

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**Thursday 3 July 2008**

The **SPEAKER (Hon. J.J. Snelling)** took the chair at 10:31 and read prayers.

LEGAL PROFESSION BILL

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Croydon—Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (10:32): I move:

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

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (10:33): I bring up the report of Estimates Committee A and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Ms THOMPSON: I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee A and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (10:33): I bring up the report of Estimates Committee B and move:

That the report be received.

Motion carried.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I bring up the minutes of proceedings of Estimates Committee B and move:

That the minutes of proceedings be incorporated in the votes and proceedings.

Motion carried.

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Croydon—Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (10:34): I move:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (10:33): It has been an interesting budget estimates. As the bill (the budget) comes out of committee, there is rise for considerable concern both in the house but more broadly across the community. We have had doctors resigning en masse and, it appears, a government unable to adequately pay them. We have had thousands of teachers demonstrating on the steps of Parliament House about their conditions of employment and their negotiations with their employer, the current state Labor government. We have a country health system facing the most radical cuts we have seen in decades, if ever, and a government which, although it is awash with revenue, is clearly having trouble meeting its expenses and controlling them.

A number of revelations have come from cabinet about unmet savings, about the way in which the government is managing its debt and investments, about failures within the families and communities portfolio, about issues within Attorney-General and the underfunding of our courts, about the way in which the environment is being managed and funded, and about the way in which the health and education systems are being failed.

Let me go over some of the details. I do not intend to hold the house long; we have had a response to the budget already. I will try to focus on the issues that have arisen through estimates. We know that on two of three normally used accounting measures the budget is in deficit—quite a considerable deficit compared with previous years. We know (and it has been confirmed through estimates) that the government has decided to go into considerable debt, despite the fact that by 2011-12 revenues will be approaching \$15 billion, having been just over \$8 billion when the government first came to office.

The question was asked during estimates: how on earth, with that amount of revenue, do you find yourself having to go to borrow such an extraordinary amount, in fact, around \$5.2 billion by 2011-12? Well, the facts are that estimates have revealed that our investments have not been going very well—over half a billion dollars worth of losses with the current shake-out from Funds SA, from the Motor Accident Commission and from WorkCover. There was trouble extracting the exact figures, but it is clear that it is in the many, many hundreds of millions of dollars.

We have also found, of course, that the government has struggled to meet its savings targets. On questioning about Shared Services and RISTEC initiatives from the 2008-09 budget committees and the Budget and Finance Committee, we have found that many of the savings will not be met.

The 2006-07 budget advised of Shared Services savings of \$130 million. It was to be \$25 million in 2007-08, \$45 million in 2008-09 and \$60 million from 2009-10 onwards and would involve total implementation costs of around \$60 million from 2007-08 to 2009-10.

I am trying not to die here. I am choking to death (although the government may urge me on in that regard), and I blame my 3½ year old's cold for my throat at the moment.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: We need you.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I assure the Attorney: you have got me right through until March 2010—and I am really looking forward to the adventure!

Neither the 2007-08 nor the 2008-09 budgets updated the status of the shared services initiative. During the 2008-09 estimates hearings, the Treasurer and the ministers confirmed that the 2007-08 savings would be realised; however, the minister for finance said that only \$25 million of the total of \$45 million in savings were likely in the 2008-09 period. There were no estimates of the savings shortfall. The Treasurer confirmed that the savings of \$60 million from 2009-10 onwards might 'slip' a year. However, the minister for finance's comments suggest that these savings might slip more than a year.

On 30 June, the Budget and Finance Committee heard that delays to the shared services initiative meant that the government is paying 'dead rent' for buildings to house public servants. We all know that the Public Service Association is unhappy with these reforms. In July 2007, the government announced the lease of nine floors at Westpac House, on 91 King William Street, to accommodate and centralise all the staff as part of the shared services project. Property industry sources estimate that the government will pay around \$4 million per annum for this lease.

The Under Treasurer also confirmed that the government will spend \$9 million fitting out new office space at 77 Grenfell Street before public servants move in, which may not be until next year because of the delays. The original budget for shared services implementation was \$60 million; now an additional \$37 million has been allocated, pushing the total implementation cost to \$97 million.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I would call for a doctor, but there aren't too many still on the payroll—they have all resigned!

