any of these particular butterflies found in the Northern Adelaide Plains in the mid-1990s to a situation now where there has been some rehabilitation of their habitat going on and an attempt to protect those potential habitat areas. This particular thatching grass has a particular shape that only these butterflies will breed in, apparently, and it is only found in swampy, coastal areas around the Bolivar and Virginia area.

So, amongst all the work these volunteers from the Two Wells Golf Club are doing, they are involved in the SA Urban Forest Biodiversity Development Program and some others in regenerating a habitat for this local butterfly. These are the things you learn as a local MP about your area and about the good work that volunteers do. I commend the work of the Two Wells Golf Club, and I know that the money the state government gives will be well used.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (15:28): Like my colleague the member for Goyder did a few minutes ago, I want to talk about the country health plan. I also bring to the attention of the house the impact I expect this will have on some of the communities in my electorate, which is a very extensive electorate. Geographically, it is the fourth largest electorate in the state. It takes me longer to drive across my electorate than it would take many city-based members to walk across their electorate (and that is not driving slowly, either).

Before I talk about the impacts of this plan, I want to bring to the attention of the house some of the misinformation that underpins—or I presume underpins—the country health plan. I also want to tell the house of my dismay on discovering that the minister dropped that plan out for the public on the afternoon the budget was announced. As soon as I discovered that, I knew we were in for a bad time in the country because I knew the minister was looking for a busy news time so that he could slide it in at a time when it would receive as little publicity as possible. That was the first thing that came to mind—and I was not disappointed when I brought up the plan on my computer and started reading about the hospitals in my electorate. It immediately came to my attention that my home town of Millicent has a very, very good hospital. Fortunately, I do not expect that Millicent Hospital will suffer through this process as greatly as some other hospitals.

Let me tell members about some of the misinformation in the document released by the minister. He claims that Millicent Hospital has 35 beds and that it has an occupancy rate of 50 per cent. My understanding is that, when the current Labor government came to power, the Royal Adelaide Hospital had some 850 beds; today, it has 650 beds. If we were talking about the occupancy rate at the Royal Adelaide, would we use 850 or 650 as the number? I suggest that we would say that it is only a 650-bed hospital and that it has a high occupancy rate.

Although Millicent Hospital has 35 beds, it is funded and staffed to operate only 28 beds. I am told (and, I believe, reliably so) that, once they have 28 patients, when the 29th patient arrives on the doorstep they are transferred to, say, the Mount Gambier hospital so that they do not go over 28 patients. I think that it is totally incorrect and misleading for the minister and the department to publish a document purporting that Millicent Hospital has 35 beds. I assume (and I think I am correct) that the same thing has been done right across the state.

I tell city-based members, who would be unaware of this, that country hospitals quite often have aged care patients in their beds and that these are not counted in the occupancy rate. When it states that the average occupancy of Millicent Hospital is 17 beds (which is only half of 35 and therefore 50 per cent occupancy) it does not take account of the fact that often a number of aged care patients are in the hospital. There is no extra funding or extra staffing, but the patients are there.

It is totally erroneous to suggest that Millicent Hospital is an underutilised service, because the figures have been twisted to try to give that impression. It is erroneous and a complete falsehood. If that is the sort of working that underpins this Country Health Care Plan, no wonder country people are up in arms.

My greatest concern is for the smaller communities where hospitals will be downgraded to so-called GP Plus clinics. From my experience as a country member in this parliament for

10 years, what will happen is that, once the downgrade occurs, those communities (and there is a large number of them across the state) will have great difficulty in retaining their local GPs, and they will have huge difficulty in attracting replacement GPs when it becomes necessary from time to time.

That is the fundamental problem of the Country Health Care Plan. There are a whole heap of other problems, but that is the most frightening for country people. This nonsense that people in, say, Bordertown will go to Mount Gambier for more significant health service, rather than come to Adelaide, is just that—nonsense. When people are in hospital, particularly for an extended period, they need the support of family and friends. People in Bordertown always have family and friends in Adelaide, but they rarely have them in Mount Gambier.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WILLIAMS: The whole plan is based on—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member has taken too many liberties.

Time expired.

PARA WEST EARLY LEARNING CENTRE PRESCHOOL

The Hon. L. STEVENS (Little Para) (15:33): I was very pleased to be asked recently to open the Early Learning Centre Preschool at the Para West adult campus.

Mr Venning interjecting:

The Hon. L. STEVENS: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is difficult to—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Schubert will not interrupt.

The Hon. L. STEVENS: The early learning centre is a very important initiative that comes on top of many years of excellent work by that campus in the education and support of young mothers, particularly those in a disadvantaged situation. I was especially pleased because I was the foundation principal of the school from 1989 until 1993, and it is always good to be invited back to see a really important program developing to the extent that this has.

Para West Adult Campus has a family learning faculty, which was developed in response to the needs of young mothers and young families and, particularly, single-parent families in the local community, but it draws people from a wide radius around that centre.

The family learning program commenced in 1993 with the Pathways for Young Mums program, and it is the longest-running school program of its type in Australia. Relevant programs and resources have evolved over time in direct response to community needs. I would like to pay a particular compliment to the Coordinator of Family Learning at Para West Adult Campus, Ann Thomas. I remember appointing her to the staff in the time that I was there. I think at the time she filled a key teacher position. Her job was to be a community liaison person looking for innovative ways for that campus to involve the local community, to draw them into the campus and to provide learning opportunities for them. She has done this with bells on.

It is through Ann's efforts that the family learning faculty has developed to the extent that it has. Family learning at Para West Adult Campus supplies learning that is centred on children zero to five years of age and their family members. It is generally recognised that the first and most important learning experiences occur in the home. The values, attitudes and culture that we learn from our families can stay with us throughout our lives. We acquire knowledge from school, but that knowledge is given a context by the family and the family situation from which we come.

For example, children learn to read at school, but it is often the family that nurtures the love of reading. Without family support, a child's education is impoverished and can become a developmental struggle. Evidence suggests that the family learning programs assist in addressing difficulties associated with multiple disadvantage.

Within this context, Para West Adult Campus provides a second chance for parents, carers, step-parents and grandparents of young children. It provides a second chance for them to return to education through the family learning programs. These programs recognise informal and formal learning and involve working with more than one generation. A major strength is that they are offered within a learning approach, which emphasises collaboration, negotiation and building community partnerships.

There are a whole range of courses, and assessment processes are constructed around the formal and informal, with collaborative learning experiences supporting the wellbeing of young families. All of the programs are negotiated with the participants and are presented in association with community organisations. So, congratulations to Para West Adult Campus, and congratulations to Ann Thomas and her staff. I am sure that this program will continue to provide massive support to families in the northern suburbs.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (15:38): I, too, want to speak to the issue of the Country Health Care Plan. Further to question time today, I was very incensed by the Minister for Health's personal attack on me and my physique. I have never resorted to personal abuse in my time here. I interjected the word 'gross' because I have totally lost faith in this minister to deliver what he says he will. It is simply gross that he is now attempting to stuff up country health as he has stuffed up natural resource management here in South Australia. Yes, I did appreciate the note he sent me across the chamber offering a case study on an amalgamated health care service in the Barossa, but no commitment and no expectation.

Another reason I have lost confidence in this minister relates to another personal attack. Apparently, on ABC Regional Radio, the minister implied that I was the only MP who was happy to close a hospital. That is most misleading and unfair; I have never said that. I have often referred to the fact that the Barossa health community has agreed to allow the closure of two existing old hospitals to be replaced by one new one: fact. However, the truth is: no new hospital, no closures. So, I believe that was very mischievous and a breach of trust.

I have never attacked this minister before. I have had him on a pedestal and have given him the benefit of every doubt that may have existed. However, with these two personal outbursts, along with his attack on our country hospitals, for me it is a case of two strikes and you are out, and any respect he has earned has gone.

This comes on top of the minister seeking, three months ago, the sacking of country hospital boards, getting rid of the community management of hospitals and putting in bureaucratically controlled health advisory councils, and taking the local cheque books away. I opposed it at the time, as it is the start of the process to close country hospitals, and I invite members to check *Hansard* and read the exchange between the minister and me. He was advised in that instance by two country doctors: Dr Richard McKinnon, my doctor from Crystal Brook, and Dr Peter Joyner from Mannum, also in my electorate. I did raise that matter with my doctor and I could not get any response.

Well, Dr McKinnon, the same doctor who advised this minister and was supportive of him, was very vocal about this last round of reviewing country hospitals. He was on the ABC television program *Statewide* on Friday night. Did you see him, and was he cross! He is a very good hospital administrator, doctor and community person. He is the success of Crystal Brook Hospital, a great hospital, with five doctors offering a wide range of services. Dr McKinnon has every right to feel betrayed. To be told we are a GP Plus hospital is a disgrace. Do you think we will retain doctors in 43 country hospitals if we reduce the available procedures?

I am totally gobsmacked that two country members can support the government on this move. I presume by their silence that they do, especially the member for Chaffey, leader of the National Party here in South Australia. Her own state president is opposed to the government position. Where does it leave her and, more importantly, her country constituents, or does she not care? Mr Wilbur Klein, President of the National Party, is right and we agree with him. I will read what he said:

The health and well-being of many country people will be put at risk, and the very sustainability of these communities will also be put at risk...We don't need a local hospital with fancy signage, we just want simple quality health services made available to all country people and families.

That is the President of the National Party. What is going on? Why does he not say something to his leader, who is part of the Labor government here in South Australia? I cannot believe that this situation can be allowed to continue like this; nor can I believe the hypocrisy of this minister. It goes further: yesterday we had a farmers' march in Canberra on the single desk issue—again, the National Party rising to the fore, and I support them fully. In this chamber the leader of the National Party does not support the Nationals, and she never has done. I strongly support the National Party, even over my own party, on this issue, but what is she doing?

I have been consistent on this matter; I have been totally consistent in everything I have done in this place. She sits here, with her own president saying, 'We are supporting single desk,'

and what has she done in the past? It is totally unworkable, hypocritical in the extreme and I cannot believe that she can sit in here, as she does, on an issue like this. I wonder if she will be out on the front steps tomorrow, because I will be. Will she be out there tomorrow facing the doctors and the communities? I will be out there. I challenge her to be out there also.

TEACHERS, INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (15:43): This morning I had the opportunity to stand out the front of this place with several hundred school teachers as they called for better conditions and pay from the state government. Listening to the speeches, I think we are not a long way apart, in terms of the government's view and the teachers' view on this issue. The one objective of both parties is the betterment of school education here in South Australia.

The resounding message that I heard out there was that they do not want the system dumbed down. That is something that this government does not want to see, either. That is why we have seen the investment in our schools during the term of the Rann government. We have increased spending on each child who is at a public school by more than 53 per cent since coming to government in 2002. The money being spent on capital budgets in rebuilding schools and building new schools is spending the like of which we have never seen before in this state. It is in stark contrast to what we saw under the Liberal government, where they went around the state closing schools.

In the electorate of Mawson this year, we opened the newly refurbished Willunga Primary School at a cost of more than \$5 million. McLaren Flat Primary School has also undergone a multimillion dollar facelift and, in this budget, \$7.7 million was set aside for a complete overhaul of Willunga High School, something that is very welcomed by the southern community.

Coming from the same sort of background, where the government is looking to improve education service and provide better education for our students, and the teachers and the principals are also after the same thing, I wonder whether we need to look at some sort of overall structural reform of the teaching profession and perhaps bring it more into line with other professions. We could perhaps buy back the weeks off that teachers receive, so over a seven or eight year period, we could buy back a week at a time. Therefore, instead of teachers having eleven or twelve weeks annual leave, they would have four weeks annual leave, like most other professions. Then the professional development, which is crucially important for our teachers and principals, is undertaken while students are away on holidays, instead of students having pupil-free days and parents having to make other arrangements.

I know it is something that has not really been tried, as far as I know, in the rest of Australia, but it could be a good opportunity. If teachers are willing to look at it and the government is willing to look at it, and, if it is palatable to the teachers and affordable to the government, it could be worthwhile. Then it could be copied in other states of Australia and perhaps elsewhere.

Obviously, teachers would be paid a lot more because we would be paying them for those weeks that normally they would not be at the school. Then it is likely that we would attract an even higher calibre of teacher to the profession, a profession that is vitally important for our society, not just now but, of course, into the future.

As the parent of a child who is in the public primary school system, I really want to pay tribute to our great teachers. What I see from my son coming home from school is that the things that he learns and the attitudes that he brings home are fantastic. Each time he has a pupil-free day and his teacher goes off for some more professional development, almost instantly my son comes home and says, 'My teacher learnt this and this is what we were doing in class today.' I know that it is very important that teachers have professional development days. Perhaps if it were something that the teachers and the government could at least agree to look at, that might work a little better.

I notice in the teachers' log of claims that they want an additional six pupil-free plus a reduction in the number of duty days, that is, the days they are required to attend school. They want that reduced from 207 to 202 days, which would mean an additional 11 days a year, or more than two school weeks, where they do not have to front up to the children in the classroom. They also want to limit their contact or classroom time to 18 hours per week.

As a parent and someone who travels around to 17 schools in and around the electorate of Mawson, I would like to see our teachers having as much contact time with pupils as possible. If they could then be paid during their school holiday period to mark work or set out the next term's agenda and curriculum and also undertake their professional development, that could be a big win

for everyone. I think we would see a reduction in the amount of annual leave that teachers would have, and a very significant increase in their pay scales which, as I said, could hopefully attract even more people to a wonderful profession.

WORKERS REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION (SCHEME REVIEW) AMENDMENT BILL

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

New Schedule, page 77, after line 4—Insert:

Schedule 2—Review

1—Review

- (1) The Minister must, as soon as practicable after 31 December 2010, appoint an independent person to carry out a review concerning—
 - (a) the impact of this Act on workers who have suffered compensable disabilities and been affected by the operation of this Act; and
 - (b) the impact of this Act on levies paid by employers under Part 5 of the principal Act; and
 - (c) the impact of this Act on the sufficiency of the Compensation Fund to meet the liabilities of the WorkCover Corporation of South Australia under the principal Act; and
 - (d) such other matters as the Minister may determine.
- (2) The person appointed by the Minister under subclause (1) must present to the Minister a report on the outcome of the review no later than 4 months following his or her appointment.
- (3) The Minister must, within 6 sitting days after receiving the report, have copies of the report laid before both Houses of Parliament.
- (4) In this clause, terms used have meanings consistent with the meanings they have in the principal Act.
- (5) In this clause—

principal Act means the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986*.

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

This amendment provides for a review as soon as practicable after 31 December 2010. The government thinks there is some good logic to this amendment and is happy to move that the amendment be accepted.

Motion carried.

WORKCOVER CORPORATION (GOVERNANCE REVIEW) AMENDMENT BILL

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

No. 1—Clause 6, page 3, lines 22 and 23—

Delete paragraph (d)

No. 2—Clause 8, page 4, line 7—After 'the Minister' insert:

and the Treasurer

No. 3—Clause 8, page 4, line 22—After 'the Minister' insert:

or the Treasurer

No. 4—Clause 8, page 5, line 1—After 'the Minister' insert:

and the Treasurer

No. 5—Clause 8, page 5, line 3—After 'the Minister' insert:

and the Treasurer

No. 6—Clause 8, page 5, line 20—After 'the Minister' insert:

and the Treasurer

No. 7—Clause 8, page 5, line 26—Delete 'Minister considers' and substitute::

Minister and the Treasurer consider

No. 8—Clause 8, page 5, line 26—After 'the Minister' insert:

and the Treasurer

No. 9—Clause 8, page 5, line 28—After 'the Minister' insert:

and the Treasurer

Consideration in committee.

Amendment No. 1:

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment No. 1 be agreed to.

This amendment deletes part D, which is a catch-all phrase, and brings us into line with the Public Corporations Act. The government is happy to accept the amendment.

Motion carried.

Amendments Nos 2 to 9:

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments Nos 2 to 9 be agreed to.

These amendments are consequential and relate to the greater ministerial direction in regard to the charter and performance agreement. The Legislative Council has proposed to include the Treasurer, as is the case in the Public Corporations Act. The reason the government did not include the Treasurer, and had only the charter and performance agreement being prepared by the minister, is that it involves business levies and not public funds. Having said that, the government does not have difficulty with this series of amendments.

Motion carried.

FIREARMS (FIREARMS PROHIBITION ORDERS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendment made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT BILL

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:54): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to make provision for the disposal, management and conservation of Crown land; to make related amendments to certain other acts; to repeal the Crown Lands Act 1929, the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1934, the Irrigation (Land Tenure) Act 1930, the Marginal Lands Act 1940, the Monarto Legislation Repeal Act 1980, the Port Pirie Laboratory Site Act 1922 and the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act 1945; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:55): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The *Crown Lands Act 1929* is the primary legislation for the management and allocation of various interests in Crown land in this State. It is also the oldest Crown lands legislation currently operating in Australia.

A key purpose of the current Act was to assist land settlement. However, this key purpose has long since been fulfilled. As a consequence, almost two thirds of the provisions are no longer used. In addition, the statutory provisions for dealing with ongoing management of Crown land and leases are now outmoded and inhibit the development and application of new and improved processes and technologies. The offence and penalty provisions are also outdated.

The need for reform has been acknowledged for a long time by successive administrations. In addition, a National Competition Policy review in 2000 recommended that the Act be rewritten to suit modern conditions and that some related Acts dealing with irrigation and soldier settlements be repealed, with remaining leases managed under a new Act.

The Crown Land Management Bill had its genesis following the National Competition Policy review. It has been subjected to considerable development and consultation, both within Government and with stakeholders over the last few years. In particular, public consultation was undertaken late in 2006. Stakeholders consulted included the Natural Resource Council, Regional Natural Resource Management Boards, the Local Government Association and local government bodies, the Farmer's Federation, the Law Society of SA and leaseholder representative bodies among others.

Resolution of concerns or attention to comments has been negotiated with all the stakeholders concerned. As a consequence, this Bill is a complete rewrite and replacement of not only the *Crown Lands Act 1929*, but also six other minor Acts dealing with Crown lands.

In particular, the Crown Land Management Bill will:

- deliver more efficient processes for Crown leasing and licensing and facilitate adoption of national best practice for Crown land administration, with measures which include authorising the Minister, rather than the Governor, to grant land on behalf of the Crown;
- remove the current legislative barriers to implementing an automated registration process for Crown leases within the Lands Titles Registration Office;
- facilitate more active and improved management of Crown land;
- ensure open and transparent processes, with accountable reporting and fair and equitable appeal mechanisms;
- improve the administration of risk in the areas of contamination and native title, although nothing in the Bill diminishes the State's obligations under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Commonwealth);
- provide more contemporary offence and penalty provisions, including expiable offences, for misuse of Crown land, and even provide for use of the offence provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* in specified circumstances;
- implement the National Competition Policy review recommendations in relation to the *Crown Lands Act 1929*, the *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1930* and the *Irrigation (Land Tenure) Act 1930*; and
- repeal and replace the *Marginal Lands Act 1940*, the *Monarto Legislation Repeal Act 1980*, the *Port Pirie Laboratory Site Act 1922*, and the *War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act 1945*.