Of course, then there is the RISTEC project. In July 2002, cabinet approved the development of RISTEC as a RevenueSA information system to enable compliance. The system, for the collection of state taxation revenue, was to have been implemented by June 2006 at a cost of \$22.6 million. The new integrated system was to replace existing systems. The Budget and Finance Committee, however, heard that an extra \$20.5 million had been allocated to the project—a blow-out of almost 100 percent—which is now expected to be completed in 2011.

The Treasurer told the 2008-09 estimates that the RISTEC system will generate additional tax revenue through increased compliance. The savings are expected to be \$14 million in 2011-12 and \$19 million once it is fully operational, but of course the whole project is collapsing or pushing beyond its time lines.

I give these two examples of the government's inability to meet its savings targets. Standard & Poor's previously noted that its AAA rating was dependent on the government's meeting its savings targets. Add to these the wage negotiations that have failed under the lack of leadership from this government, clearly the government has been forced to concede more than it has budgeted, and that will have an impact on the budget.

Again, we have a picture of a government that cannot achieve its savings targets and cannot control its wages bill but is growing the size of government beyond that for which it budgeted. When you add all these things together, you have risk, and that risk is particularly highlighted by the current economic uncertainty evident in the state, national and international economies.

If revenues decrease even slightly, the very small net operating surplus the Treasurer has maintained, given the size of the overall budget, will be at risk—little wonder that estimates have confirmed the fact that the government is taxing out of control. We know that the Commonwealth Grants Commission has revealed that we are working our tax base in this state harder than any other state; the Treasurer conceded that during estimates and just accepted it as a given. We are the highest taxing state in the commonwealth.

As we heard during estimates, there have been extraordinary increases in tax across the board, with only piecemeal offerings in regard to reform, which has not been the sort of comprehensive reform that is needed and which the opposition has been calling for. I will not go through it chapter and verse, but I say that the opposition has already held a tax summit and that we are driving the agenda on this subject. Sooner or later, tax reform is one of the structural reforms this government will need to address. I only hope that by then it has not once again bankrupted the state (as it did when it was last in government), leaving few options for reform.

One of the most concerning issues that has arisen from the budget is the heavy burden being pushed onto motorists. We have a national debate raging at the moment about the cost of fuel. I see in the warm afterglow of the federal election, with Labor governments, state and federal, rushing to kiss and cuddle one another, that the federal Labor Treasurer is threatening to reduce the GST take from fuel gained by the states. Already, there are threats of taking away some money. We will see how that unfolds. The GST revenue on fuel, together with the almost \$500 million of other taxes and charges on motorists, is hurting families and small business.

The other thing that has been revealed during budget estimates is some of the truths about the so-called mining boom. The Premier is going around spruiking up what he calls the mining boom and, to be perfectly frank, we all welcome—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: There isn't one?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: No, there is not. If the Attorney-General had read his own budget paper, instead of whatever it is that he is reading—which is probably totally irrelevant—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: —the English language; he is trying to learn it—he would have noticed the budget confirms that mining's contribution to the South Australian economy during the period of this budget has fallen from 4.8 per cent in 1996-97 to 4.3 per cent in 2006-07. Also, he would have noticed that jobs in the mining sector have fallen, according to the ABS. He would have noticed that mining contributed 8.4 per cent to Queensland's economy in 2006-07, where mining royalties were \$3.6 billion. Think about that figure: \$3.6 billion. It is slightly less—around \$3.4 billion—in Western Australia. He would have noticed that in this budget mining revenue from royalties for the state government was \$163.5 million. The last time I compared \$163.5 million with \$3.6 billion there was a big gap. I know that Labor Party politicians cannot add up. We worked that out with the State Bank collapse.

If the government is trying to spin that we are enjoying a mining boom on a par with Queensland and Western Australia, I suggest they get out their pocket calculators and recompute. There is not a mining boom happening now.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: It's a mirage in the desert, is it?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: There is a promise of things to come. I make the point that—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: —before they encourage those in the economy, who are prone to go out there and hype things up—and we all know who they are because they get by on hyping things up—I will give one example. Property prices in Whyalla in the past 12 months have risen extraordinarily, much of it on the promise of the overhyped mining boom about which the Premier keeps talking. Mums and dads are mortgaging their existing homes and buying investment

properties or going in at a very high price on the promise that this boom will unfold. I hope the Premier delivers—because we could see dramatic falls in those house prices.

That is what happens when you overhype things. We need to deal with the facts. The fact is that there is not a mining boom at present but, rather, mining exploration. We welcome that—it is a wonderful thing—but let us keep our feet firmly on the ground, let us deal with facts not fantasy, let us not get caught up in the wave of spin through which this Labor government hopes to con the people of South Australia for a third term.

They have taken their eye off manufacturing and food producers. Exports are only now reaching the levels they were eight years ago. A lot of our core—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Exactly: they were going to triple them. Well, they did not triple them. A lot of our core businesses are floundering and the government is trying to bury all that under this spin that there is a mining boom happening and there is a defence boom happening.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Well, the Attorney-General might look at the facts because the facts speak for themselves. When mining as a share of economic activity decreases, when mining jobs decrease and when royalties are 1/20th of those in Queensland, there is not a mining boom happening—just deal with the facts.

I know the Attorney-General has never run a business. I do not know whether he has had a job. I think he was a copyboy at *The Advertiser*. He has never had a job as a lawyer. He has spent more time in court appearing as a witness in corruption cases than he has working as a lawyer. He has never employed anyone, as far as I know. I do not know whether he has ever had a real job—perhaps he could tell us. If he had a real job he would have learnt how to count.

When one counts the figures there is not a mining boom. I am sorry to tell you the truth. Maybe they sit in caucus and turn around like tops with all the spin going on: 'Wow, there's a mining boom going on; there's a mining boom going on.'

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I have a point of order, sir.

Ms Chapman: He has a real job!

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: The Leader of the Opposition is spinning around 180° and apparently dancing in his spot. Is that not a display within the meaning of Erskine May?

The SPEAKER: No. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Treasurer loves question time because we get to ask a tightly confined question and he gets up and rabbits on like a chook—if that is possible—for as long as he likes. He can be funny and witty. He can quote from the dictionary. He can banter about. But it is funny how prickly he gets when he is on front bench duty and it is coming back the other way. It is funny how prickly he gets. I do not know whether he has a glass jaw—it is probably a china jaw—but, whatever it is, it cracks and breaks very quickly. How fragile he is. Anyway, he will not be the Attorney-General for much longer—I think it is 20 months. The member for Heysen will do a much better job—but we must move on.

We need to be realistic about the mining boom and deal with the facts, and that brings me to defence because that also arose during budget statements. Of course, we welcome any growth in defence, and we have done well thanks to the former federal Liberal government's effort in getting contracts here, particularly the air warfare destroyer. We all know that Penny Wong and Kate Ellis would have been able to do the same job in getting the air warfare destroyer contract here if it had been their decision.

I am sure they would have been just as good in cabinet as the four or five senior Liberal ministers who saw that contract come in. The truth of it is: if it was not for the former federal government, the air warfare destroyer project may well not be here, and that is the message the government needs to understand about defence.

As the economy tightens and things get tighter, much of that government contract work for the future may dry up and further large contracts may not necessarily follow. They may follow; they

may not. You cannot build an economy around defence contracts. You need to remember your food producers, your wine industry, your grain crops, the work your farmers are doing in building exports, your manufacturing and small business and your tourism. You need to remember all those businesses as well, but this government has not: it is all about mining and defence.

I say let us deal with the facts. That brings me to the question of GST revenues which have just been extraordinary. I take a moment to remind the house of the absolute inspired brilliance of the Premier and the Treasurer when they said that the GST was a dumb idea and a rotten deal for South Australia. The Premier is prone to this sort of prophesying. He would have been a fortune teller in another life. For example, who else could have predicted that Roxby Downs would be a mirage in the desert? Who else could have predicted that it would have been the worst thing that could have happened to South Australia, other than Mike Rann? Of course, who else could have predicted that the GST would be a rotten deal for South Australia. Who else could have predicted that Tim Marcus Clark was a wonderful guy and the State Bank would have been a terrific jewel in South Australia's crown?

Only our Premier could demonstrate such inspired brilliance on Roxby Downs, the State Bank and the GST that he got it wrong, got it wrong and then got it wrong again. Now he is telling us that we are getting a great deal for the River Murray. I might just shift to the question of water in this budget. As we speak, the Premier is over there arguing the case for South Australia. He has a cabbage in one hand and he is smacking Mr Brumby on the cheek with it. He has a cucumber in the other hand and he is going to ding Kevin Rudd on the head.

He is doing such a good job of arguing the case for South Australia that it looks as though he will sign an agreement today that does not require Victoria or New South Wales to give up their powers or to refer them to the commonwealth, so, in effect, they will have a veto power and they can back away from anything when it gets tough and with which they do not agree it.