The title, Crown Land Management, has been chosen to reflect the change of focus for Crown land legislation from the role of allocating land for the development of the State to one of maintaining, protecting and actively managing Crown land for future generations.

The objects of the Bill include the provision of efficient processes, fair and transparent decision making with appropriate appeal mechanisms, and active management of Crown land to provide balanced social, economic and environmental outcomes for the community. In addition, decision making will be guided by a set of principles for ecologically sustainable land management.

The Bill will oblige the Minister to exercise control over Crown land, monitor the efficiency of processes, manage land, grant interests and monitor the condition of land held under lease or licence. It will also empower the Minister to establish advisory bodies and management committees and devise management plans for the development and use of Crown land. The Land Board, constituted under the *Crown Lands Act 1929*, will be discontinued.

The Minister will be empowered to compulsorily acquire land for the purposes of the Act and dispose of land declared to be surplus to the requirements of government. The Minister may appoint authorised compliance officers and may delegate any of the powers contained in the Act to a person or body.

Provisions in the *Crown Lands Act 1929* relating to dedication of Crown land for a public purpose and placing that land under the care, control and management of a custodian, will be preserved, along with the power to revoke dedications. Evidence that land has been dedicated will be witnessed by an endorsement on publicly searchable Crown titles rather than by notice in the government Gazette. A special provision will require custodians to seek the consent of the Minister before entering into agreements for exclusive use of dedicated land.

The Bill will empower the Minister to dispose of Crown land, once declared surplus, by way of an open and competitive process. Some exceptions are prescribed for direct sale or sale at less than market value together with provisions for transparency, concurrence and disclosure.

The Minister will be empowered to grant freehold title over Crown land on behalf of the Crown. Under the *Crown Lands Act 1929* that power vested in the Governor. The Minister will also be empowered to grant freehold title subject to special management conditions that will be registered on the title. The current system of Trust Grants will be discontinued.

The Bill will provide for the grant of easements over Crown land; the issue, surrender, resumption and cancellation of Crown leases; the issue, renewal and cancellation of licences to occupy Crown land; and provisions for dealing with abandoned land.

Nothing in the Bill will empower the Minister to increase lease rentals other than as specified in lease agreements. The past practice of selling Crown land using agreements to purchase (vendor finance) will be discontinued.

Proclamation of Crown land or acquired land under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* can sometimes be delayed by negotiations and preliminary works. While that land is managed in the meantime, as though it was already part of the formal conservation estate, the offence and penalty provisions of that legislation cannot be legally enforced. Provision is made in the Bill for the Minister to declare, in the government Gazette and by advertising and notice on site, that certain provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* apply to that land for a period of up to two years.

The Bill will empower the Minister to serve notice on a lessee, licensee or custodian to remediate the condition of any land that presents a risk to the environment, public health or safety or to the property. In the event that the notice is not complied with, the Minister may remediate the site and recover any costs. Certain exceptions are outlined and may be added to by regulation. This power is in addition to any site contamination provisions contained in the *Environment Protection Act 1993*.

The Bill will provide for lodgement of a bond or financial assurance, by a person or body to be granted any interest in Crown land, to be available for eventual remediation, if required, in situations where the Minister is satisfied that the proposed use of the land may lead to environmental risk to the land or surrounding Crown land.

In order to ensure that environmentally valuable waterfront land is not alienated from the Crown without public scrutiny, provision is made in the Bill for any leasing or disposal of waterfront Crown land to be the subject of a public consultation process.

The Bill will provide for penalties of up to \$20 000 for defined offences on Crown land. In addition, authorised officers will be empowered to issue expiation notices in the case of minor offences. Authorised officers will be granted powers for investigation, arrest and seizure in relation to offences on Crown land. The Bill also protects officers from personal liability when engaged in the administration of the Act in good faith.

The Bill will provide for review of certain decisions of the Minister, firstly by the Minister and then by an advisory board to be set up for such purposes as required. Appellants will then be given the opportunity to appeal to the Administrative and Disciplinary Division of the District Court if still dissatisfied.

Lessees dissatisfied with a determination of rental will be able to seek review, firstly by the Minister and then by a peer panel of valuers to be set up as required. Appellants will then be given the opportunity to appeal to the Land and Valuation Court if still dissatisfied.

Provision is made in the Bill for: reverted land; preservation of public maps; constitution of counties, hundreds and towns; duties of the Registrar General; and service and evidence clauses. The Bill will also give legislative status to the Crown land register of publicly searchable Crown land records.

The Bill will empower the Minister to dispose of chattels left behind on vacated property. It also retains current arrangements in relation to liability for injury or damage occurring on land under this Act and some other Acts.

While nothing in the Bill relieves the Crown from its obligations under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Commonwealth), provision will be made for the Crown to recover from a custodian or lessee, any compensation or damages payable by the Crown arising from actions in contravention of that Act by the custodian or lessee.

The Bill will provide for the making of regulations as required for the management and protection of Crown land.

The Bill includes amendments, relating to definitions, to the following Acts: the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*; the *Petroleum Act 2000*; the *Rates and Land Tax Remission Act 1986*; the *Real Property Act 1886*; and the *Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Act 2002*.

Finally, with the repeal of seven Acts, the Bill includes transitional provisions to provide for the discontinuance of the Land Board and the preservation of rights contained in existing leases and grants. These provisions include the transfer of the assets and liabilities of the Lyrup Village Association (constituted under the repealed *Crown Lands Act 1929*) to the Lyrup Village Settlement Trust Incorporated (constituted under the *Irrigation Act 1994*).

The development and introduction of the Crown Land Management Bill represents a long overdue reform of the tenure and management system for Crown land in this State.

I commend this Bill to members.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

3—Interpretation

This clause defines certain terms used in the measure. In particular, *Crown land* is defined as unalienated Crown land, dedicated land, Crown leasehold land and land owned by, or under the control of, the Minister; *land under the control of the Minister* is defined as land placed under the care, control and management of the Minister under this or any other Act, land of a Crown agency if the agency has requested the Minister to assume, or has consented to the Minister assuming, control of the land and dedicated land not under the care, control and management of some other person or body; *unalienated Crown land* is defined as all the land of the State other than

land granted, or contracted to be granted, in fee simple, dedicated land, Crown leasehold land, land owned by, or under the control of, the Minister and land owned by, or under the control of, a Crown agency and unalienated Crown land includes land that has reverted to the status of unalienated Crown land in accordance with the measure.

4—Objects

This clause sets out the objects of the measure.

5—Principles of Crown land management

This clause sets out principles of Crown land management applicable to the exercise of discretions under the measure. This requires that principles of ecologically sustainable land management (defined in subclause (2)) be observed in the management and administration of Crown land, that the objects and objectives of other relevant legislation be given due weight and that Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interests of the State consistent with these principles.

6—Act does not derogate from Mining Act, Opal Mining Act or Petroleum Act

The measure does not derogate from the operation of the *Mining Act 1971*, the *Opal Mining Act 1995* or the *Petroleum Act 2000* or of a lease or licence granted under any of those Acts.

7—Inconsistency with *Real Property Act 1886*

This clause provides that this measure will prevail over any inconsistent provisions in the *Real Property Act 1886* (to the extent of the inconsistency).

8—Application of Act to pastoral leases

Except where specifically provided (see clauses 27 and 45), the measure does not apply to pastoral leases (ie. leases under the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*).

Part 2—Functions and powers of the Minister

9—Functions of the Minister

This clause sets out the functions of the Minister under the measure.

10—Advisory committees

This clause allows the Minister to establish advisory committees.

11—Management committees

This clause allows the Minister to establish a management committee to undertake the management of any Crown land. A management committee must not, however, be constituted to undertake the management of Crown leasehold land or dedicated land that has a custodian other than the Minister without the consent of the lessee or custodian.

12—Management plans

This clause provides for the development of management plans. Such plans may only be developed after appropriate public consultation, should seek to promote the principles of ecologically sustainable land management and must be consistent with any relevant regional NRM plan. A management plan may only relate to Crown leasehold land or dedicated land that has a custodian other than the Minister with the consent of the lessee or custodian.

13—Minister's powers of acquisition

This clause provides for the Minister to acquire land by agreement or compulsorily.

14—Minister's power to dispose of surplus lands of a Crown agency

The Minister may dispose of land owned by or under the control of a Crown agency if the land has been declared surplus (see clause 3(2)).

15—Authorised officers

This clause provides for the appointment of authorised officers for the purposes of the measure.

16—Delegation of Ministerial powers

This clause provides a delegation power for the Minister.

Part 3—Dealing with Crown land

Division 1—Minister's land

17—Land owned by the Minister

Except as provided (see, for example, clause 23), the Part does not derogate from or affect the Minister's power to deal with land owned by the Minister.

Division 2—Dedication

18—Dedicated land

This clause allows the Minister to effect a dedication of unalienated Crown land or to alter the purpose for which land has been dedicated. The provision also protects a dedication by providing that the Minister must not grant an interest or rights in relation to dedicated land if that would have the effect of preventing the land being used for the purpose for which it has been dedicated.

19—Revocation of dedication

This clause provides for the revocation of a dedication and reversion of the land to the status of unalienated Crown land (see clause 3(3)).

20—Care, control and management of dedicated land

This clause allows the Minister to place dedicated land under the care, control and management of a person or body (whether subject to conditions or not), to vary or revoke conditions and to withdraw dedicated land from the care, control and management of a person or body.

21—Notice of instruments

Notice must be given in the Gazette of instruments under the Division.

22—Lease of dedicated land

This clause requires the consent of the Minister to a lease of dedicated land (where the lease is granted by a person other than the Minister).

Division 3—Disposal of land

23—Application of Division

This Division applies to Crown land owned by the Minister and unalienated Crown land.

24—Minister may dispose of Crown land to which Division applies

The Minister may dispose of Crown land to which this Division applies by grant in fee simple (whether on the payment of consideration or not). However, the land must have been declared surplus unless the disposal is to a Crown agency.

25—Disposal by transfer or grant of fee simple

This clause sets out requirements relating to a disposal of land by transfer or grant in fee simple. Generally, the disposal must be by open, competitive process, except in circumstances set out in the provision. The provision also specifies the circumstances in which the fee simple may be disposed of for less than market value or for no consideration and sets out certain reporting obligations.

26—Disposal subject to Crown condition agreement

This clause allows the Minister to dispose of the fee simple in land on condition that the purchaser or donee enters into a Crown condition agreement, which is registered on the title to the land and is binding on the owner, for the time being, of the land. The provision also provides for variation or revocation of conditions and sets out provisions for enforcement of the conditions.

Division 4—Easements

27—Application of Division to pastoral land

This Division applies to land subject to a pastoral lease.

28—Minister may grant easements

This clause allows the Minister to grant easements in or over Crown land and makes provision in relation to such easements.

29—Short form of grant

This clause would allow an easement to be granted using a short form of easement set out in Schedule 6 of the *Real Property Act 1886* and provides for an easement to incorporate the matters set out in Schedule 5 of that Act where the easement grants 'a free and unrestricted right-of-way'.

30—Creation of easement by deposit of plan

This provision allows the creation of service easements and other easements by deposit of a plan in the Lands Titles Registration Office.

31—Effect of grant of easement

Easements granted under the Division have effect as if created under the *Real Property Act 1886*.

Division 5—Leases

32—Leases granted by Minister

The Minister may grant leases of unalienated Crown land.

33—Interaction between Division and lease

Powers under the Act are in addition to any powers under the lease and if the lease and the Act are inconsistent, the Act will prevail.

34—Minister to fix terms and conditions

The Minister will fix the terms and conditions on which leases are granted under the measure. The rent payable must be based on the current market rent unless the Minister is satisfied special circumstances exist justifying a lesser rent. The provision also allows for the regulations to prescribe a minimum rent to be paid in relation to leases, or leases of a specified class and to fix a common date for the payment of rent under leases or leases of a particular class. A regulation prescribing minimum rents may not apply to a lease granted before commencement of the provision (ie. one which, under the transitional provisions in the Schedule is brought under the measure).

35—Waiver of conditions etc

The Minister may waive a breach of, or compliance with, a condition of a lease unconditionally or subject to conditions or waive, reduce or remit an instalment of rent payable under a lease or allow an instalment, or part of an instalment, to be paid at a time other than that fixed by regulation or under the lease.

36—Dealing with lease

The interest of a lessee cannot be assigned, transferred, mortgaged, sublet or otherwise dealt with without the consent of the Minister. The exception to this is that the consent of the Minister is not required for a mortgage over the lessee's interest under a perpetual lease, unless the Minister holds a mortgage over such interest. The provision also provides for the transfer of accrued and accruing liabilities on transfer or assignment of an interest under a lease and for enforcement of such liabilities.

37—Surrenders

This clause provides for whole or partial surrenders of a lease. Such surrenders may be absolute or may be conditional on the granting of a lease or a fee simple title to the lessee or another person.

38—Resumption of land

The Minister may resume Crown leasehold land (in whole or in part) by notice in the Gazette given at least 3 months prior to the resumption taking effect. The clause also provides for the payment of compensation to a lessee on such a resumption.

39—Abandonment

The Minister may cancel a lease if the land is abandoned by the lessee. The provision sets out certain notification requirements that must be followed by the Minister before cancelling a lease under the provision.

40—Penalties for late payment of instalments

This clause allows the Minister to fix, by notice in the Gazette, a scale of penalties to be paid by lessees for late payment of instalments of rent under the lease.

41—Cancellation of lease on breach of conditions

This clause allows the Minister to cancel a lease on breach of a condition (if cancellation is necessary in order to prevent or arrest serious damage to, or deterioration of, the land or if the lessee has been given a reasonable opportunity to make good the breach but has failed to do so) and provides for the making of an application for the payment of compensation.

42—Cancellation of lease obtained by false statement

The Minister may cancel a lease if satisfied that it was obtained by false statement.

43—Notification of proposed cancellation

The Minister must not cancel a lease unless written notice of the proposed cancellation has been given to all persons who have a registered interest in, or caveat over, the lease.

44—Effect of cancellation

On cancellation of the lease the land reverts to the status of unalienated Crown land (see clause 3(3)).

Division 6—Licences

45—Application of Division to pastoral land

This Division applies to land subject to a pastoral lease.

46—Minister may grant licences

This clause specifies that the Minister may grant licences in relation to Crown land.

47—Interaction between Division and licence

Powers under the Act are in addition to any powers under the licence and if the licence and the Act are inconsistent, the Act will prevail.

48—Minister to fix terms and conditions

The Minister will fix the terms and conditions on which licences are granted and renewed under the measure and may vary the terms and conditions. A licence may not be granted or renewed for a term exceeding 10 years (unless it is granted to a Crown agency). The licence fees must not take into account the value of work carried out by the licensee or other improvements on the land that do not belong to the Crown. The provision also allows for the regulations to fix a common date for the payment of licence fees for licences generally or for licences of a particular class.

49—Waiver of conditions etc

The Minister may waive compliance with a condition of a licence (either unconditionally or subject to conditions) and may waive, reduce or remit fees payable or allow a licence fee, or part of a licence fee, to be paid at a time other than that fixed by regulation or specified in the licence.

50—Dealing with licence

This clause requires the consent of the Minister for any dealing with a licence. The provision also provides for the transfer of accrued and accruing liabilities on transfer of a licence and for enforcement of such liabilities.

51—Cancellation of licences

This clause provides for cancellation of a licence and specifies that no compensation is payable by the Crown in respect of the cancellation.

52—Renewal of licence without application or on late application

This clause allows the Minister to renew a licence without application where a licensee continues to exercise rights under an expired licence or to renew a licence on a late application.

53—Exemption from stamp duty

This clause provides an exemption from stamp duty for licences.

54—Special provisions relating to Murray-Darling Basin and River Murray Protection Areas

This clause requires the Minister, in granting and renewing certain licences, to take into account the objects of the *River Murray Act 2003* and the *Objectives for a Healthy River Murray* under that Act, and requires consultation with the Minister to whom administration of that Act is committed, and compliance with any directions of that Minister, in relation to prescribed classes of licences.

Part 4—Protection of land

Division 1—Application of Part

55—Minister may make declaration in relation to land

This clause allows the Minister to declare that provisions of this Part will not apply to specified Crown land for a specified period (of less than 2 years) and that, instead, specified provisions of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* apply to the land, during the specified period. The provision also provides for variation or revocation of such a notice and publication of its contents.

Division 2—General Ministerial responsibilities

56—General Ministerial responsibilities

This clause requires the Minister, to the extent allowed by available financial resources, to carry out work, or cause work to be carried out, for the conservation, protection and rehabilitation of unalienated Crown land.

Division 3—Remediation of land and financial assurances

57—Minister's power to require remediation of land

This clause allows the Minister to serve a remediation notice on a person granted an interest in, or right in relation to, Crown land. The notice may relate to a condition on or of the land that—

- is unsightly or offensive; or
- presents a risk to the environment, the health or safety of any person or any property; or
- is likely to have the effect of reducing the market value of the land.

The notice must specify the action to be taken to remediate the condition and the time within which the action must be taken (which must be reasonable). Failure to comply with the notice is an offence punishable by a maximum penalty of \$50 000. In addition, if a person fails to comply with the notice, the Minister may take any action required by the notice and may recover the reasonable costs of taking such action as a debt from the person. The notice is reviewable under Part 5.

58—Power to require payment of financial assurance

This clause allows the Minister, by conditions imposed on the grant of an interest in, or right in relation to, Crown land, to require lodgement of a financial assurance in the form of a bond or a specified pecuniary sum, the discharge or repayment of which is conditional on the grantee not committing a contravention of specified conditions of the grant during a particular period or taking particular action within a particular period to achieve compliance with conditions of the grant.

The Minister must be satisfied that the imposition of the conditions is justified in view of the degree of risk of remediation being required and must not require lodgment of a bond or pecuniary sum that is greater than the amount that, in the opinion of the Minister, represents the likely costs remediation if there were a failure by the grantee to satisfy the conditions imposed.

The clause also provides for forfeiture of the bond or sum where the grantee fails to satisfy the conditions of discharge or repayment.

Division 4—Waterfront land

59—Waterfront land cannot be leased or disposed of without public consultation

This clause imposes special public consultation requirements where the Minister proposes to lease or dispose of waterfront land (other than where the lease or disposal is made to a Crown agency for the purposes of another Act or law or where the lease or disposal is, in the subject to adequate consultation requirements under some other Act or law).

Division 5—Offences and powers of authorised officers

60—Application of Division

The Division does not apply to Crown leasehold land or to dedicated land that has a custodian (except where the custodian has requested that it apply and the Minister has made a declaration to that effect).

61—Misuse of Crown land

This clause sets out offences relating to the misuse of Crown land.

62—Policing powers

This clause gives authorised officers power to issue certain requirements for the purpose of policing Crown land. Failure to comply with a requirement is an offence punishable by a maximum fine of \$2 500.

63—Power of arrest

This clause gives authorised officers a power of arrest.

64—Powers of entry, seizure etc

This clause gives authorised officers various powers of entry and seizure.

Part 5—Appeals and reviews

Division 1—Ministerial review

65—Applications to Minister for review

This clause sets out matters which may be the subject of an application for a review by the Minister and provides that the Minister may establish an advisory committee to provide advice in relation to the subject matter of any review. A review must be determined within 28 days, but if it is not determined within that period, the decision the subject of the review is taken to have been confirmed (which then triggers further appeal rights detailed below).

Division 2—Valuation reviews and appeals

66—Valuation reviews

This clause allows a lessee who has applied for a review under clause 65(1)(a) and who is dissatisfied with the determination made, or taken to have been made, on the review to apply for a valuation review, to be conducted either by the Valuer-General or by a specialist review panel constituted by the Minister.

67—Valuation appeals

This clause provides for an appeal to the Land and Valuation Court from a decision of the Minister under clause 65(1)(a) or a decision on a review under clause 66.

Division 3—Other appeals

68—Other appeals to Court

This clause provides for other appeals to the District Court.

Part 6—Miscellaneous

69—Minister may determine that land reverts to unalienated Crown land in certain circumstances

This clause allows the Minister to determine that land that has reverted to the Crown (but has not vested in a particular Crown agency) will, if the Minister so determines, revert to the status of unalienated Crown land.

70—Public maps

This clause provides for the deposit of public maps and for the recognition of allotments and public roads shown on public maps.

71—Constitution, alteration and abolition of counties, hundreds and towns

Under subclause (1) of this clause the Minister may, by lodging a plan with the Registrar-General, constitute a county, hundred or town, alter the boundaries of a county, hundred or town or abolish a county, hundred

or town. The Minister must consult with the Surveyor-General before lodging the plan and the plan only has effect on its deposit in the Lands Titles Registration Office. The provision also allows the Minister to take various other measures (such as closing roads and merging allotments), consequentially to the lodging of a plan under subclause (1) under which any land ceased to be comprised in a town.

72—Duties of Registrar-General

This clause requires the Registrar-General to maintain registers for the purpose of the measure and to take other necessary or expedient action, at the request of the Minister, in relation to the issue, alteration, correction or cancellation of certificates or other documents of title, the deposit of any plan in the Lands Titles Registration Office and the making, recording, alteration, correction or cancellation of entries or endorsements in the Crown land register or in the Register Books.

73—Failure to execute documents

This clause allows the Minister to cancel a person's entitlement to be granted a lease or other right, and for the person to forfeit any money paid to the Minister in connection with the proposed lease or other right, if—

- the person fails to return the documents issued in respect of the grant of the lease or right, duly executed and with any necessary fees, to the Minister within 30 days (or such longer period as the Minister may allow); or
- delivery of the documents has not been effected because the whereabouts of the person are unknown.

74—Disposal of property etc on vacated land

If a person granted an interest in, or right in relation to, Crown land vacates the land leaving behind property or fixtures that were not on the land at the time the interest or right was so granted, the Minister may, under this clause, take possession of, or require removal of, the property or fixtures.

75—Service

This clause sets out the manner of serving documents for the measure.

76—Evidentiary provision

This clause provides for evidentiary certificates for the measure and for the certification of maps and plans.

77—Protection from personal liability

A person engaged in the administration of the measure incurs no civil liability for an act or omission in good faith in the exercise or discharge, or purported exercise or discharge, of a power, function or duty under this Act (and such liability lies instead against the Crown).

78—Liability of the Crown

This clause is an equivalent of section 271F of the current *Crown Lands Act 1929* and limits the liability of the Crown in relation to unoccupied Crown land.

79—Crown may recover native title compensation

This clause specifically allows the Crown to recover native title compensation from a custodian or other person whose acts or omissions have resulted in the compensation being payable.

80—Offence of hindering or obstructing administration of this Act etc

This clause sets out various offences relating to authorised officers and others acting in the exercise of powers conferred by the measure.

81—Regulations

This clause sets out a regulation making power for the measure.

Schedule 1—Related amendments, repeals and transitional provisions

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Amendment provisions

This clause is formal.

Part 2—Related amendment to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972*

2—Amendment of section 44—Establishment of sanctuaries

This clause amends the definition of *owner* in section 44(3) to make sure it includes a lessee of land subject to a lease under this measure as well as a lessee of land subject to a lease under the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989*. In addition, the clause ensures that declarations made under section 44 before the amendment that relate to land subject to a lease under the repealed *Crown Lands Act 1929* or under the *Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989* will not be found to be invalid solely on the ground that the consent of the 'owner' (as defined before the amendment) was not obtained before the declaration (provided that the consent of the lessee was obtained before the declaration).

Part 3—Related amendment to the *Petroleum Act 2000*

3—Amendment of section 80—Grant, resumption etc of Crown and pastoral land

This clause makes a consequential amendment to section 80 of the *Petroleum Act 2000* to reflect the fact that, under this measure, land grants will be issued by the Minister rather than by the Governor.

Part 4—Related amendment to the *Rates and Land Tax Remission Act 1986*

4—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

This clause makes a consequential amendment to the definition of *rates* in section 3 of the *Rates and Land Tax Remission Act 1986*.

Part 5—Related amendment to *Real Property Act 1886*

5—Amendment of section 93—Execution and registration of Crown Lease

This clause provides for the registration of dealings with a Crown lease in the Register of Crown Leases maintained under the *Real Property Act 1886*.

Part 6—Related amendment to the *Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Act 2002*

6—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

This clause makes a consequential amendment to the definition of *Crown land* in section 3 of the *Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Act 2002*.

Part 7—Repeals

7—Repeals

This clause repeals the *Crown Lands Act 1929*, the *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1934*, the *Irrigation (Land Tenure) Act 1930*, the *Marginal Lands Act 1940*, the *Monarto Legislation Repeal Act 1980*, the *Port Pirie Laboratory Site Act 1922* and the *War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act 1945*.

Part 8—Transitional provisions

This Part sets out transitional provisions for the measure.

Debate adjourned on motion of Dr McFetridge.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 June 2008. Page 3507.)

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart) (15:56): I am not the lead speaker for the opposition, so—

Mrs Geraghty: Oh, no!

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: I could keep the honourable member here until 6 o'clock, but I will not put her through that particular painful exercise. I have only 20 minutes, and I want to make it clear that, at the appropriate time, my leader will be the lead speaker to put forward alternate views in relation to this document. Over the last few days most of us have spent a considerable amount of time studying these particular documents. It is perhaps the most important matter which the parliament discusses each year, that is, the appropriation of sufficient funds for the general services of the state.

That is the responsibility of state governments. They are basically the providers of services, and to provide those services they must have revenue; and, of course, the debate is really about how we raise the revenue and how we spend it. That is what the difference is about. This particular government and all state governments in Australia have been very fortunate in the last few years because they have had their pockets lined with huge amounts of GST revenue. This year they have received in excess of \$90 million (more than they anticipated), which therefore allows them to provide for services which they would not otherwise have been able to.

We are debating the Appropriation Bill and not those large documents that have all been put in front of us. Two departments, of course, spend the biggest proportion of the budget: the Department of Health, which spends over \$2 billion; and the education department, which is allocated about \$1.7 billion, and that is a very large percentage of the state budget. In this budget, I am very pleased to say that my constituency at Kapunda has been allocated a considerable amount of money to upgrade the old Sidney Kidman home at the high school. It has a lot of historic value and it is a very interesting place, but it is not actually that suitable for the administration of a modern high school. It is a very good school, so there was an urgent need to spend money to upgrade it.

The science laboratory has already been upgraded, and we have had an excellent upgrade of the primary school. I do not know whether the minister has had a look at it, but the concept at the

primary school is an outstanding piece of architecture. If anyone is interested they should look at how you build a modern primary school, particularly for juniors. The quadrangle area ensures that, during inclement weather, the children can be out in the fresh air, which is excellent—whoever is responsible deserves full credit. I hope the concept is repeated around South Australia.

An honourable member: Which school is that?

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Kapunda Primary School. In my time as a member of parliament, I have taken considerable trouble to pay attention to education in rural areas because I believe it to be one of the most important things that a local member can do. If we do not create an opportunity for the next generation of South Australians, they will not have a good future and, therefore, whether you live in an isolated part of South Australia or in the large city of Adelaide, we have to provide the best opportunities possible.

I think that in South Australia our teachers provide as good a standard of education as anywhere else in the world. I have had the privilege of being in schools in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. I have also visited schools in Queensland and I believe that they were better in South Australia. So, I am very pleased about that part of the budget.

However, there are always problems in ensuring that we maintain a very efficient and widespread school bus system so that students in isolated parts of the state can get to school, and there is also a need to support parents who want to send their children to Adelaide for senior secondary education, university or TAFE, or to do a trade because that is a very expensive undertaking. The parents of one of the people receiving work experience in the deputy leader's office have played a very important role in promoting isolated education.

Of course, we have the need to ensure that funds are expended in relation to the provision of emergency services. I note in this budget that a line deals with the provision of a new helicopter to assist with firefighting and the Eyre Peninsula where we had the Wanilla bushfire. The only comment I would make on that is that last week I had the pleasure of attending a photographic exhibition organised by Country Arts SA in which one or two items were affected by the bushfire. Nobody could look at those photos and fail to appreciate what took place and not recognise that we have to take every step possible to make sure that it does not happen again. That is the first thought that would come to anyone looking at this very large photographic exhibition. I commend all those responsible for putting it on. That ought to be the message: after looking at that exhibition, what do we have to do to ensure that it does not happen again? We can do plenty of things. We need to ensure adequate access to native vegetation, we need to provide for controlled burning and we need to ensure that the local volunteers have a say and that land managers are not restricted by all sorts of unnecessary, unwise and foolish requirements. They are very important.

In country South Australia there is nothing more important than an adequate, effective health system, and, throughout rural South Australia, country people have taken a great interest in their health services and hospitals. They have worked for generations to ensure that they have adequate resources and facilities, and they have been a source of employment. They have also provided a mantle of safety. The proposals that were released on budget day have sent a shiver throughout rural South Australia, and that can be felt if one listens to the radio and looks at the local newspapers that are circulating in rural South Australia. I must have been reading a different set of newspapers from that of the Minister for Health.

Let me quote from the *Northern Argus* of Wednesday 11 June, which carried an article entitled 'Grim Day for Rural Health: doctors threaten to leave rural towns', as follows:

The State Labor Government's newly launched Country Health Plan has been dubbed Black Friday for rural health services. The plan, which was slipped into the public eye just behind the State budget announcements on Wednesday, will see millions of dollars spent on modernising Whyalla Hospital, Berri, Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln, while stripping away facilities from the remaining country hospitals.

I also want to refer to comments made by Dr Steve Holmes, as follows:

The hub model is fine if you live in the city, if you have a good public transport system.

That is what a Clare doctor had to say. An article in the *Flinders News* on Wednesday 11 June carried the headline 'Doctors sickened by health plan'. It stated:

Local doctors are furious about moves they believe will hurt country areas and young medical graduates. Those in the medical community have expressed their anger and concern as the State Government releases its Country Health Plan in conjunction with the Budget last week...Quorn doctor Tony Lian-Lloyd, who is also the regional representative of the Rural Doctors Association, described the move as 'an absolute disaster for country health'. 'It is an absolute disaster for rural doctors working at the coalface,' he said. 'The Government has not listened to country doctors; they have deceived country people and doctors for so long. I have absolute contempt for

the Minister for Health'. Dr Lian-Lloyd said many hospitals would function little better than first aid posts under the new plan.

He goes on. To carry that a little further, I hope that most people would read *The Weekend Australian* from Saturday. On page 15, an article entitled 'Dismantling rural services bad policy' quoted the doctor at Murray Bridge. This article gives some examples.

I do not know who drew up this particular plan or what long-term thought has been given to the ramifications of this proposal. However, if you want to upset country people and if you want to get normally placid, hardworking people upset, just try to remove what they believe to be their basic right, that is, adequate health services. Some of us choose to live in rural South Australia. I for one have no desire to live full time in Adelaide. I live 650 kilometres from Adelaide—

An honourable member: And that is to carry the ones in the city.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That's right. I live about 60 kilometres from the closest hospital. I will give an example of what will happen where I come from if this happens, as I know it will. On two occasions in my life I have had to be taken to a hospital at very short notice. If we are told that we will now have to go to Ceduna, that will put another 110 kilometres onto that journey; or, if we have to go to Port Lincoln, that is some 250 kilometres. Yet, the district where I live has a hospital that has functioned for as long as anyone can remember. I was actually born there, and so were many other citizens. There is a doctor, a pharmacy, and a number of people are employed.

What will be the result if these hospitals go? In recent times, the previous federal government had a plan to assist in the establishment of pharmacies—there are two in my electorate: one at Booleroo Centre and one at Orreroo—and that was a great innovation. It was good for those communities, and they were very grateful. It was the first time in many years that they had had a chemist shop.

If the hospital is downgraded and if the doctor leaves, not only will you lose the services of the doctor but the pharmacy will go; there is nothing surer. Why would you want to do that? In this particular document, they refer to Kapunda and Eudunda, and the doctors there are absolutely beside themselves. Kapunda is a growing area with a hardworking community who, in recent times, as the member for Schubert knows, have spent a lot of money—not taxpayers' money—on putting in a helipad, an extra facility. It was done by the community, not the government. If you rip out some of the services, it will be stepping on those people's toes. That is why that community is getting itself mobilised.

Let us look at another example. How far is Leigh Creek from Hawker? I think it is 156 kilometres. Last Saturday week I was at Blinman, in my constituency, diligently doing my duty as the local member. The Blinman Hotel is a nice place to stay. A busload of young people came up to Blinman, and they were celebrating the marriage of one of their mates. They were having a very convivial evening and enjoying themselves. At about midnight, one of them decided to take a walk to look at the stars, and he fell down a pit. So, at 1 o'clock at the morning, he had to be carted off to hospital. Where did he go? The irony was that he actually did not hurt himself very much because he had had plenty of 'medication' but, because he was under the guidance of a bus company, they insisted that he be taken to hospital. What happened? The volunteers had to come in to pick him up and take him back to Leigh Creek.

If that service was not there, where would they have taken him? People might say, 'To Hawker,' but there was so much rain that they would not have got down the road on that particular night. If those services are downgraded, it will have an effect on employment. A few months ago, when the leader and a group of my colleagues were in Leigh Creek, we met with the management. The manager made it very clear that, if the hospital services were downgraded, it would have a detrimental effect on his ability to employ people to man that operation.

In 1993, the then Labor government decided that it was going to close the Leigh Creek Hospital, and I remember what the result was. All it did was to give me a free kick in the goal square in the forthcoming election. People just would not tolerate it. So, I appeal to the government's common sense.

When I first became a member of this place, people like Des Corcoran would not have tolerated or accepted this sort of behaviour, and those members who came from an AWU background would not have, either, because their members were out in country areas. I can just imagine what some of those people, such as Jack Wright, who had a bit of pull and could strong-arm the people in question, would have done. It was their members who were working on the roads

and in other areas who needed these services, and they would not have put up with this. The plan would have been put up, and Sir Humphrey Appleby would not have been seen again.

These sorts of decisions are causing much concern. It will affect property values, and it will be detrimental to people travelling in the north. I want to briefly quote from what a doctor from Kapunda said, as follows:

The GP Plus emergency hospitals will be unable to provide the necessary resources to safely care for critically-ill patients. Many South Australian patients will be put in great danger by virtue of the increased distance they will need to travel to obtain safe emergency care.

Under the heading 'Medical staffing', he said:

It is well recognised that there is a crisis in the medical workforce in Australia, and the rural medical workforce in particular. The reasons are complex; but the most significant factor has been bureaucratic mismanagement of medical training in Australia.

The bureaucrats have had a field day with this particular document. They have not said how much money will be spent, and they have not thought through the ability to transport people to these new whiz-bang facilities. The volunteer ambulance people are under great stress, and it is difficult to get volunteers, and the volunteers will be put under more stress. It is difficult to get doctors and nurses, and they will be put under more stress. The Flying Doctor Service will be called upon to make more flights, and the retrieval service will be called upon when it is not necessary.

Therefore, I appeal to the government to think through this escapade. The people in rural South Australia do not ask for a lot, but the most important thing we can give them is a reasonable health service. Those hospitals belong to those communities and, in the early days, the people built and paid for them. They have a particular pride in them, and they will support them and work for them. When you took away the hospital boards, you took away their voice, and the only voice they have now is through their councils, who are gearing up.

I say to George Beltchev, the head of Country Health: you may get your way with this bureaucratic idea, but we are watching carefully, and we will make sure that, at the appropriate time, people in rural South Australia vent their anger if you take away their services. In this budget, you will spend \$250 million on rural health, but that is only a fraction.

Time expired.

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (16:16): I rise today to speak on the Appropriation Bill. I have been here now for just over 18 years, and I have never seen such a political budget as the 2008-09 documents. It really is a city-centric document, with the government feather-bedding its own electoral base. I thought that pork-barrelling was a thing of the past, but it is blatantly obvious to anyone who examines the 2008-09 budget papers that almost all the spending is concentrated on the western suburbs, which is Labor's heartland, rewarding its true believers.

Here we have a state government that reannounces that it will put money (\$96.5 million in the next financial year) towards a desalination plant—funding for a plant that was so desperately needed years ago. What about funding for stormwater reuse or water recycling schemes? No major funds are allocated for those projects at all. We are now entering four years of drought, but when will the government get the message? We are in a desperate situation and, if we do not get run-off, it could get worse.

As we know, Western Australia is building its second desalination plant, but we have not even started our first. It is gross in the extreme, and you are playing with the most vital thing the state has—water. We have a state government that makes no new announcement in regard to water to help our farmers, irrigators, or others whose livelihood relies on the availability of water, as they continue to suffer from the worst drought in their history.

Perhaps the reason the Rann state Labor government has been so slow to act in relation to desalination is so that it can keep reannouncing it as policy, thus getting as much mileage out of it as possible. That is a very cynical attitude, but it appears to be how it is. This is just one example that shows where the priorities of this Rann state Labor government lie: it surely is not with the rural and regional areas.

Every day country South Australians feel as though they have been forgotten and will continue to be ignored by this government, which has been in power six years, but has invested very little into the country. When reviewing this year's budget, it is clear that rural and regional South Australians have been forgotten.

The state government announces \$20 million of investment in the defence sector and outlines spending in the mining sector, but it has not allocated any funds towards assisting the growers of the Riverland whose trees are dying and withering more and more every day, which will be a loss to the South Australian economy despite the Treasurer's assurances that we are 'spending money and doing the right things in the Riverland to the best of our ability'.

It is ironic in the extreme that the member for this area (member for Chaffey) where the biggest losses are now occurring in relation to the long-term loss of citrus plantings happens to be the Minister for Water Security. I believe that she is quite responsible for some of these problems, because the water is there, and she is unable to negotiate to get the water down to save these people. I believe that these people have a legitimate beef, because I think that these long-term plantings should be the highest priority, but they are not. They have now been promised 2 per cent, which is better than nothing—but not much better.