He is not going to demand a strong, powerful independent authority as he said he would, because how can there be one if the states still have their powers and can still veto decisions and nobble such an authority? He will not demand that over-allocated water be bought back. No, we have gone for the infrastructure option. As Professor Young said this morning on radio, we are all a bit disappointed that the Premier has bailed out to the infrastructure option.

The infrastructure will be welcome, it will be good, it is needed, but there is no point in having pipes if there is no water to put in them. The tough decision is reversing the over allocation of water upstream. The tough decision is getting New South Wales and Victoria to let the water flow and to stop abusing it.

That is why we have recognised in the state Liberal Party that, ultimately, we will have to go down the Professor Mike Young option of buying back over-allocated water—and buying it from willing sellers may not be enough. We are setting out our plans as to how it should be done. The other states have to refer their powers. There has to be a strong, independent authority and this fundamental issue of over allocation of water has to be addressed.

There is none of that in the budget. The Premier is over there signing away a once in a lifetime opportunity: he is signing away our ability to get New South Wales and Victoria to the table. Why? Because he is national President of the Labor Party and he is the Premier of South Australia. Which of those two jobs is more important to him—national President of the Labor Party.

He does not want to have a fight with Mr Brumby, Mr Lemma or Mr Rudd or put Mr Rudd on the spot, so he has sold out South Australian interests in the interests of the Australian Labor Party. Of course, there was further evidence of it in the budget. Not much here for wastewater, nothing here for stormwater. As we heard during budget estimates, Mount Bold has sunk without a trace; and the Upper Spencer Gulf desal plant, apparently the member for Giles said that it is definitely going ahead, but the ministers say, 'No, we do not think it is.' It is another little squabble going on in caucus.

However, if you ever needed an example of Media Mike getting caught out by his own spruiking, it was the desal plant in the Upper Spencer Gulf. It was a centrepiece of the budget—hundreds of millions of dollars of investment. When he spoke to BHP about the fine print, it turned out that the water was not going to be potable and now we cannot go ahead with it. This is the mining boom that we are being over spruiked—

An honourable member: Here's the next premier.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Yes, that's right, the next premier may have walked in. Although he has had his own problems in the past week or two. We might get to that in a minute. He might

have gone down in the pecking order. We might be back to the Kevin Foley option or the Pat Conlon option. We could elevate political affairs in South Australia, so instead of having a minister for stuff ups, we could have a government for stuff ups and a premier for stuff ups—and wouldn't that be so much more exciting for us all! Water has been neglected in this budget, as we know, yet it is the number one issue.

Health is an aspect of this budget that just beggars belief. The government has gone off on a frolic, and I will tell the government although it knows what it has done, but I will spell it out for it because the media know as well. It has been on this mantra for six or seven years about its priorities being health, police and education. Of course, it did not deliver anything for health, police or education, but it has been on this mantra. The opposition has been pressuring it for 18 months or longer about infrastructure and public transport and, under pressure, it has conceded that it needs to shift—to get off its messages and get onto the message of infrastructure and transport. It has come onto our ground.

Welcome to infrastructure and public transport! We know that ground very well. We have been arguing it for 18 months to two years. We have been leading the agenda on it. The government now is following our lead and electrifying the rail system. Of course, it is doing a couple of other kooky things we would not do such as build more trams, but at least it understands it needs to reinvest in the public transport system. And, hello, what has happened? It has gone with \$2 billion. All it wants to talk about is trams to the western suburbs—to safe Labor seats, by the way—and what has happened? The doctors are resigning, the teachers are on strike, and the nurses are not happy. Now the firefighters are out there. Forget about health, education and police. The government is meandering around like a drunken sailor in a bar who does not quite know which door to stagger out of.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Of course, the Attorney spruiks up. He obviously argued hard for his electorate when these budget negotiations were underway. He wanted a tram—'I would like a tram.' Forget about the plight of the River Murray irrigators, forget about people whose lives depend on a hospital in the country, forget about the 21 children who were rescued in the last couple of weeks from terrible situations. Let us just worry about trams to the Attorney-General's electorate. 'Let's go west, young man. We will build a \$162 million tram to the Entertainment Centre.'

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I will run through the sums for the Attorney, because we have worked them through. Based on his \$162 million cost for extending the tramline from the tram station to nowhere down to the Entertainment Centre—we will use the government's own figures—it will cost \$149 million to do the West Lakes extension, \$77 million for the Semaphore extension and \$103 million to do the Port Adelaide extension. Add it all up and it is half a billion dollars in trams. That is in today's dollars. It will be far more than that in tomorrow's dollars when the government eventually builds them. But, then again, I notice it did not put any figures in the budget to pay for it. It is all in the beyond-estimates period. It is probably about as in-the-bag as the Mount Bold reservoir extension and the Upper Spencer Gulf desalination plant. The government would say, 'She's in the bag, you can count on us, it will definitely be happening.' It is a load of garbage.