A lot of questions need to be asked. I think that it is absolutely disgraceful that the state may lose hundreds of millions of dollars in permanent plantings, yet there has been no response from the state government. On the other hand, the River Murray levy is set to increase 4.5 per cent. What are taxpayers getting for their money anyway? How many years have we been paying this levy? It has been seven or eight years, but what do we have to show for it? The question that needs to be asked is: where is this money going?

Here we have a government that can find \$100 million to upgrade AAMI Stadium, but it cannot find \$60 million to build a new Barossa hospital. We have a government that can spend \$162 million on extending the tramline to the Entertainment Centre, and \$30 million tarding it up, when the Outer Harbor line runs parallel to Port Road anyway (even if the patrons do have to walk a few hundred metres further to the centre), but it will not trial even a passenger train on the existing railway line to the Barossa Valley.

It is a disgrace. Daily visitor numbers to the Barossa are down at the moment because of the cost of petrol and other matters. We need a train to fill the gap. We need it to keep the Barossa's prominence in not just South Australia but also in Australia and for international tourism. It needs to be there if we want to maintain our position, but the government is more interested in putting a tramline down to the Entertainment Centre and spending \$30 million to tart it up. Why is it doing that? So that it can compete against private enterprise in the wedding reception market and so on.

We have a government that can find \$1.5 million for a permanent screen to be installed at the Adelaide soccer stadium, and \$3.3 million in the next financial year (out of a total estimate of \$9.7 million by 2012) to be spent on building, refurbishment and upgrade works to the Department of Transport, Energy and Infrastructure corporate buildings, yet it cannot find a paltry half a million dollars to upgrade the concrete ramps for the upstream ferry at Mannum to make it operational again and give those local people guaranteed access, across the river, to their essential services.

The people living on the eastern side of the river, with the hospital on the other side, are just horrified because, if that one ferry goes out (and it has done so four times) how do they get to their hospital? It is a 65-kilometre round trip. It is a disgrace. The minister has quoted \$500,000 to fix it. I believe that is a figure on the upside. I believe it is a figure more like 300,000. We are only talking of a piece of concrete about 1½ metres long by about eight metres wide. That is a ridiculously small project, but we just cannot get it off the ground. It is not fair at all. So, the ferry remains closed, affecting my electorate as well as the member for Hammond's electorate on the other side of the river. Tourists are very frustrated. In fact, as we heard on ABC Radio state news this morning, this issue is starting to bite. It is high time the minister was responsible and did the right and fair thing and give these people what everyone else expects: access within their community. They are not asking for a bridge but if this goes on any longer they will be. I think we would have to be hard pressed to say that they cannot have a bridge, which will cost millions and millions of dollars more.

As I said, upgrading concrete ramps is such a small job in the scheme of things, yet it would greatly improve the conditions that residents of Mannum are currently experiencing, particularly those residing on the eastern side of the town. I just cannot understand this government's constant refusal to do anything about it. It is grossly improper. For the few dollars involved, I just cannot believe that this is the case. I have heard all the arguments against this; even Aboriginal title has been raised, and we wonder why people get cynical. It is about a piece of concrete about 1½ metres long under the ferry, yet we are talking about native title. I cannot understand why the rollers are not cut off that ramp to give it another 1½ feet or 18 inches in the

old language so as to give it more life but, no, nothing at all has been done. It is too hard. There is no political interest.

The South Australian government announces rail upgrades and resleepering, and where will it start? The western suburbs. Which electorates are out there? The resleepering and electrification should start in the northern and southern suburbs in order to create a north-south transport link. The Gawler line should be done first. After all, has the Rann Labor government forgotten about its urban growth boundary being extended just outside Gawler? Surely, this is to go ahead—

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: The Treasurer just said that Gawler is happening first. Not on my reading of the budget; it is the last part of the project. Stage 4 of the project is Gawler. Stage 1 should be Gawler, then we would have the same scheme as in Western Australia, which has been hugely successful. The urban growth boundary should have necessitated all this planning far in advance, not just in a pork-barrelling exercise such as this. What about the south? Surely the rail upgrade should commence and later be electrified down to the south. The government need only look at how well the north-south corridor in Western Australia is going in relation to—I have forgotten the name of the city down there.

Mr Pederick: Mandurah.

Mr VENNING: Mandurah. The past member for Mandurah was the Hon. Arthur Marshall, whom I knew very well. He took me down there. I am amazed at the development down at Mandurah. It is a credit to him and the previous WA Liberal government. It can be done. It is fantastically successful and popular. I believe that, rather than electrifying the network in the western suburbs first, the government ought to be doing that. After all, people living in the western suburbs have all the other options. They can catch a bus, train or a taxi. They can even walk from their home to the city. You cannot do that from Gawler.

I cannot understand why the train services are not tidied up. We hear that our train services are not utilised. Why are they not cleaned up and new windows put in to make them more user-friendly? What about health? We have a government that keeps everybody waiting for the Country Health Care Plan until after the budget is announced, and what is contained in it for people in regional and rural areas? Nothing—unless you live in Berri, Loxton, Whyalla or Mount Gambier. Berri, of course, is in the minister's electorate, as is Mount Gambier. Whyalla is a Labor seat so, again, three out of four—not bad.

We have hospitals where services and facilities will be increased and improved somewhat, but this comes at great expense to all other hospitals. Health facilities in all other areas will be downgraded to nothing more than bandaid centres. Forty-three hospitals will suffer a downgrade. I am not prepared to play politics with this issue for the sake of playing politics. I take the cue from the country doctors association, the AMA, my own local doctors and the local media. They have all said, 'How can we maintain services in the country when they are downgraded?' We will lose doctors and, if doctors go, what services will we have? We must try to get the hospitals back. We strive, we work hard and we put so much effort into getting doctors out there. In Crystal Book, for instance, as in the Barossa, we are very lucky to have fantastic services. We have local doctors with wonderful experience and expertise. We will lose that quick smart, because doctors will not stay there if they cannot practise the way they have been trained to. We will lose those doctors.

The government has repeatedly said that its Country Health Care Plan would see significant investment take place in regards to country health. Yet, after analysing the budget documents, it appears that the overall increase in country health spending is only \$3 million compared to last year's budget. I have never before seen so much public angst about an issue. Forty-three hospitals are being targeted, and 'GP Plus' has become a very bad word out there.

What about the Mid North? We have four hub hospitals. Look at the map of South Australia and look at all the money that the government has spent on advertising. All the money used for advertising would have repaired the Mannum ferry easily—twice over. All this taxpayer-funded advertising to push these issues is just gross, terrible, bad, a waste of money. It should be illegal. It is corrupt, really. Taxpayers' money should not be spent to sell the government's argument; it should stand on its own merit.

In all my time here, I have never heard the uprising that is going on at the moment. It is not being led by us; it is being led by the people, the country hospitals and the boards that the government has sacked. They have all gone, but they are still active. I just wonder what is being

said in caucus, Mr Speaker; you must have heard it. What are the backbenchers saying? I know that the previous minister for health would not have put up with this. In fact, I think the reason she is no longer there is because she stood up for country hospitals. I appreciated the day she came to Crystal Brook and opened the new aged care wing. The plaque is on the wall and I often see it. I pay tribute to her, because she would not have overseen a thing like this, and I note that she is in the chamber.

I think that it is a disgrace that this has happened. When we look at the map, we see the four hub hospitals across South Australia. If we look at where the population base is, we can see that there is nothing from Whyalla right around to Adelaide. Should there not be a hub hospital in the Mid North somewhere, whether it be Port Pirie, Clare or somewhere in between? If you are at Orroroo and you have a serious accident, where is your hub hospital? How many hours will it take to travel to the nearest hospital? Three hours, and that is if you can get into a vehicle and you have a good run. That is not fair. So, I cannot understand it. When they put in hub hospitals there ought to have been one in the Mid North at Port Pirie or Clare, or both, or the Barossa. I think it is totally wrong.

We hear all this talk about efficiency in hospitals. How can you talk about efficiency in relation to hospitals? We do not put hospitals in places where they have to be efficient: we put them where they strategically have to be. When the city people and others are out driving around the countryside things can go wrong: people have accidents and heart attacks in cars. We need to have hospitals strategically placed so that they are there for the care of all South Australians—not for just the people who live around them but for everybody.

The minister starts quoting inefficient hospitals: some of these hospitals have low bed rates purely because they are not allowed to go past a certain level. Even though some hospitals have, say, 30 beds, they are restricted to operating only 20; they are only staffed to operate only 20. Then the figures are quoted in here showing that the hospital is inefficient. We need to get a few facts right. This all needs to be declared, and we should be comparing apples with apples.

What an uprising this is causing. I will be interested to go out onto the steps of Parliament House tomorrow and share with my country colleagues their angst about this matter. I feel we all have let them down—and very much so. When we got rid of the hospital boards, we all sat back and let that happen: hospitals were all gone, with the cheque book taken away from local people. It did not take long (three months) and here we are doing this. I thought that at least they would have waited six to 12 months but, no, in three months here we are—bang! They have gone.

The state Rann Labor government has outlined a savings target from the health sector of \$81 million. I have to ask: if the services and health infrastructure are going to be increased as the government claims, where will these savings come from? I was excited to hear that finally some money will be put towards a study relating to a new health facility in the Barossa. (I spoke to the minister a few moments ago and we have come to a truce over what was said during question time, and I thank him and appreciate that.)

I appreciate that it is better than nothing to have a study to see what an amalgamated health service in the Barossa can do, but there is no commitment. Again, it is a matter of trust. There are no costings on that, and no time frames were outlined, either. I guess that out in the Barossa we will have to do what we have done for 10 years now: just wait and see.

We have a state government that appears to have forgotten about road safety—and this is a pertinent issue in many country electorates. The state Rann government has slashed the police budget for road safety by \$2.6 million compared to the previous financial year. The Barossa Valley Way is a major freight route in the Barossa and a major road on which tourists travel throughout the region. It has repeatedly been rated by the RAA as one of the worst roads in the state, and yet no funds are allocated towards upgrading any part of it, including the bad rail crossings.

Gomersal Road, which directly connects Tanunda to the Main North Road, a great project that I have been involved with, is in urgent need of work as well. There are potholes everywhere in it, and turning lanes are desperately needed at the intersections along this road. There have been two fatalities within the past 12 months at the same intersection, yet nothing is done to improve the safety of this major road. This road should not remain the responsibility of the Light council. Surely with the traffic that traverses it—eight times the traffic numbers predicted—it should be a major road coming under state responsibility.

The government will respond to this by saying that they have pledged \$7.2 million towards a targeted program of sealing road shoulders of high priority rural roads, but do not country people deserve more than that? There have been five fatal accidents in the Barossa Valley within five

months, and there is no doubt in my mind that the condition and safety of the roads within the area played a role in some of these crashes.

South Australians have a state government which, prior to the official release of the budget, made grandiose announcements on upgrading rail level crossings in a bid to improve safety, following some devastating fatalities that have occurred in the past year. However, upon closer inspection of the announcement in question, it appears that the funds allocated towards level crossings have actually been slashed by \$300,000 on the previous year.

We have a state government that will spend \$4.5 million on fitting out an office for Shared Services, a policy designed to save the state government \$60 million. With the official fit-out, nearly \$5 million of the savings are already gone and, once again, those in the country will suffer. The state Rann Labor government has abandoned country South Australians. The budget does not deliver anything worthy of returning to the debt levels that confronted this state found with the State Bank disaster; and that is where we are going. We are now approximately \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion down, and the figure is rising, especially with the unfunded liabilities that we seem to have.

This budget sees most of the funds being directed towards seats held by the government and issues that are less important, and our state's debt level is being increased astronomically to fund that. The Schubert electorate has received nothing, or very little, from this state Labor government for almost six years, and this budget is no exception. This is despite the area's contributing to the state's economy enormously through the wine and tourism industry.

My electorate is part of the economic powerhouse of the state and deserves more. I hope that the government will see the folly of its ways and put some money where its mouth is, because if you do not look after the Barossa the whole state will be affected. I certainly will go through the estimates process with a lot of interest. We will be asking a lot of questions of individual ministers, and I hope that they will have some good answers.

Mr O'BRIEN (Napier) (16:36): I am pleased to rise in support of the Rann Labor government's state budget for the year 2008-09. This budget provides the resources needed so that the state government can embark on one of the most ambitious and far-reaching programs of reform ever seen in South Australia. I particularly applaud the investment of \$2 billion made by the Rann Labor government in the budget in order to transform South Australia's public transport network, interlinking, as it does, with the government's endorsement of a new planning strategy for Adelaide.

As chair of the steering committee of the South Australian Planning and Development Review, I especially welcome the Labor government's allocation of \$7.9 million to further evolve the strategy and improve South Australia's planning and development system. South Australia will have root-and-branch reform of its planning and development system.

While the South Australian planning system has been sound, the reforms endorsed by the government will make it the most efficient and modern in the nation. This will be a planning system that will reduce the cost to families and businesses of getting approvals for the development of houses or businesses and will improve the economic competitiveness of the state. This will be a planning system that will help improve housing affordability and also equips us to better meet the challenges of climate change and improve management of our water resources. It will be a planning system that helps us to make the most of existing and new investments in infrastructure. The planning system reforms fit into a coherent vision set out by South Australia's Strategic Plan and the Rann Labor government's landmark budget brought down by the Treasurer on 5 June.

South Australia's Strategic Plan sets clear targets for economic growth for ensuring South Australia remains the least costly place to do business in Australia and continues to improve our state's competitive position internationally. At the same time, the Strategic Plan sets ambitious targets for our development as a community, for infrastructure, for population growth, for protecting biodiversity, and for tackling climate change, for energy efficiency and for housing and many other areas critical to the future of our state.

The Rann Labor government has set itself the target of becoming, by the year 2010, the best performing jurisdiction in Australia in timeliness and transparency of decisions that impact the business community, and then to maintain that rating. The recently announced planning reforms are further proof of the Rann Labor government's commitment to government reform and competitiveness. The Rann Labor government's seventh budget, with its bold program of investment in modern advanced public transportation for Adelaide, is key to making planning and development reform work. Under that program, \$2 billion will be invested in the state's public transport system in the next decade to build a coast-to-coast tramline from Glenelg through the city

to West Lakes, Port Adelaide and Semaphore, to electrify the major northern and southern rail lines, and to put many more buses on busy routes.

During the next four years, nearly \$650 million is to be spent on the first stage of a program to modernise our rail and light rail transport infrastructure. Specifically, the government is to electrify the Noarlunga and Outer Harbor rail lines, extend the tramline to the Entertainment Centre, resleeper the Gawler line in advance of electrification, and purchase new light rail vehicles.

This robust budget invests in a fast, electrified train network for Gawler, Outer Harbor and Noarlunga commuters, and a light rail service from Glenelg to West Lakes, Port Adelaide and Semaphore. To build on this budget initiative and to further secure a prosperous and environmentally sustainable future with opportunity for all South Australians, it is vital that this state is served by a competitive and visionary planning system.

Much has already been done by the Rann Labor government in relation to streamlining our planning and development systems. We were the first government to:

- introduce an industrial land strategy;
- support the growth of regional communities through the development of regional planning strategies;
- streamlined development policy through the Better Development Plans program;
- greater independence in development assessment through ensuring the majority of members on council Development Assessment Panels are independent—we are the only state in Australia to have achieved this reform and I am aware that a number of other states (particularly New South Wales and Victoria) are looking enviously at this particular reform and wishing to emulate it themselves;
- introduction of systems indicators to measure the performance of decision-making authorities, such as referral agencies, councils and the Development Assessment Commission;
- introduction of automatic appeal rights for applicants on overdue applications; and
- extension of the e-lodgement system for land division, resulting in 98 per cent of land division applications submitted by surveyors now being lodged electronically.

The Economic Development Board has been a strong advocate of the need for further planning reform, and I pay a tribute to the board's role in promoting needed reform. Other advisory bodies, such as the Regional Communities Consultative Committee, have also highlighted the need to improve elements of the system.

In June last year, the Minister for Urban Development and Planning established a steering committee (which I chaired), to provide advice on options for further reform that not only lock in past gains, but ensure South Australia has the most competitive planning system in the nation. With the support of international accounting firm KPMG through the engagement of lead reviewer Jennifer Westacott, the committee has proposed and provided reforms that will boost the state's competitiveness in the housing market, cut red tape and prepare the state for the enormous social, environmental and demographic changes ahead.

The committee was linked strongly to the EDB by the inclusion of board members Grant Belchamber and Michael Hickinbotham, together with former EDB member Fiona Roche. The committee also included Jamie Botten, a legal expert on planning matters, Stuart Moseley, then CEO of Adelaide City Council, and Tim Jackson, CEO of the City of Playford. The steering committee with its wealth of industry experience and knowledge has produced a quality report which, when implemented, will deliver benefits to every community in South Australia.

The government has announced that it has endorsed more than 90 per cent of the review's recommendations. These are the most comprehensive and progressive set of planning reforms to be enacted in Australia and will position South Australia as the number 1 state in this country for doing business.

These reforms will provide a major boost to South Australia's competitiveness. The review suggests that these sweeping reforms will add as much as \$5 billion to gross state product within five years, and attract both people and new jobs to this state for years to come. The changes will also bring the expansive vision of South Australia's Strategic Plan to life.

By improving housing affordability and a reduction in the cost of living, it will help to ensure that South Australia reaches its target population of two million by 2050 and sustain a strong economy and better environment. Indeed, the need for planning reform is all the more urgent as it now appears that we will achieve our population target of two million people much earlier than 2050. Planning SA has informed me that we are now looking at the year 2032.

South Australia needs a planning system that can meet that challenge sooner rather than later and this requires action now for the future. KPMG estimates that these reforms will slash red tape by \$75.6 million a year, cut mortgage costs for house owners by up to \$5,000 and yield savings to the housing industry of \$62 million a year by reducing delays.

The government's reform will streamline arrangements for assessment, both through the introduction by September 2009 of a residential development code and a broadening of the range of developments that will no longer require planning approval. However, in a somewhat different approach from that recommended by the committee—and this is one recommendation that was altered by cabinet—the government accepts that there is a need to proceed cautiously in declared heritage areas, historic conservation zones and heritage-listed places.

The government will not apply the code in such circumstances. It is also essential that we manage community safety and for that reason the code will not be applied in bushfire protection areas. During the next three months key stakeholders, in particular local government, will be consulted on the content of the code.

The planning and development review found that the system is burdened with minor and low risk matters that create unnecessary backlogs and delays that simply add to costs. For example, there are in excess of 17,000 pages of regulations that can affect planning approvals. The review estimates that by removing from the planning system minor renovations, extensions and housing that already comply with residential zoning requirements, as well reducing the number of referrals between agencies, assessment times can be reduced by up to 70 per cent. Based on this estimate, total interest savings on mortgages alone could be cut by up to \$5,500.

These changes are just some of the reforms that will boost housing affordability for South Australian families. The state government accepted the committee's recommendation that the timely release of land for residential, commercial and industrial use is necessary to meet the increased expected rise in demand flowing from an expanding economy and a growing population. By providing a 25-year rolling supply of broadacre land with a 15-year zone supply at all times, the government will ensure an appropriate sequencing of land release. Other measures to improve land supply and land use include the careful expansion of Adelaide's urban growth boundary and the fast-tracking of rezoning.

Affordability is not just about the cost of land and buildings: it is also about the annual cost of running a house. Families located large distances from work and far from available schools, health and other community services face higher annual costs, particularly at a time of rising fuel prices—and I think this has been the experience in the United States with the subprime crisis. Leading economic commentators in the US are of the view that escalating petrol prices in large part prompted the subprime collapse.

One way of addressing the increasing burden on household budgets is to encourage a new type of neighbourhood development, which brings families closer to work, schools and services. That is why the government is supporting the creation of transit-oriented developments (TODs)—higher density, well-designed neighbourhoods that are situated on efficient train, tram and bus networks. If fuel prices were to rise by another 50 per cent—which is entirely plausible—South Australians living in these walkable neighbourhoods would have far lower living costs than their fellow commuters in other major cities. These neighbourhoods would help to reduce Adelaide's reliance on cars and foster greater use of the government's expanded and upgraded public transport system.

International evidence indicates that people will make greater use of public transport if they live within 400 metres of a railway station. The upgrade of the Subiaco precinct in Perth has given rise to a 60 per cent increase in patronage through that particular railway station. On the basis of national and international evidence, we know that TODs can produce significant increases in patronage of our rail system. None of this would be possible without the wholesale changes to transport announced by the Treasurer in the Rann government's 2008 budget. These changes will provide the vital underpinning for a new planning system and the creation of neighbourhood development within existing suburbs.

This type of development is not just good for affordability: it is also good news for the environment. Planning is a major climate change issue. Urban form and building design directly affect carbon emissions. Transport and building emissions comprise 25 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively, of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. If one does the sums, this means around 50 per cent of all emissions can be addressed through planning.

New communities closer to the city and linked by public transport will also provide an opportunity to cut energy and water costs for South Australians. Those savings also sharpen South Australia's competitive edge in terms of business operating costs. South Australia already leads the nation in support for renewable power sources and commitments to hard targets to cut carbon emissions. With these reforms, South Australia further confirms its leadership position. These reforms will not only create the most climate change aware planning system in Australia but also take Adelaide to world's best practice.

While leading the way in our response to the threat of climate change, South Australia will blaze a trail for others to follow. Our planning reforms are the first in Australia to take on board the issue of climate change; and, in that, we are very much in advance of New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia in particular. These planning reforms create a new vision for Adelaide. This vision encompasses a rapid mass-transit city, with people living in energy and water-efficient developments along efficient tram, train and bus networks. By fostering communities within existing suburbs, Adelaide will be able to grow by an additional 250,000 people and 130,000 jobs without putting unsustainable pressure on our environment and public services?

Within those figures are an additional 125,000 dwellings within the space of two to three decades; so, the challenge confronting Adelaide is considerable. This is the budget that has committed \$2 billion to expand public transport during the next decade. A lion's share of this investment will be to upgrade our rail network. To support these sweeping reforms, this government will adopt the Regional Plan for Adelaide recommended by the planning review. This regional plan will provide guidance on the best places for houses and jobs, where land and native vegetation should be conserved and what infrastructure is required to support the city's growing population and growing economy.

Neighbourhood developments within easy walking distance of our enhanced public transport network will be the focus of this new long-term vision for Adelaide. The Regional Plan for Adelaide will set clear development targets with about 60 per cent of new housing to be built initially in existing suburbs and, by and large, along rail and tram lines, rising eventually to 70 per cent, again along our major transport corridors. The urban growth boundary will continue to be expanded selectively to ensure adequate housing supply for those who seek a suburban lifestyle.

The Regional Plan for Adelaide will also set aside high value agricultural and conservation lands to ensure that they are properly protected. This vision for Adelaide aims to create a climate-change prepared city, a strong affordable supply of housing to accommodate a growing population and a broad range of housing choices to serve a changing demographic base, and to create a prosperous future for coming generations of South Australians. A world-class planning and development system needs a strong planning agency. There is a need to revitalise Planning SA so that there is a clear focus on the future needs of the state and on the bold planning agenda ahead. For that reason, the Rann Labor government has decided to create a separate department that will report directly to the Minister for Urban Development and Planning.

An expanded Planning and Development Steering Committee will provide independent advice on the roll-out of these reforms. Now begins the challenge of implementing these bold reforms. The \$7.9 million allocated in this budget for reforming the planning system will assist in ensuring that these sweeping reforms will be in place by 2010, and the investment of \$2 billion in revitalising the public transport network is in fact crucial to ensuring that this broad and innovative vision for Adelaide is achieved.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (16:56): I want to make some brief comments in relation to the 2008 budget. I note that the leader will be speaking some time after me, and he will outline in detail the opposition's response. Other shadow ministers, such as the transport and health shadow ministers, will be giving detailed responses about the announcements in the budget in relation to those portfolios. I will therefore not be touching in any great depth and detail on those issues. However, I do wish to speak about the difference between this government's philosophy and my philosophy. We have had six or seven budgets now from this government, and I think we are getting a clear picture of what this government is about and what the government is not about.

This government is not about community building. This government is about government building. I just want to touch on this issue of community building, because I think there is a philosophy with which this government does not agree but which I strongly support. The concept of community building is something that, I guess, is second nature to me in my political philosophy about the role of government, and I just want to walk through the difference. During my time in government I had the opportunity to give some examples of community building—things like the Volunteer Protection Act and changing legislation in relation to good Samaritan legislation.

Community sport grants were introduced, and the Nature Foundation's BushBank was introduced to allow community organisations to buy land and preserve it for environmental purposes. The philosophy was about supporting individuals and communities in their efforts. That was the philosophy of the former government. If one looks at what is now happening, one sees that this government does the exact opposite. This government is about killing off community groups and replacing them with government agencies, and let us look at the evidence of that. The Natural Resource Management Bill killed off the plant and soil boards, the water boards and the pest, plants and weeds boards.

All those boards went from local communities. They were replaced with the Natural Resource Management Board, dominated by public servants, a huge bureaucracy behind it and a massive levy. We have killed off a lot of country communities and the volunteer effort in relation to those exercises. We then look at the government's plan for education, which is to demolish small inner country schools. Every decision taken by the current minister for education is about getting rid of small inner country schools like Basket Range and Scott Creek, making life so difficult for them that the schools have no choice but to put up their hand and say, 'We surrender. We will amalgamate with another school'.

In their own electorates, of course, is the super school concept, which is yet to be tested in the court of public opinion as to whether or not it delivers a better education system. I, personally, remain unconvinced that a big pool of students delivers a better social outcome and a better educational outcome than small schools. This government is targeting those small schools quite deliberately because they see them as inefficient.

Then we come to health. What are they doing with health? This government has done exactly the same thing: it got rid of all the health boards—those pesky volunteers from the community who might actually know what is happening—and then, in this budget, it is attacking 43 country community hospitals. There has been no big attack on the city hospitals. Bureaucracy is booming in the metropolitan area, but in the country area where they hold few seats they are demolishing the community aspect of those country electorates. So, the hospital boards are going. Even on things like planning—and the member for Napier just gave a speech about his own planning review—the government is moving to a system of taking planning off local council (off of the local input) and giving it to a central bureaucracy all on the basis of efficiency.

Look at the building industry advisory committees—the plumbing advisory committee and the electrical advisory committee, for example—which have all been abolished, because the people in the industry may actually know what they are doing. We have gone to a central bureaucratic advisory system. The point I make is that, with the six or seven budgets that Labor has brought down, there is a slow creep of killing off community involvement in their own lives because government knows best. It is not a philosophy that I subscribe to and it is a slow creep, if you like, to kill off community.

The classic examples that I have given are illustrative of this aspect. Another example is that this government has got rid of the national parks consultative committees. For what purpose? So that they can put out a press release saying, 'We have streamlined and reduced the number of boards.' What they are really doing over a long period of time is reducing communities' control of their own lives simply because some of the big end of town are putting pressure on them to reduce the number of boards because they see them as an inconvenience.

What are the ramifications of all this? The ramifications are illustrated in the budget. If you take away the volunteer effort, if you take away the community's effort in running their own lives, and replace it with government-run advice, what you get is a bigger bureaucracy and a higher tax burden on the taxpayer. Where is the evidence of that? The evidence of that is shown in the budget papers—and it depends on whom you believe, because the Commissioner for Public Employment has one figure, the Treasurer has another and the annual reports have another again—but somewhere between 9,000 and 15,000 extra public servants above budget have been employed by this government at a huge cost to the taxpayer.

The cost to the taxpayer of 10,000 extra public servants over and above budget is somewhere around \$500 million to \$600 million a year. We have \$500 million or \$600 million a year extra cost each and every year. What could you do with \$600 million a year over four years? That is \$2.4 billion. The desalination plant is \$1.2 billion. If they had kept their Public Service within the budgeted figures, they would not have had to borrow money to do the desalination plant. It could have been paid for out of budget and they would have still had \$1.2 billion left over. This government has not kept an eye on the growth—the uncontrolled growth as our leader calls it—in the Public Service. As a result, there is an extra cost to the taxpayer.

The extra cost to the taxpayer is not only an annual cost, it is now going to be a cost of significantly increased debt and the cost of the financing arrangements of the public-private partnerships (PPPs) for various projects such as the prisons, the super schools and the police station. If you take away the community input to their own lives and replace it with an increased bureaucracy, there is a long-term cost to the community and that is a higher debt level, increased costing, possibly through the financial arrangements of PPPs, and, therefore, you need a higher taxing arrangement.

The commonwealth comparisons between states show which state is working its tax base the hardest. The highest taxing state is South Australia. It all adds up to this philosophy about how well we are managing the budget. The reality is that this government is not managing the budget well, partly because of ministerial incompetence, but partly because of an underlying philosophy that government knows best.

Let's look at the latest example. I think the most cruel example is the attack on country health. My electorate is essentially an urban electorate. It is right next to Flinders Medical Centre and we have the Blackwood hospital—a community-based hospital. But I am going to speak on country health because my constituents travel to the country. I am a former state and national president of Apex and I have travelled by car all over this state and this country, and I have relied on country health, not only for my own treatment but also for treatment that saved my son's life after an allergic reaction to a bee sting.

At the end of the day, governments are about supplying services and the baseline service is health. Anyone living in urban or rural South Australia deserves a decent level of health service. The government is running around saying that these hospitals are unviable. Well, guess what, there is not a public hospital in Australia that makes money, because they are a service.

The government is saying: country South Australia can have a second class service. As my country members explained it to me, it is not a country health strategy, it is a country health slaughter. This is an issue for urban South Australia. When you go on your hikes in the Flinders Ranges or your holidays to Mount Gambier, or for your weekenders on Yorke Peninsula or your trips to Eyre Peninsula, you expect a decent level of health service. We should be supporting the country in the supply of a decent health service. This government is all about centralising everything into Adelaide. I am sure that it is by pure coincidence that the two country Independent members are both getting hospital upgrades in their electorates. The reality is that the rest of the state is not being dealt a country health strategy; it is being dealt a country health slaughter.

What does this all mean ultimately? It means that under this government households are hurting. This government listens to the big end of town. There are payroll tax cuts and other business cuts, but name me one cut for households. Under this government, water prices were to go up 32 per cent over five years—and that was before the government announced the desal plant. Now, water prices are going to double, and that will have a huge impact on ordinary South Australians.

Federally, the Labor government will introduce emissions trading. The best estimate is that electricity prices will go up somewhere between 27 and 35 per cent, and that will affect every South Australian. The River Murray levy, the emergency services levy and a whole range of ordinary, everyday household costs are going up. There is not one example of one expense to ordinary South Australians—to the average householder—that has gone down. There is no doubt that this government will feel the pain from ordinary South Australians because of the cost structure it is placing on ordinary, everyday households, particularly the households of pensioners and those who are on fixed incomes.

By way of illustrating some of the wrong priorities of this government, fit thoroughbred horses get \$11 million in capital works and an \$8 million a year tax relief but, if you are disabled, you get nothing extra in this budget. The disability groups are slamming this budget. They have been overlooked again by this government. If you are footy park, you get \$100 million but, if you

are the Entertainment Centre, you get \$163 million by way of a tram upgrade and a \$50 million upgrade as well. The total country health budget is around \$250 million a year. The government is slaughtering health at the same time it is doing up the Entertainment Centre. Some people will question that priority, and so they should. I understand there is only about \$2 million extra in new capital works for schools this year.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: How are the polls going?

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The polls are going well in Davenport. Thank you for asking, Attorney-General. I am grateful that, of that \$2 million in education funding, about \$500,000 is going to Eden Hills Primary School, in my electorate, for a much-needed upgrade to some of the buildings.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Fifty-two per cent of the polls supported their transport policy. That is the problem with this government: it is poll driven.

Mrs Geraghty: Your poll.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: But you are quoting it, saying 'Go to the polls.' I want to talk not about the budget but about the philosophy. The philosophy of this government has delivered ultimately the budget problems it now has: increased household expenditure, a blow-out in the Public Service, a high tax rate.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: The member for Torrens talks about a AAA credit rating. Which party lost the AAA credit rating? The Labor Party. The party that got it back was the Liberal Party.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Go and ask any rating agency, and it will tell you that the Labor Party did not have to do a thing. My grandmother could have delivered a AAA credit rating in March 2002, and she had been dead six years. All the work had been done, and all the government had to do was to wait for the credit agencies to get to their auditing month to tick it off. Everyone knows that.

The reality is that this budget has been seven years in the making. It says something about the government: it is all about government building—it is not about community building—and the state is the poorer for it.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen) (17:15): It is a pleasure to follow the member for Davenport, with whom I could not agree more profoundly. I absolutely endorse his comments about this government being about government building and not community building. I endorse also his comments about the way the bureaucratisation of our government has resulted in the need to spend this enormous amount of money on bureaucrats. Let me tell those people on the other side who interjected during the member for Davenport's comments about the disability sector the disability sector still talks to me because I am still very involved with them.

They are profoundly disappointed once again, not only about this budget but also about this government's ongoing interest in putting everything into a central bureaucracy. We got rid of the Julia Farr Centre, the Independent Living Centre, the Intellectual Disability Services Council, and a number of other organisations, and put them all into a central bureaucracy. What does the bureaucracy do? It turns around and asks the previous organisation (which the minister always decried as being just a parents group) to provide it with the expertise it lacks in order to supply the services it says it will provide. However, I will not continue to comment on those issues.

I will make some general comments about this budget before I move onto my specific portfolio areas. I will also touch briefly on issues relating to the people in my electorate of Heysen and this budget, although it is clear that not a lot can be said to give them comfort in relation to water, health, education, transport or benefits for either young people, as first homeowners, or the elderly.

First, I will comment on some general issues outside my portfolio areas, the first of which is what I perceive to be the most crucial issue for this state—water. To me, this government's response demonstrates that it is about spin, not substance; announcements, not action; and headlines, not headway. It has achieved nothing in six years. This is its seventh budget and it has obtained not one extra bit of water for us in this state. Indeed, in this budget it has done backflips on its two previous announcements.

It is now trying to back away from the Mount Bold reservoir, saying, 'We didn't really announce anything about Mount Bold. It was always part of an overall look at the Mount Lofty Ranges.' That is arrant nonsense. It announced Mount Bold. Indeed, at the time I must confess I thought that it was not a bad idea and that we could increase the size of the reservoir and catch a bit more water. However, it became apparent that Mount Bold would not catch any more water but would be increased in size in order to pump more water out of the Murray.

The government does not comprehend that the very thing we need to do in this state is wean ourselves off the Murray. We should have a plan to stop any reliance whatsoever of metropolitan Adelaide on the Murray. We know that the amount of water that falls on Adelaide in an average year is roughly equivalent to the amount it happens to use in an average year. It should get half smart about catching that water, putting it into aquifers, storing it and reusing it and about sewer mining and all sorts of things we could do to better a situation.

However, the government has sat idly by, becoming unbelievably rich in terms of windfalls from property taxes and GST over the time it has been in office, and done nothing about the issue of water. It has utterly failed to do anything about our water supply, and I am talking about not just metropolitan Adelaide but also about the whole of this state—our farmers, our irrigators and our communities and the towns that will be devastated by this government's not just inattention but now positive action aimed at making them disintegrate.

Let us look at health. The government is at last coming clean about its real intentions, that is, to decimate country health services by closing or downgrading 43 hospitals throughout our regions. Make no mistake: this is a social justice issue. The member for Davenport mentioned the fact that this is not about proving that something is economically viable. The reality is that virtually none of the services provided by government is economically viable: building roads is not economically viable and providing public transport has never anywhere been economically viable.

The reality is that people who live in our regions right across the state have a right to expect at least some equity in the way their health services are provided. Instead, this government is taking away the services and, on a number of occasions, putting in what it is calls GP Plus—except there is no GP, so it is actually GP Plus minus a GP, which strikes me as a little odd. It is trying to put spin on it, saying that there will be an improvement in services, but the reality is that there will be a downgrade.

Like the member for Davenport, I do not live in an area classified as part of the regions. However, I know that the Mount Barker Hospital, for instance, which had a very viable board, with an excellent chairman and excellent committed people who have served for many years, is now to become a satellite of the RAH, just as other hospitals will become satellites of the Lyell McEwin and the Flinders Medical Centre. For example, Noarlunga Hospital will become a satellite of Flinders.

I accept that, in a state this size, we cannot have more than one burns unit, for example, as it is a highly specialised area. I can tell you from my personal experience that it is more than possible to run a viable hospital that has a very small number of beds. I have been on the board of Stirling District Hospital for over 25 years. It is a community-based hospital, and it runs successfully in a community close to Adelaide with only 35 beds and only roughly 50 per cent occupancy, and sometimes less than that. However, we run a successful hospital. We do not expect to do major heart surgery at Stirling, but we provide orthopaedic surgery to hip replacement, plastic surgery, ENT surgery and a huge range of surgical and non-surgical but acute care services. It is a viable hospital. Why is it viable? Because the community support it.

The reality of what this government is doing is that it will decimate communities by taking away the volunteer element of the boards, which have served these communities for years and which really know what the communities and their needs are about, and replace it with bureaucrats. Of course, Tony Sherbon has been brought into this bureaucracy from interstate specifically to be a knife man for the government. I have no doubt that he will do an excellent job of crucifying health throughout this state, and then he will be paid out, he will leave the state, and he will not be answerable to anyone. He will have done the job that this government engaged him to do.