The government is happy to spend half a billion dollars on trams to its own electorates but it is not prepared to make sure that country people have a hospital, when they need one, with a doctor and a nurse in it. It is happy to build trams to Semaphore but it is not prepared to ensure that water security is provided for the people of South Australia. It is happy to spend money on trams, half a billion dollars worth, in its own electorates but it is not prepared to ensure that the Department for Families and Communities has enough workers to intervene early in the case of families in need.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Will you cancel it?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: The trams?

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Yes.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: He does not even listen. Pull the cotton wool out of your ears, Attorney. Wake up, for heaven's sake! We replied to the budget and we told you we would not be proceeding with the trams. It has been in the paper, on TV and on the radio. Where have you

been? For God's sake, where has he been? Having cups of coffee with Graham Archer? Having a sherry with Randall Ashbourne? Where have you been, Attorney? Get with it! Don't you read your media monitoring? Wake up to yourself and get a grip of what is going on.

This is where estimates have shown that the government's priorities are all over the place. All of this is in the context of unfunded superannuation liabilities that have gone up \$2 billion. By the way, during budget estimates it was revealed that the Treasurer had just fiddled a little bit with the discount rate he uses for estimating superannuation. He has shown it as \$7.1 billion by 2011-12 using a discount rate of 6.3 per cent, but he had to admit under questioning in estimates that he used to use a discount rate of 6 per cent, which is the rate the commonwealth uses, and if he had used that the unfunded liability would be another \$540 million, so it is heading towards \$8 billion, not \$7.164 billion. That is another little accounting fiddle, like a few of the others, revealing yet again a blow-out in unfunded liability. Then we have the \$1 billion for WorkCover and the \$400 million for their own scheme. You are doing a great job, fellas. Just keep it up and it will be the State Bank mark 2 in no time whatsoever. The trouble is that, this time, the options for fixing the mess the government has created will not be as evident as they were in 1994.

I am not going to go on at length about the doctors crisis. I would simply say: how can a competent government let it come to this? I would say about the current Minister for Health—the dulcet-toned Minister for Health, the very suave Minister for Health—that I am sure he could have sat on the stern of the *Titanic* and said, 'It's all right, the ship's just sinking. There will be a lifeboat coming in no time and we will just hop on board.' He could have been conducting the band as the ship sank. Everything seems calm on the surface like a duck paddling on a still lake and, underneath, legs are madly going, trying to stop itself drowning.

The problem is he has been caught out. He has hundreds of doctors handing in their resignations. They are exposing the failures of our health system and particularly our emergency departments. We have people left on trolleys in emergency corridors for days, we have people overworked and understaffed, we have a health system that is quite apparently in chaos and a hospital system that simply is not coping. The reason it is not coping is because the people are not being adequately resourced. It is not about bricks and mortar.

That brings me to one of the most remarkable revelations of budget estimates. The government has run the mantra for more than a year that the cost of building the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital would be \$1.9 billion (including the cost of remediation) and that the cost of building a new hospital at the Royal Adelaide would be \$1.4 billion. Of course this was carefully consulted, we were told. There were consultants involved, full reports done.

Ms Chapman: We're not allowed to see those.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Of course, that is all secret, no-one's able to see that, but it is \$1.4 billion. We suspect that that is grossly overstated, but to do the right thing, we thought we would give the government the benefit of the doubt. We used the government's own figures and we pointed out that there is half a billion dollar gap between \$1.4 billion and \$1.9 billion. Obviously it is getting traction. We are saying, 'Why not spend the other half a billion dollars on country health or doctors and nurses and provide for them in the future?' Suddenly, in comes the Minister for Health out of nowhere—mind you, the Treasurer had just told me in estimates a few days before that it was \$1.4 billion, or just under that, for the RAH—and he says, 'We've redone the sums, we think it's now going to be'—what was it?