It is not just the hospitals, of course. When it comes to education, I did not notice a lot of members from the Labor side out there supporting teachers in the strike action today.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: The Attorney yells at me across the chamber, but I do not intend to acknowledge what he says. I do ask, Madam Deputy Speaker, that you ask the Attorney to stop interjecting so that I can get on with my comments, since I only have 12 of my 20 minutes left.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs REDMOND: I would like to comment on what this government is doing to education. The member for Davenport said that he was yet to be convinced about the value of super schools. Let me put on the record quite clearly that I have no doubt that they will be a catastrophe. They are a social disaster being planned and instigated by this government at the cost of the little schools. I have a lot of little schools in my electorate. I had Basket Range. I do not actually quite have that any more, but it only had 31 students. It is a wonderful school and, like most of those small schools, in my view, they are super schools, because they give the benefit of great pastoral care, great pastoral involvement—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs REDMOND: —and involvement of the children with the communities. They are valued by the parents, the teachers and the pupils who attend them, and by the community at large. What happens to any community when you remove the doctors, the hospitals and the schools? The communities die. That is what happens.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs REDMOND: Madam Deputy Speaker, could you please intervene and stop the Attorney from interjecting. It is very hard to talk over him and to concentrate on what I want to say. I beg that you protect me, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have asked the Attorney to come to order. Please continue your remarks.

Mrs REDMOND: Outside today, the principal of a primary school got up to speak, and he indicated, quite rightly, that primary schools with fewer than 200 pupils and high schools with fewer than 800 pupils were likely to be at risk under this government. It has been pointed out by other speakers that what the government is aiming to do is achieve the death by a thousand cuts. That is its plan. It wants to bureaucratise and centralise everything. It does not give a toss about communities. It talks about having some sort of population increase in this state, but what it is actually doing is exactly the opposite of what is going to lead to a population increase.

We need our regions. We are still actually an agricultural-based economy in this state. For all the Premier's nattering about our resources boom, it is not yet a resources boom. It is a resource investigation boom. We are certainly exploring, but we do not yet have a resources boom. Maybe one day that will happen, but I can tell you this: if we do not want people out in those far reaches working in those areas to be fly-in, fly-out employees who live in another state, we are going to have to provide services. Closing all these little hospitals will just be a nail in the coffin for all of those things happening.

I want to quickly move on to my comments on my portfolio, since I am running out of time. It appears to me that little is going to be achieved—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs REDMOND: —in the portfolio of Attorney-General and Justice. I notice once again in the estimates timetable that all sorts of time is given to things other than the Attorney-General and Justice portfolio. The Attorney-General obviously does not want to be questioned at any length on that portfolio. Only 45 minutes is allocated to the Attorney-General's portfolio during estimates. I think that is disgraceful, and he should hang his head in shame.

The Hon. R.G. Kerin interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: It would not matter if I had five minutes; it would cover more than the Attorney-General knows. The Attorney-General and Justice portfolio, I believe, will not achieve very much. The Attorney made a great big announcement last week about how we are going to build

these two new courts at Sturt Street and that that will reduce the criminal case backlog. The reality of it is that the Capital Investment Statement shows that, of the total expenditure of \$3.206 million, only \$361,000 is going to be spent in the next budget year. In fact, of a total of more than \$15 million, only \$837,000 will be spent in 2008-09. So, the reality is that those courts are not going to be operational. The Attorney has probably forgotten that it is not all that long ago since the Chief Justice provided a report for the year ended 31 December 2007. In that report, he makes mention of a number of things that the new courts in Sturt Street do nothing to address. He states as follows:

The outdated Supreme Court infrastructure provides facilities of an unsatisfactory standard in which staff, the legal profession and the judges must work.

That does not even take into account the fact that, inevitably, when there is staff, judges and the legal profession, there are almost always witnesses, plaintiffs, defendants, and those from the community actually involved in the legal process. He goes on to say:

In fact, staff are accommodated in cramped conditions. Public amenities are well below contemporary standards in every respect. Buildings do not meet disability access standards, and the court is able to provide adequate disability access to only one of its court rooms.

No doubt, if the government were a private enterprise, it would have been required to adjust things to get over those problems. In fact, last year, office space had to be vacated for a substantial part of the year after it was declared unsafe under occupational health, safety and welfare standards. So, the government does not really address that in any great detail by simply saying, 'Well, we are going to be providing some funding to refurbish a couple of courts down in Sturt Street.' My suggestion is that it will do little or nothing, particularly in the next 12 months, about the backlog of criminal cases. It also does not really address the issue of the DPP, but I will wait to see in the estimates how much the so-called initiative in relation to the DPP does affect the case load.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney-General will allow the member to continue in silence. The Attorney will be silent and the member will continue.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: Yes; if only I could keep going but the Attorney successfully—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: That is right. As I said, I will wait until estimates to see what it is going to do in terms of the actual case loads and how much, because whilst it may be true to say—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs REDMOND: —that the number of staff in the DPP's office has more than doubled since Labor came to office, that is several years ago now and for all we know their workload has trebled, or even quadrupled, in that time, so that doubling the staff is hardly an adequate response.

The budget speech also refers to the outlaw motorcycle gang taskforce, which is under the police department rather than the Attorney-General's Department, but I note that the extra expenditure on the outlaw motorcycle gang taskforce does not even kick in during the next year, it just does not happen. Similarly, there is a thoroughly inadequate response to the issue—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney can join the debate properly.

Mrs REDMOND: —of pathology services and DNA testing. I can see that the Attorney gets too excited with me talking about things related to the Attorney-General, so to close my comments this evening I will move on to my portfolio of ageing. It is quite clear to me that this government has no regard for the situation of those on fixed incomes and those who may be self-funded retirees. So, whether they are pensioners on fixed income pensions or self-funded retirees who have to make ends meet on limited amounts of money, this government takes little notice.

We know that this state has an ageing population and, indeed, it is ageing more rapidly than that of the other states, but what did Kevin Foley say about pensioners when he was interviewed on Radio 891 the day after the budget? I will read from what he had to say. David Bevan said:

But the government has chosen to target a particular group this time around, a lot of people would say quite rightly so, with first home buyers, and previous governments have targeted pensioners in state budgets, with assistance with utilities. This time around, nothing special for them?

Kevin Foley's response was:

Well, no, you're right. I mean, we have chosen first home buyers for special attention and indeed only, I think, now three budgets ago we provided pensioners with a significant contribution, a \$100 contribution towards their utility bills in that year when we could afford it.

Bevan said, 'I think that's been spent.' Kevin Foley responded, 'Oh yeah, of course.' Bevan then said, 'Three years ago: things are a lot tougher now.' Kevin Foley's response was, 'Sure, I don't doubt that for one moment.' They are very telling comments. For a start, \$100 three years ago: just how far does he think that is going to go to meeting the extra expenses of people on fixed incomes? How are those people, who are well below the average income rate, going to be able to stretch that \$100? It is a nonsense.

Furthermore, as to his response that first home owners got the benefit: the reality of the first home owners grant is that the stamp duty rates in this state are such that it is worth nothing to the first home owner. It takes money out of Kevin Foley's right-hand pocket and puts it into his left-hand pocket and is of no benefit whatsoever to the first home owner. As I said in my opening remarks, this budget contains nothing for either the old or the young, and certainly not for the people in the middle.

Time expired.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (17:34): I rise to congratulate the Treasurer on his seventh surplus budget, a budget that he has crafted—along with the Premier and Minister for Transport—to further build on the fine reputation of economic management that the Rann government has built up since coming to power in 2002.

Having put a lot of money into health and education in recent budgets, this budget is solidly built on a transport revolution, a \$2 billion transport spend that will see the electrifying of the trains throughout the metropolitan area, including down to the Noarlunga railway station, which is in the electorate of Mawson. Many people catch the trains from surrounding suburbs such as Noarlunga Downs, Hackham, Hackham West, Huntfield Heights and even as far across as Woodcroft, so that is something that has been very much welcomed by people in the south.

Last year money was injected into fixing the sleepers on that line, and that was the first money that had been spent on the line since it was constructed in the early seventies. So, after decades and decades of neglect, the Rann government is turning its attention to fixing the transport system, which has been in a fairly poor state over recent years because of a lack of investment in infrastructure and rolling stock—train windows that you cannot see out of, trains that are delayed because of rickety sleepers and rail lines that are not as straight as they should be. So, I congratulate all the ministers involved in that. It has been very much welcomed, as is the increase in the bus fleet, which is very important particularly to areas such as Woodcroft which fall outside the spokes of the wheel of our urban train network, that is, those areas that are catered for by buses. The extra 80 buses will mean more services for places like Woodcroft, which is very much welcomed.

The \$4,000 first home bonus grant will help many young South Australians, particularly those down in the southern suburbs, get into their first home, and it has been gratefully received by people in the local area. We also see \$142 million for more children in state care and \$15 million for early intervention and home visiting services, as well as \$4.6 million to attract and retain carers, who are a very important part of our society. The Rann government is taking care of our carers.

Again, health has received huge bonuses and the continual upgrades at places such as the Flinders Medical Centre and Noarlunga Hospital in the south are very much appreciated, as is the \$26 million addition to the ambulance budget. Earlier this year we opened the McLaren Vale Ambulance Station, something for which the area had been calling for many years. I know that when we got into government in 2002, the ambulance service had been run down to such a degree that people were working ridiculously large amounts of overtime.

What we had to do was hire more ambulance officers, train them and also buy more ambulances and more equipment, so that we could get the ambulance service back on track before we did any extension to the ambulance service. Since that time we have opened up more ambulance stations in areas across the state including, as I said, McLaren Vale. This budget is all about adding to the personnel in the ambulance service as well.

In the justice system we have had \$35 million to increase the capacity in our prisons, as well as \$5.2 million to help police deal with outlaw motorcycle gangs and \$8.4 million for increased DNA testing and pathology services. While the money goes in, it is also good to see the statistics that come out the other side, and that is less crime in the south; that is something that is touched on by people at Neighbourhood Watch meetings that I attend in the electorate. People have noticed a great reduction in crime since 2002, when the Rann government came into power with a strong law and order policy and we put those extra police on the beat, and it is making a real difference. I commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the police minister for sticking to their guns year after year and injecting more and more money into those areas.

In the area of education, again, we see a lot of money being put into capital investment in our schools, and Willunga High School is one of the great beneficiaries in the state. It is a school in a very shoddy condition. It has been run down for a number of years and there are some temporary buildings that would have celebrated their 50th anniversary when the school celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2010. Thankfully, we will get rid of those temporary buildings because that is what they were—temporary buildings. They are still there; they have white ants and holes in them, and this is probably one of the worst schools in the state but, with \$7.7 million to be spent on it during the next 18 months to two years, the school will undergo a makeover. That development is something about which, at the governing council meeting at Willunga High School last night, the teachers, the principal and the parents of the school were very excited. The fight has taken a few years, but they were very glad to see that money in the budget.

It is great as a local member to see the difference that this money makes to communities. We have recently opened the new Willunga Primary School, which had more than \$5 million spent on it, so we have first-class facilities in the south. McLaren Flat is also undergoing a multimillion dollar overhaul, so we are seeing some first-rate public schools being built or refurbished in the electorate of Mawson. They are the schools that our students deserve, and I think the more we can attract people to our public school service the better.

In terms of roads, we have \$7 million in the budget for an overhaul of the Victor Harbor/South Road intersection. You do not have to live in the electorate of Mawson to have been affected by this one. Anyone who has been to Victor Harbor and had to drive back, particularly on a Sunday afternoon or at the end of a long weekend, will know that it has been a bottleneck that has caused a great deal of distress over the years because you sit there in a long line and wait.

The people who live in McLaren Vale, Willunga, McLaren Flat and Blewitt Springs put up with that wait every morning, Monday to Friday, as they make their way into town, but thankfully something is being done. At the moment, that intersection, as you head north and turn right off the Victor Harbor Road onto South Road, has a stop sign there. It will be replaced with three lanes of traffic, which will then turn into three lanes. The South Road intersection will be extended by a lane and we will have traffic lights there, with the traffic lights at the next intersection also to be updated, to cope not just with the traffic that we have now but with the growing population that we are experiencing in the south.

Returning to the train line extension, or the electrification, we are also extending the train and tram network, which people in the south might say, 'That money's being spent in the western suburbs; what's in it for us?' It is a little like the Bakewell Bridge project recently completed. People could say that about the Bakewell Bridge. Indeed, the old Bakewell Bridge was teetering on its last legs and could have been struck by a truck or a heavy vehicle at any stage and come down on a train and, a la the Granville train disaster, could have killed many people from the south who travel into work each day on the Noarlunga line.

The benefit that we will see with the investment in rail and tram services into the western suburbs is the urban infill that will occur in places such as Brompton (on the existing Clipsal site when that is converted into housing land), the Cheltenham racecourse site when that becomes housing land, and also Port Adelaide, where a major multibillion dollar redevelopment is under way. We are going to see growth and urban infill in those areas, and the big reward for us in the south is that it will slow down the urban sprawl, because what we have down there is more developments going ahead and it has been hard in the past for successive governments and local government to keep up with the growing demands placed on the existing infrastructure. I think the real benefit with that will be that we can provide high density housing in the western suburbs and complete that urban infill, and the flow-on effects will be felt down in the south.

The member for Davenport said that this government is friends with the big end of town and that all we care about is the big end of town. I think the member for Davenport is a little confused. I think what he probably means to say is that the big end of town is often applauding the

Rann government for the work that it is doing and for its vision and the way that it is setting down the plan for the future and the way that it has dealt with the economic growth in this state in recent years.

The big end of town is not the only area that will benefit from payroll tax. If the member for Davenport got out and spoke to business people in small and medium sized businesses, he would realise that payroll tax has been crippling their businesses year after year. The business people I have been speaking to were very impressed to see, in the Treasurer's budget, the tax-free threshold increasing from \$504,000 to \$552,000.

The payroll tax rate will be cut from 5 per cent to 4.95 per cent (which is the second lowest rate in the country) and will result in \$136 million in tax savings for business. It is the small to medium size businesses that will benefit the most from this move. As a result of talking to business people in the electorate of Mawson, I know it is something that is very welcome. This budget delivers for the people of Mawson and all South Australians. This government is taking action now for the future.

[Sitting extended beyond 18:00 on motion of Hon. M.J. Atkinson]

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (17:46): Overall, I think the budget is quite good. There are a couple of ways in which one can look at a budget. I have studied a lot of economics in my time—in fact, I majored in my honours degree in economics. In simple terms, one can look at a budget in relation to what is in it or what is not in it. I will talk about both those aspects. The commitment to public transport, in particular the light rail extension, is fantastic. It is something about which I have spoken in this house for many years. I asked my staff to extract remarks from *Hansard* in days gone by. On 13 February 1990, I said:

I trust that this is not empty rhetoric because the electorate of Fisher, particularly the south-eastern section of Happy Valley, needs something equivalent to the O-Bahn or a light rail system to complement the decent road system that it also needs.

In September 1990, during an estimates committee hearing, the Hon. Frank Blevins was asked a question as follows:

Has consideration been given to providing a light rail transport option to the southern suburbs including, for example, integration with the existing Glenelg tramline?

The Hon. Frank Blevins asked the Director-General of Transport to respond—and he then responded to the question. During debate on the Supply Bill in February 1992, I said:

I mentioned publicly quite recently the need to electrify the metropolitan rail network with the assistance of funding from the federal government. At the moment South Australia is the only mainland state that does not have a program to electrify its metropolitan rail lines.

So 16 years later it is proposed to further extend what has happened recently with the Glenelg service. It is a fantastic announcement. Obviously, I would like to see rail extended to Aldinga (which is not in my electorate) because it would be a good thing to do. I hope the state government will commit to that extension in future budgets, and one would hope the federal government would see fit to provide some of its extensive surplus for that purpose, as well. As I have said on many occasions, every section of the rail network does not have to be done at once—there is no need to do that—but over time the network could be electrified and standardised.

Some people have criticised the fact that electrification is not proposed for the Belair line. The reason for that is simple. The tunnels make life more complicated but, also, in terms of cost effectiveness (and to be fair about it), one would have to say that it is hard to justify that expense. One would hope that future technology may make it possible.

However, the Belair line, in addition to commuter services, could be used on weekends with the introduction of some historic trains running to Belair. It is difficult to run trains through to Bridgewater because of the current rail infrastructure, but I think we should get back to encouraging people to catch a historic train to Belair and then going for a walk and picnic in Belair National Park—which used to happen many years ago.

The reality of the light rail network extension is that housing will follow. If we build good, fast public transport systems, housing will follow. People will move to live near a rail facility. I guess part of the government's plan is to establish and encourage higher density living near these rail corridors—which I think is very important. We will have to get used to higher density living in Adelaide but, at the same time, we need to ensure that we provide genuine open space where

people living in higher density living can relax and spend time with their kids kicking a football, throwing a netball, and so on. The public transport expansion proposal is a great part of the budget.

One aspect which relates to transport and which was not adequately dealt with in the budget is the provision of off-road cycleways. The reason for a budget is that one cannot do everything at once. If one had all the resources one wanted, one would not need to budget. I know the Attorney-General is a keen cyclist, and it is disappointing that more effort has not been put into constructing off-road cycleways in Adelaide.

Adelaide is the perfect city for off-road cycling and we should be encouraging people to cycle. At present, the program—which is euphemistically called Share the Road—does not encourage people to ride bikes on the existing road network. Certainly for young people it is far too dangerous.

I would like to see in future budgets a bigger commitment to providing off-road cycleways in the metropolitan area. It could not be done all at once, but it could be a long-term strategy. Many people from the inner suburbs could commute quite easily into the city if off-road cycleway provision was made for them.

In the budget I was pleased to see that the Treasurer has finally shaken off the voodoo about borrowing. A lot of people got hung up about the State Bank and what happened to it. The problem with the State Bank was the result of the two major parties creating a bank, which the cowboys could run, and taking it out of the hands of the government. The blame for what happened in the State Bank crisis was the fault of both the major parties in that they enthusiastically created a corporate charter that allowed Marcus Clark and his cowboys to do what they wished with the money in the bank, and we know the consequences of that. However, the downside has been that, as a result, treasurers—both Liberal and Labor—have had this scare implanted in them of not borrowing because they fear that there could be some sort of electoral backlash or concern that we might fall off the edge of the solar system.

The reality is that borrowing is good if it is done for the right purposes, so I am pleased to see that the government is borrowing for wealth creation. To use a simplistic example, if one puts money into constructive and creative investment one will get a benefit in the long term—the same as with education. But if you put your money into everyday consumables, at the end of any period of time you will have little to show for it. I think that this budget represented quite a significant shift in the attitude as reflected by the Treasurer, and I commend him for it because he has shaken off the voodoo of being frightened to borrow for the sake of investing in infrastructure. You will only improve the wealth-generating capacity of the state if you borrow to put money into wealth-generating infrastructure—not into goat farms in South Africa, but into infrastructure that will benefit community.

I have said that we could spend all the budget on health and we still would have people saying, 'It's not enough.' Realistically, we need to move to a situation where people take more responsibility for their health, and that requires people to participate in preventative health programs. I have argued to the health minister that we need to be doing more with respect to preventative health activities, and members would have heard him say today that this week some preventative screening is taking place in Parliament House.

We should be doing that on a widespread basis—not screening in a silly way where there is no likely benefit, but checking things such as blood pressure, blood sugar and so on because, as the minister highlighted today (with information from the Florey Foundation), many people do not even know they have hypertension or high blood pressure; they do not know they have other health issues which are readily and easily detectable. I would like to see more emphasis in future budgets on preventative health measures to keep people out of hospital. The Japanese set the standard in this regard; it is one of the healthiest populations in the world.

Just digressing for a minute, the other day I saw in a chemist shop the bowel cancer testing kit, and I thought that I might avail myself of that kit. For the massive cost of \$27, less the discount because I belong to that chemist group, I was able to get peace of mind through that testing kit. As I say, for the huge cost of less than \$27 I was able to have a test done that reassured me that there was no likelihood of bowel cancer. We need to be doing more of that sort of screening for people in at-risk groups, and likewise for breast cancer. We still have in this state a significant percentage of women who do not avail themselves of screening for breast cancer. Currently, I think about 70 per cent do, so 30 per cent of women in the at-risk group do not avail themselves of that screening process. We still have a long way to go.

Many men think they are macho men who do not need to look after their health. To his credit, we saw Sam Newman go public on prostate cancer. Here was someone who was seen as a tough guy but who found that he had prostate cancer—and the message is not just in relation to cancers, some of which are not easy to detect, such as ovarian cancer. We need to have more emphasis on preventative health and regular check-ups, and in that way we can reduce the incredible burden of health repair, if you like, through our hospital and other systems. That will be assisted, too, if we can encourage people to try to build in fitness as part of that.

The budget made some provision in terms of dealing with the crisis that we face in relation to water, and, in particular, not having a guaranteed water supply in Adelaide and other parts of the state. I would like to see more emphasis on dealing with and using our stormwater capture reuse. There is provision in the budget for some of that, but, I guess, all of us would like it all to be done by yesterday. It is something on which the government needs to keep focused, that is, making better use of stormwater and treated grey water.

I mentioned at the start of my contribution public transport, and I commended the government for the light rail provision extension. However, one area really concerns me. The minister has indicated that he is buying some new buses—I think 90 from memory.

My concern is more about how the provision of services is determined and, in my experience, that involves a lack of consultation with commuters, local members and other important stakeholders. I find that—and I do not know whether other members have the same experience—we get a decree from the transport board saying that certain bus services will be cut, increased, or whatever, and they often have no relationship to what the people in the area want or have asked for.

I have written again recently to the Minister for Transport saying that it would be good if his department and its public transport sector actually consulted with the people who use these buses, and then we would not have all the heartache that we have had because they have cancelled some services and then have had to bring them back, and so on. That could all be avoided if there was genuine consultation before the decision was made. It is not consultation if residents are told after the event that bus services have been changed, irrespective of their wish.

In regard to roads, I recently drove 1,400 kilometres in the space of a week while having a look at parts of the River Murray system, and I would have to say that the road system in South Australia is pretty good. Some areas warrant attention but, overall, considering our population size and the geographical dispersal of where people live, I think our road system is very good. We hear people say that the Victor Harbor Road is terrible. There is nothing wrong with the road to Victor Harbor: there is a problem with the people who use it. If used according to the proper speed and so on, I do not find much of a problem with any of our roads.

In regard to law and order, I have been arguing for a long time for the government to introduce environmental work camps for youth at risk. I did not see any provision for that in the budget. The government is spending about \$11 million on the so-called Gang of 49, and that amounts to more than \$200,000 per individual. One would have to ask whether that expenditure is really necessary and whether there are better ways of going about dealing with those Aboriginal young people who have become marginalised—young people who know nothing about their own culture and who have no real connection with the wider community. I think that, if we involved Aboriginal people in running certain programs, a lot could be achieved for a lot less than \$11 million or \$200,000 per young person. Anyway, I guess time will tell whether that approach is going to work, but just throwing money at an issue is not going to resolve it. I think we come back to key points of accountability and responsibility that young people (Aboriginal or otherwise) need to understand and abide by.

Overall, my view of the budget is that some areas should have been addressed. I would have liked to see more money go into protecting biodiversity. There is money for marine parks—that is fine—and there is a lot of money going into global warming, and I do not have a problem with that focus. However, people need to remember that if you do not protect the biodiversity below then you eventually put that biodiversity at risk, and in South Australia our record is appalling in relation to protecting our indigenous plants and animals. I am not saying that people are obsessed with global warming but you need to have a balanced view and also protect the biodiversity whilst you are working towards the long-term aim of reducing global warming and the consequences of that. But I think the government to some extent seems to be obsessed with global warming. There should be a focus on it—I do not have a problem with that—but the focus is probably somewhat over the top, in terms of maintaining a balance between all aspects of the environment.

In summary, I think that as a budget it is quite good. I would like to see teachers receive greater remuneration in the future, but their quest for smaller class sizes helps to negate that. Research does not suggest that reducing class sizes below a certain point brings about much benefit to students. I think that future budgets need to prepare for paying teachers a decent professional salary rather than the inadequate salary level that most of them receive at the moment.

Time expired.

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Frome) (18:05): In my budget reply I will concentrate mainly on country health, but I first wish to make a few general comments. On the day that the budget was brought down we saw a fair old song and dance and joking around by the Treasurer. I think that showed a lack of seriousness about this budget, and I would quite seriously question the processes that were gone through over the longer period of time and a lot of the decisions that were made. The minister could not answer any questions today about the Entertainment Centre tram, and I think that what we are seeing under this government is some non-disciplined decisions about what will be good news stories out of the budget rather than disciplined news over a period of time to make the decisions in a planned and logical way.

One of the other things that concerns me is that we are seeing voodoo economics right across Australia at the moment. The federal scene set the scene for South Australia. The federal government was under pressure to bring down a surplus. However, it did not really have the discipline to do that, because it announced a \$20 billion surplus and straight away it put that \$20 billion into an infrastructure fund and, instead of saying 'We will spend the interest,' it said, 'We will spend the \$20 billion.' As far as I am concerned, \$20 billion spent on infrastructure is as good as on balance sheets. So, federally, we have seen no restraint. I would call its budget not a surplus budget but a balanced budget, and that will fuel inflation more and more.

Here we have the ridiculous situation where we had the Treasurer stand up and say, 'In the next four years we will deliver four strong surpluses but add to debt by \$1.9 billion.' It just does not make sense. That is voodoo economics. It is mixing up the ways of measuring things, and I would not be surprised, if his management gets much worse, to see the Treasurer employ a new tactic and say that the surplus is the revenue, because at the moment a lot of what the government is spending is not included in what is called the surplus—or, in its case, what should be a deficit.

Other issues have been raised. The member for Davenport raised the issue of the size of the Public Service, and the member for Fisher said that borrowing for infrastructure is good, with a return. We should not have to borrow for infrastructure at the moment. The windfalls this government has had should be plenty to fund the infrastructure that we have.

However, we have seen this incredible unchecked growth within the Public Service. Year after year ministers have come into this house to be questioned with respect to the Auditor-General's Report, and when asked, 'How is it that your department has budgeted for 15 extra public servants and you have 300?' we just see a blank look. They do not know what is going on within their departments and, overall, the bureaucracy in this town is having an absolute ball. The number of public servants in back office positions is just amazing. It is just not providing the services that people need.

For the last few years I have been quite concerned about the difference between the rhetoric and the delivery of this government with respect to water. In the last three or four years, in particular, because of the increases that we have seen in water prices and the drag of money out of SA Water, I think the government's water policies are absolutely revenue driven. It is milking SA Water and using the good nature of the people of South Australia to do so. The River Murray levy when it was introduced was a classic case of introducing a levy. The government has said that that levy goes for good purposes. That levy goes towards payments made by Treasury previously and the government has not stuck to what the Treasurer told this house when it introduced that levy.

The trams are an absolute waste of money. The tram situation is an absolute joke. Trying to get from east to west through Adelaide nowadays is absolutely hopeless and, in getting from north to south, the trams have almost taken King William Street out of the equation. The trams have blocked Morphett Street and have caused enormous trouble. But extending the tramline to the Entertainment Centre will be an absolute farce. We heard the minister today, and he has no idea. He basically said that we will sort it out later.

I can remember when the government announced the extension of the tramline down to City West. The next day, the minister could not answer two questions put to him, which makes you wonder whether it was the media unit that made the policy decision. One question put to the minister was: 'Do we lose a lane each way down King William Street?', to which the minister

replied, 'I don't know.' The other question was: 'Will the trams be powered by overhead wires or through electric rails?', to which the minister replied, 'I don't know.' How the hell can cabinet make decisions which involve that amount of money and which have that sort of impact on the traffic flow without any of these studies being done? It makes no sense.

In 1994, I was a member of the Public Works Committee when it looked at the widening of the Port Road Bridge over the Torrens River, which was an absolute bottleneck. Anyone who knows that area would know that that bridge is an absolute funnel for all the traffic coming from that direction. In 1994, it was found that, for the economic good of the whole state, we had to open that up and widen the bridge. Now we are, in effect, going to run trams over that damn bridge and we will go back to pre-1994 traffic flows and there will probably be 60 to 70 per cent more traffic. It will be an absolute disaster. I am sure the member for Adelaide will be really happy when probably the only way of fixing it will be to increase Barton Terrace to two or three lanes. The member for Croydon might be happy about that, but I am sure the residents of North Adelaide and the member for Adelaide will not be. If the government is going to put trams across Torrens Road onto Port Road it will cause absolute chaos with traffic flows out of that area. It is one of the most ridiculous things I have heard.

Before I get on to health, I want to turn to the resources boom. Day after day, we hear about the resources boom. I was the minister for mines and energy for a lot of the early days when we started doing the flyovers to provide the data to all the companies that are now investing in this state. This government has not funded the mines and energy department anywhere near the level it received back in those days or as well as it should be funded.

We keep hearing about the resources boom. I can tell members that the resources boom will not be worth anywhere near as much to this state as we hear it will unless this government gets serious about infrastructure and services. So much of the figures referred to by the government relate to Roxby Downs. If you go to Roxby Downs and talk to the people there and have a good look at the town, you will find that the school is stretched to the absolute limit. Families from interstate who go to Roxby Downs and see that will not stay in Roxby Downs. The health service in Roxby Downs is stretched to the limit, and there are not enough police there. In the past, Roxby Downs was considered to be a family town but, if those services are not there for families, it will become one of your typical rougher mining towns, but the government is not willing to invest in that town to make sure that what should happen with the mining boom will actually happen.

In relation to the rest of the state, again, we hear all this rhetoric about the mining boom. Yes, there are opportunities out there, but without ports, water, electricity, roads and airstrips it ain't going to happen. The government is absolutely kidding itself about where the benefit will be to the state. It is only overseas countries that have the money to put into infrastructure. What we will see is a small revenue stream and no great benefit to the state. We are a minnow compared with Queensland and Western Australia and we will remain a minnow compared with Western Australia. I think we have overcooked the talk about the resources boom.

As an ex-minister, I know there are some huge opportunities there and that it will be a good industry in the future, but we have ignored the food industry and other industries. This concentrating just on defence and mining will not serve this state in the long term because we will be ignoring a lot of our other opportunities. As the minister who opened the only uranium mine operating in South Australia in about the last 30 years, I am pleased in one way that the government has embraced uranium. However, the government, while in opposition, did everything possible to make sure that the uranium mine did not get up, and it is quite interesting now to see the government embracing it.

I turn to the country health plan. For anyone living outside Adelaide, that is the big news out of this budget. It is the big worry out of this budget. Country people are absolutely furious at the moment. We have a Minister for Health sending very mixed messages. He has been done over. The bureaucrats in the back office have had a huge win with the country health plan. These are shiny-arsed blokes sitting in offices down here who have no understanding about country community and the delivery of country services.

We have heard about the four general hospitals: it has nothing to do with the four general hospitals. The four general hospitals keep the member for Mount Gambier, the member for Chaffey and the member for Giles happy, and the government has to put a service at Port Lincoln because it is too expensive to get people to Adelaide. About 75 to 80 per cent of country people in South Australia will have to come to Adelaide for those services. If anyone looks at a map, Mount Gambier is surrounded on two sides by water and on one side by Victoria: it sits in the very corner

of the state. Berri; yes, it can service the Riverland. Port Lincoln can service about 25,000 people. Whyalla is a big city but there is nothing else around it.

People living anywhere south of Port Augusta—Port Pirie, Yorke Peninsula, the Mid North, the Lower North, the Murraylands, the Fleurieu or the Upper South-East—will all be expected to come to Adelaide. The whole agenda is about the bureaucrats trying to centralise all our health care into the four big hospitals in Adelaide. That is simply what it is about. We have heard some rubbish from the Minister for Health, particularly on *Stateline* the other night. On the ABC program *Stateline* on Friday night, the minister stated:

But I dispute that argument because upgrading hospitals at Whyalla, Berri, Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln and others in moderate-sized communities, will mean that the population centres of country South Australia will have more services available closer to where people live, so 85 per cent of country South Australians will have more services within 60 minutes.

His 85 per cent is out by an enormous factor. It is not 85 per cent: it is more like 25 to 30 per cent.

We have been sold a pup. The government has swallowed a pup. Basically, it means that about 75, 80 per cent of rural South Australians, if they want anything other than simple health care, will need to come to the city. We have heard about the second tier hospitals. They have no idea what is going on. They are been told very little. My understanding is that most of them will not be upgraded, they will be downgraded. Apart from Ceduna, there is no money for any of those hospitals.

I think this comment applies to them all, but I will refer to Clare as an example. It states that Clare country community hospital will enhance services in line with community need—bureaucratic speak. Services may include obstetrics, surgery, acute medical in-patient beds, 24-hour emergency response and community health care type things. They do that now. Suddenly, instead of 'they will', it is 'they may'. This is about the upgrade of four hospitals, although we will see what they do at Ceduna—it might be five hospitals. All the others are expected to wind back, which will leave only about 130,000 with access to the general hospitals, and that is only if you have a vehicle because there is no public transport out there.

For country people it is an absolute disaster. I would ask members opposite to look at a map, because, fair dinkum, if they look at the distribution of people in regional South Australia and then look at where these four hospitals are situated, apart from satisfying three individuals, they do absolutely nothing for regional South Australia. The rest of us will be expected to come to Adelaide. There is not one person living in my electorate who would not have to come to Adelaide. There would be no-one in the member for Goyder's electorate and there is probably no-one in the member for Stuart's electorate who would not have to come to Adelaide. We would all have to come to Adelaide.

These four general hospitals are absolutely useless to us. Is a person from Stansbury supposed to go to Whyalla? I suppose a person from Clare would be expected to travel to Berri. Is a person living in the member for Hammond's electorate supposed to go to Berri or Mount Gambier? How in the hell do they get there? Adelaide is closer to all these places. The government has been sold an absolute pup. It is about downgrading the services. If you look at where 80 per cent of the people in South Australia live, they will end up coming to Adelaide for nearly all their medical services.

The way it was done was a disgrace: they snuck it out at five o'clock on budget day. The Country Health Board was going to be briefed. Some members were on their way to be briefed at nine o'clock that morning, but they got a phone call saying that the Treasurer did not want anyone briefed until the afternoon. The government thought, 'Let's make sure that we get a good statement out of the Farmers Federation, and all these other groups that have an interest in the country, out of the budget lock-up before we tell them anything about the fact that we are closing their hospitals.' It was an absolute disgrace.

Dr Richard Mackinnon (who, I admit, is a good friend of mine) has been in Crystal Brook for 20 years. He has been President of the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, President of the Rural Doctors Association of South Australia, and he is on the Country Health Board. There has been zero consultation and, on top of that, he receives the insult that the government wants to call these places 'GP Centres' and trade off the goodwill engendered by those GPs over a long time.

However, it gets worse. The thing that really annoys me is what the government is doing to Richard Mackinnon and three or four other doctors across the state. It has told Crystal Brook Hospital and Richard Mackinnon that, while Richard Mackinnon stays in Crystal Brook, they can keep their birthing services but, when he goes, they will close. Over the past 20 years, Richard

Mackinnon has given that community and rural health right across Australia enormous service. He is now faced with the situation that, if he wants to move on in five years, take early retirement or whatever, it will not be the state government that closes Crystal Brook Hospital; it will be laid at the feet of Richard Mackinnon.

If he wants to retire (although I would not be surprised if he is not burnt out before then) or whatever, the way it works is that it will be Richard Mackinnon who closes the hospital in his own community. That is not fair—in fact, it is bloody unfair. I know that Richard is very annoyed, and several other doctors have been put in the same position. It is just not fair that these guys, who for years have been doing the hard yakka and who have represented rural people on national bodies, all of a sudden will be asked to take the blame for the whole damn thing. It is just not right.

Another problem, and one that the government cannot ignore, is what we have seen over the past 10 or 15 years in particular, namely, people moving out of smaller towns to retire in towns where these 43 or 44 downgraded hospitals will be. In Crystal Brook alone, three big projects have drawn people from smaller towns that do not have hospitals, such as Gladstone, Gulnare and Redhill. They have shifted from smaller towns into Crystal Brook; for example, people from Bute, Mundoorra and Wokurna have shifted into Port Broughton. The reason they have bought those homes in their retirement is that there is a working hospital in the area. They have made their investment and shifted in, but now this government will pull the rug out from under their feet and take away the services they need.

This also comes at a time when petrol prices are so damn high. There will be an enormous cost, whether it be for ambulances or whatever, to shift people from where these 40-odd hospitals are now to bigger hospitals. It will be a huge cost and a huge use of fuel and resources. It just makes no sense for this to happen, and I think it is an issue that has not been taken into account. The bureaucrats of Adelaide who just run the hospitals are obviously not responsible for patient transfers because they have not factored into the same equation the enormous cost that will now arise.

In my area, four hospitals will be as good as closed, and one will rest on the good graces of Richard Mackinnon, bless his soul. Laura, Port Broughton, Crystal Brook, Snowtown and Riverton are all on the list for a hatchet job. Port Pirie and Clare face an uncertain future, as the Country Health Care Plan states that they may have certain services, but there is no damn guarantee. People do not understand the anger and grief. The member for Stuart quoted a few things out of the paper earlier. The anger is huge. *The Clare Argus* editorial started off in a pretty apt way. It states:

It's funny how local government is required to ask its communities their opinions on anything from the naming of new roads to the use of community land. Funny because the next couple of tiers of government obviously believe it's okay to ride roughshod over everyone and everything, making decisions for us—because, presumably, we are incapable of providing useful input.

Regional residents have been worrying for months about the content of the state...government's Country Health Plan. The details have been kept under wraps until last week when they popped up after the new budget was announced...With 43 out of 66 regional hospitals statewide to lose or have their acute services seriously downgraded, it's not a pretty thought.

It is not a pretty thought, and I ask government members to put pressure on the Minister for Health, rather than just listen to the bureaucrats.

Time expired.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (18:26): I rise also to make my contribution to the budget reply speech. I am just stunned and appalled at the lack of money put aside for any reasonable water infrastructure in this state. We have seen the attention that this government, including Premier Rann and his so-called Water Security Minister, Karlene Maywald, give to this state in the commitment they have given for water supply. It is absolutely terrible.

The Riverland is in a situation where people bought water last year. They spent \$100 million, I believe, and now they have no money left to buy water to keep alive their permanent plantings. They were sold a pup along the way, that water allowances would not increase from 16 per cent. Within a few days it went to 22 per cent, and within 10 days it went to 32 per cent. Many people made poor investment decisions not through their fault but because of bad advice from the government and government sources.

We then get down to the Lower Lakes region which, since November 2006, when the announcement of a proposed weir was made, has just been neglected. The vines at Langhorne Creek will go to pack. The dairy industry has been totally cut to bits. Out of about 37 dairies on the

Narrung Peninsula and surrounding areas—the Pottaloch Peninsula—three are left operating. One operator has stuck it out, spending \$3,000 a week on water cartage to keep going.

I sat next to one of the operators the other day, and she still had a smile on her face. She said, 'Milk's gone up to a bit over 50¢, and we're going to stick with it.' They are a very stoic lot down there, because they are not getting very much assistance at all. All that the people there have asked for is a fair go. Above Lock 1 they cannot afford to buy water, and below Lock 1 in many places they cannot access any water, whether or not they have an allocation.

Speaking of allocation, it is an absolute joke for the minister to get around before the last couple of days saying that we might be on zero allocation. It is just not workable. The minister should know that, and she does know that. She knows that you cannot have zero allocation because of the stock and domestic pumps that are shared with the same pump that pumps the irrigated water. You could not have the water police going around on 1 July saying, 'Why is that pump going?', when it is feeding stock and domestic supply.

The Langhorne Creek group has been working very hard on its water supply options to get water to their vines. They have had a little bit of assistance from the government—\$250,000—but \$125,000 of that will have to be paid back. I acknowledge the work of people from DWLBC in assisting the community. It is just too expensive to put up this pipeline project. It works out to \$7,000 a megalitre, and it is just not viable. I have talked to people involved in the bigger companies, such as Fosters, etc., and they have said, 'The vines will survive; we'll get them through. We'll have to take our luck.'

You get down to the Narrung Peninsula communities and around Pottaloch, and the government is just leaving them right out to dry. There should be a pipeline of at least 400mm capacity built from Taillem Bend to start with. That will only get enough water to sustain life as it is right now, after 33 dairies have closed down. These are all taxpaying operations, but the government is obviously happy not to collect that tax. It is obviously happy to let communities wither away.

I firmly believe that, with the government's total lack of attention to these communities, it is hoping that the federal government will pick up these projects: the \$60 million Langhorne Creek project and the \$40 million Narrung Peninsula project by the federal government. For the community's sake, I hope the government is lobbying the federal government very hard. I know that it will not match Penny Wong's criteria for money from the \$12.9 billion plan, because she said it has to have less reliance on the Murray. We shall see whether Labor has just hung them out to dry. Kevin Rudd is not concerned, even though he went to the federal election saying that he would have equity and access to water for all Australians.

The only thing in this budget that has anything to do with water is the \$96.5 million towards the desalination plant at Port Stanvac. I am a bit like some other members in thinking that, by the time this thing gets built, it will have rained. Premier Rann's aversion to building any water supply measures if it rains will mean that it just will not happen. An amount of \$13 million has been allocated to provide fixtures and fittings for SA Water's new head office, the total project costing \$46.1 million. Talk to the local Lower Lakes communities about that. They are very impressed—I think not.

I just wonder what the state government thinks of letting people just run out of water. At least the Liberal Party is thinking about plans for storm water reuse, more use of waste water, etc.

Mr Kenyon interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: I note the interjection from the member for Newland. I know that the government's plan for any storm water reuse goes out to 2025. The member for Newland had better hope that he still has water to drink by then. He might need to get it from the warehouse full of bottled water the government has for its emergency plan when Adelaide does run out and it has to hand it out. At least the Liberal Party is thinking about the state and about what we need to get on.

I now come to country health. It is as though the Labor Party does not look at a map of South Australia. They looked simply at a map of Adelaide, I believe, when they drew up this budget. They got to Gepps Cross and they got to Glen Osmond and that was the end of it. They have just cut the absolute guts out of the country. They have just destroyed any hope of any reasonable amount of development in the bush and regional areas.

As mentioned earlier by other members, including the member for Frome, we have four general hospitals. One is at Port Lincoln because it has to be there, as mentioned by the member

for Frome. One is at Mount Gambier. What is that going to do, service half of Victoria? One is at Berri, also to appease another so-called Conservative turned into Labor minister. Then we have one at Whyalla to suit the member for Giles. I do not know whether they have even looked at how many miles there are between Berri and Whyalla. As the member for Frome so eloquently put, most people will still be going to Adelaide.

I have just a few comments on hospitals in my region. We have the Pinnaroo Hospital right on the border and we have Lameroo, Karoonda, Tailem Bend and Strathalbyn. Guess what? They are all destined for band-aid centres. I marched on this place 20 years ago to help save Tailem Bend Hospital. Laura and Blyth hospitals were already on the chopping block as well at that time. Thankfully, we have kept Tailem Bend going. My father has to access Tailem Bend quite often with bad ulcers on his legs, and he has lengthy stays there. That is just gone. He will have to go a little bit further up the road to Murray Bridge, which will be one of the community hospitals—but will there be a bed? I will go into more detail about bed availability in a minute because, with all the acute beds in all the country hospitals throughout the state, someone will want the services somewhere else. Instead of the government going around saying, 'We want to get the 550 country people that are in Adelaide seeing doctors or in hospitals at any one time,' they will actually get more. More people will come into the city hospitals.

I have some notes here on the figures provided in the so-called Country Health Care Plan for South Australia. The figures for the Mallee/Coorong region show that the proposed community hospital at Murray Bridge has 42.3 acute beds. I bet that was a bit of a science when they spent \$11 million and got one bed fewer. Mind you, it is a lot nicer place to work in for the health professionals at Murray Bridge. All seven hospitals in the region—and I include the two other hospitals that service my community, at Mannum just over the river from Hammond, and Meningie just over my border as well—Murray Bridge and the other six that will become bandaid hospitals with no acute beds—currently have a combined average daily bed occupancy of 48.9. That is 6.6 more than Murray Bridge or 16 per cent above capacity.

Compounding that is the fact that the current average stay of patients at Murray Bridge is 2.8 days and the average for the other six hospitals is 3.25. Instantly, there is reduced capacity with increased demand. Some Southern Mallee patients will go to Berri. The Riverland chart shows that Berri hospital's current capacity at 44 acute beds will be increased to 65 under the plan. All five hospitals in the Riverland region combined have an average daily occupancy of 67.8: that is 2.8 beds short before you start.

The average stay at Berri is currently two days while the average for the others, which will have no acute beds, is 3.75 days, almost double. So while the choice of Berri rather than Murray Bridge will ease the load on Murray Bridge, no allowance has been made in the Berri figures for any patient traffic from the Mallee. And that is if they can get there: these are some of the people who will be 90 minutes away. The health minister proudly states that 96 per cent will be within 90 minutes of a hospital. What a terrible figure, and how many people would have died in the past who are allergic to bee stings and maybe will not make it in the future.

It might be wise for the government to try to recruit some circus performers for the new country general and country community hospitals where juggling will be a crucial skill. The government's promotion for this plan is: 'We've joined the dots.' I would have to agree with them on that: it is the dottiest plan that I have ever seen. The plan is for undercapacity, inadequacy and imminent obsolescence that allows for no regional growth whatsoever. It might be argued that, with policies such as the shared services initiative, the winding back or cessation of public transport in country areas and a total lack of real support for river and lakes communities (there is nothing for them in this budget as mentioned earlier) perhaps this government does not expect any rural growth.

It will remove the last remaining incentive for doctors to want to practise medicine in country towns where we struggle to attract them now. If the government is having trouble getting and keeping GPs, it is about to get a whole lot worse. That is not opposition propaganda: that is the message from country doctors themselves. The resultant exodus of country doctors will ultimately lead to the closure of many, if not all, of these hospitals as they become what the government now calls 'unsustainable'. Then the government will hide its poor judgment and mismanagement behind the claim that the country hospitals closed because they could not maintain the staff, and it will be the community's fault and not the government's.

Ultimately, there will be nowhere for local patients at all, not even a local GP, and young people keen to go into nursing will have to set their sights on leaving home permanently. As hospitals are one of the major employers in most of these communities, it will have a knock-on

effect on the total viability of these communities. As the thin fabric of country health begins to tear apart and the system collapses, the government's bold statements about reduced travelling times for country people to get to hospital for assistance will begin to dissolve as journeys get longer and more frequent. You can bet the government will not make a contribution to the transport costs. At the very end of the document is what looks very much like an afterthought:

Opportunities to expand primary health care services at various country locations will be explored.

I am not sure whether this fits under the heading of 'tease' or 'appease' but either way it sounds like the sort of vague and hollow statement for which this government is now famous: distract them with an illusion while you are taking something else away from them.

Talk of better health outcomes for country people is misleading. Some will certainly benefit from the improvement to the range of services available in a few country centres. The rest of the country will, in time, be worse off. So, the gains of some country communities will be at the expense of many.

While I am speaking about health and the problems with transport, I point out that it has been hit on the head in the last 10 days with what this government is threatening to do, and looks like it will do, down in my electorate through the Southern Mallee and Coorong region, not to give appropriate funding to the local transport services. These transport services include: a run that begins at Murrayville in Victoria and comes up the Mallee Highway to Pinnaroo and through to Murray Bridge and then Adelaide; then there are other runs that come up the Dukes Highway from Tintinara, Coonalpyn, etc., and then up Princes Highway (Highway 1) from Meningie.

Many people who live out in these communities do not have a licence. They like to live out where they live, whether it be Lameroo, Coonalpyn, Tintinara or Karoonda, but they still need to access services. Now they are not going to have any bus service because the company that has the current contract cannot afford to operate under the protocols that the government is forcing it into. It does not want to go under and look like it will breach contracts because it does not have the appropriate government support.

I have been trying to organise a meeting with minister Conlon since early last week. I notice the other minister across the way laughs, but I think it is crucial that we have a meeting, because June 30 is the deadline. The minister laughs, but I am sure that if public transport services in his area were being cut he would be pushing for a meeting fairly quickly.

The passenger transport department seems to love running services in the bush as a real jigsaw: it is mixed up with area rights, who can and cannot go where, who gets subsidies and who does not, and if you do not run a service because it is not profitable you can be fined. Whether they be students attending school or people going to health services or whatever else, they need a service down there in the Coorong and Southern Mallee. One letter that I have received from the Taillem Bend Community Centre states:

I write this letter on behalf of all staff, volunteers and clients at the Taillem Bend Community Centre. The community centre was yesterday made aware of the impending discontinuation of all [local] bus services. This was devastating news as so many community members are reliant on the services to continue their day to day lives. As a low socio-economic area and with the high price of fuel today many community members rely on [this service] to access basic services; it can be the only method of transport for a substantial number of residents, especially the elderly.

With the abandonment of these transport services, residents will be forced to find alternative transport to access basic life requirements such as medical appointments, unemployment schemes, adult education, motor registration, banking and financial services, Centrelink and crisis care, as well as socialisation opportunities offered by local community organisations and the local hospitals day care scheme.

Another letter, which I received today from someone down at the Coonalpyn Hub, states:

In Coonalpyn we have 23 single families of elderly folks with special needs, pensions or of low income living one side of the railway line...

These people rely entirely on the local medical bus to travel to appointments. This medical bus will go if the company is forced out of business with no contract after 30 June. These people do not drive and other services do not fit in with the scheme of things. This is a government that is prepared to belt country communities every which way it can, when they are at their lowest: there is no water and there is no funding. It is as if it put up a fence and said, 'We don't need to know those people.' It is an absolute disgrace and one day it will wake up that it cannot disregard the bush. As we saw today, there was a strike of schoolteachers across this state, about 5,000 or 6,000, and health people will be protesting tomorrow. However, what makes me angry is that the Labor unions will still fund the government opposite, which does not deserve to govern. I commend my remarks.

Mr PISONI (Unley) (18:46): I, too, rise to reply to the budget. It is easy to see that this budget is a desperate attempt to solve problems and plug gaps driven by a previous lack of action in vital areas such as water (and water security in particular) and infrastructure. Speaking of infrastructure, we are still trying to find funding for the Mount Bold Reservoir, which was a major plank of the government's budget last year.

One of the things that this budget has tried to do is to respond to suggested plans, policies and directions from the Liberal opposition, in particular, Martin Hamilton-Smith and his master plan for Adelaide. Before Martin Hamilton-Smith released his master plan for Adelaide there was no plan for Adelaide. That is quite clear. You only have to look at the tramline as an example of that. When it was first announced, the tramline was going to go to North Adelaide, then the railway station, then it was extended to the Morphett Street bridge. Then the government announced 'The Marj' and said it was setting it there because the tram was there. However, it forgot to tell us that the tram finished 500 metres from the front door of where 'The Marj' was going to be. Obviously, that was not part of the plan, either. That was, again, policy on the run—which is what this whole budget has been.

This is a budget that has been cobbled together. We heard from the Minister for Transport today, but he failed to answer a question from the member for Morphett about the studies and the planning process after the announcement of the tramline being extended further out to the Entertainment Centre. The only solution that this budget presents is an answer to the mystery of where the tram is headed. Obviously, it is going to end up at the Treasurer's electorate office, but he will not be able to catch it from home because it does not come from Parkside—however, he will, of course, be able to catch it from Parliament House.

This cobbled-together budget is out of tune with the state's economic cycle and long-term needs. It is not a master plan but a poorly directed quick fix with dangerous overtones of future debt and interest payments which South Australian families have suffered before under Labor mismanagement. Anybody under the age of 40 will have difficulty remembering what it was like when this state suffered from an \$11.5 billion debt left by the previous long-term Labor government. It was the Liberal party, in 1993, which had to make some very tough decisions which enabled South Australia to get its AAA credit rating back.

The Deputy Premier's own words a few weeks back, when speaking to his budget, were, 'We've borrowed to the hilt.' It is a bit like the selfish child who does not really want to have the last tart on the tray but eats it anyway, just to stop somebody else from having it. He has borrowed as much money as he possibly could, without looking to be irresponsible, and said to Martin Hamilton-Smith, 'I've committed; I've spent the money. You can't now, so your plan is not going to work.' We will see what happens with the plan that we will be delivering over the next 20-odd months.

This budget underlines the missed opportunities presented by record state-based taxes; from stamp duty, payroll tax and land tax, as well as GST revenue. Regarding the GST concept, of course, Foley and Rann, the Premier and the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer, and all of those opposite told us, back in the 1990s when the GST was proposed, that it was such a terrible idea and would be bad for South Australia. Yet GST sees the Rann government collecting \$4.7 billion more in revenue than in the last year of the Liberal government. It will be collecting a total of \$43.2 million from 2001 projected out to 2012.

We have seen examples of mismanagement; we have seen enormous amounts of revenue coming in and the government simply undoing its belt and getting fatter on the unexpected revenue. Depending on who you believe, we have seen anywhere between 9,000 and 17,000 and extra public servants, but the government budgeted for only 12,000 of those. I would suggest that is quite a substantial miscalculation in anybody's eyes, but the fact is that we have conflicting figures about how many extra public servants we have.

We must ensure we control our expenditure. We have seen the WorkCover unfunded liability shoot up to \$1 billion in six short years. When we left it in 2002, it had a very manageable liability of about \$57 million. We were doing that under the current rules. We were not doing that with legislative changes that cut entitlements to workers in the WorkCover system. That was because it was managed effectively and, of course, we have a situation where WorkCover was managed for six years and is still being managed by the Minister for Industrial Relations, Michael Wright. He put his board in place, he put his changes to the management of claims in place, and he put his contract in for the management of legal work in place. This has his stamp all over it, and I say to this chamber that it is his \$1 billion that is sitting there in unfunded liability.

Of course, not resolving important issues in our public schools and public hospital system, so that surgeons resign en masse and teachers strike, throws the state's workforce and economy into turmoil. I think one of the things that have been overlooked in this whole instance is that childcare is not available for those parents who send their children to school every day. If you are not a regular user of a childcare facility, you are not going to get in. We even saw Labor members of parliament bringing their children into the house today because they had nowhere for them to go, but that is just a small example of what happened.

My children were at home today. My wife was at home with them, because both the public primary school that my son attends and the public high school that my daughter attends were closed for business today. So, that was another day out of my children's education and that of so many other South Australian children.

These disputes—the management of public assets, the management of WorkCover and negotiations with the unions—have all been engineered with the signature of minister Wright. I think that we need to be very wary of any project that the government gives minister Wright to manage and administer. We will see dramatic cuts through legislation, strikes or mass resignations. Somehow, negotiating skills are lacking a little bit there. I know that Prime Minister Rudd has suggested that Belinda Neal go out and get anger management, so maybe minister Wright needs to go out and develop some skills in negotiating, because he is certainly not doing a very good job at the moment.

Of course, minister Conlon has also been doing his bit to assist the Treasurer and minister Wright to blow the budget. We have seen examples of budget blow-outs with the Anzac Highway underpass from \$65 million to \$80 million and with the Northern Expressway from \$300 million now up to \$564 million. I think there was also an extra \$16 million somewhere in the budget there today.

Of course, when it comes to education the message from this government to South Australian families and the education community is that it has solved all the education problems in South Australia; we do not have any problems with education in South Australia, and it does not require any additional funding or anything more than 3 per cent of the budget speech (that was the proportion dedicated to education). Now we are moving onto trams because they are visual; they are touchy-feely things and we can get results by having something visual up there that the Premier can perhaps put his name to.

Of course, no consideration has been given in the budget to Kevin Rudd's brutal cutting of capital funding from the federal government. There is a \$31 billion infrastructure black hole, and we saw the Rudd government remove \$22 million from our public school sector and \$11 million from our non-government schools for infrastructure projects with the removal of the 'Investing in our schools' initiative. I have seen some great projects come through that, and the beauty of the scheme was that schools were given the freedom to manage that money themselves. We saw everything from shade buildings going up to solar-powered hot water systems going in, even computers for primary schools—which, of course, no other primary school will get through federal funding because of the government's shift.

There is nothing in this budget to address the problem of attracting and retaining quality teachers. We all know that we are losing about 40 per cent of our teachers within three years, yet there is nothing in this budget to address that. Teachers are getting older, with the average age of teachers continuing to increase, and we heard earlier in the year that school principals are suffering. They are not feeling valued, and consequently assistant principals and senior teachers are reluctant to take on the school principal role because they do not believe they are getting the support they need to run those schools.

We have seen no commitment to better education outcomes in this budget. Despite the minister's claims that South Australia is the lead jurisdiction in early childhood learning, only two of the 10 children's centres promised in last year's budget have opened, and we have seen a cost blow-out of \$10 million in the project itself. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL CENTRE TRUST (FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURE) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

At 19:00 the house adjourned until Wednesday 18 June 2008 at 11:00.