Ms Chapman: It was \$2.2 billion.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Yes, \$2.2 billion, so we have had a blow-out of something that is hypothetical that we have not even done yet. It has gone from \$1.4 billion to \$2.2 billion. I used to think that the Minister for Health had a modicum of credibility, I did once think that, but I am afraid that, with that announcement, his credibility just flew out the window. I give this message to any public servant who has put their name to it, 'Have a good think about your professionalism.' Anyone who can dream up a figure that jumps from \$1.4 billion to \$2.2 billion overnight and put that to a minister—we all know the minister sought the figure and we would all know that the minister has contrived the figure. If there is any public servant involved in trying to give it credibility, we will drag that out and we will find out who that is, because that person needs to be put before their peers to explain how on earth such nonsense can be carried into this place.

This blatant attempt to fiddle the figures just beggars belief. I am sure the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital has blown out well over \$2 billion already, but what we do not need is a multibillion dollar monument to Media Mike. What we do need going forward is provision for wages for doctors and nurses and adequate staffing levels. The health system is about people. We can

rebuild the RAH; we must rebuild the RAH. The rubbish being peddled about by the government is that it cannot be done. It took that solution to the last election. It has done it at the QEH. We are doing it at the QEH—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: On the basis that you were going to rebuild the RAH, you won the election. Then, after the election, you changed your mind. I put it to the government that it seems to have been taking the view that it can rebuild the QEH. It seems to be able to rebuild Flinders, it seems to be able to rebuild the Lyell McEwin, but for some reason or another it is literally impossible to rebuild the RAH. It is a total load of nonsense.

The fact is that the government took a political risk. Someone came up with a smart idea. I know who it was—our dulcet-toned Minister for Health. He hung you out to dry, he convinced you all that putting a hospital down in the railyards would be a brilliant idea. You are going to have to live with that idea now. It is a rotten idea. Calling it the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital was a rotten idea as well.

Now let us see what the people of South Australia decide at the next election. You have got yourself an election issue. It will be a new hospital at the RAH site or a new hospital with the Marj and I know what people think about that option already. We are happy to take that to them, because we have asked them and we know what they think. So if it is such a brilliant idea, let's see what people think about it at the next election.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Exactly. I think another question we would like to put to the people at the next election—particularly good, solid country folk—is whether they would like the state Liberals' solution for their local hospital or Labor's solution. I think that is another little question that we might put to the good people of Maitland and the good people of Laura and Booleroo Station, and the good people of the South-East and Bordertown and up in the Riverland.

That reminds me, in the context of this budget, how deeply enmeshed the National Party is in it. How can the leader of the National Party can come in here and bin the hospital in Waikerie, bin the hospital in Renmark, I think bin the hospital in Loxton and then say, 'Oh, we'll have one in Berri,' and then on the front page of our own local paper say (I think the words were) 'I'll pass your message on'—to the people who elected her? Not, 'I'll go in there and fight for you,' it was, 'I'll pass your message on.'

I can just imagine her passing her message on sheepishly in cabinet to Mike Rann as she says, 'Please don't sack me, Mike. I really love my job on \$220,000 a year and I've really got used to the car, so please don't sack me. I love being a member of the Labor Party cabinet.' The Nationals and Labor—the Attorney is so smart he keeps calling it a National-Labor coalition. I tell you what: that is how we see it too. If there is a National candidate in Goyder at the next election, if the Nationals have the temerity even to nominate in Flinders, if they are stupid enough to put up a candidate in the good seat of Stuart—

An honourable member: Or Frome.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Or Frome, we will make sure that good, decent country people in those seats understand what the National Party stands for. The National Party stands for closing hospitals, for running hospitals down; it stands for a budget that ignores our water crisis; it stands for a government that lets our roads get run down and ignores and neglects infrastructure right across the state. This state National Party is a disgrace. It does not stand for country people at all, and every single member of the National Party in South Australia should be ashamed of their leader and should condemn her for assigning their party to the dustbin of history.

The only party that represents the true interests of country people in this state is the state Liberal Party. Hundreds of people are meeting in towns all across the state to see that point demonstrated as we speak. The Nationals and Labor are in bed together. For them, the state of South Australia ends at Gepps Cross and the Toll Gate, and may they hang their head in shame over it.

I will not go on for much longer: I think I have covered the main points. However, I just want to finish on a couple of issues. I have talked about health and public transport. I want to commend the shadow minister for education and children's services for exposing during estimates some of the porkies being told by Labor about education; in particular, the so-called education revolution—

you know, the education revolution that the Labor Party told us about. Every kid was going to have a laptop; a Dell computer in every home.

It turns out that it is not an education revolution: it is an education devolution. There is virtually nothing in this budget for education. Not only that, it turns out that the education revolution money is just being used to replace computers already in the possession of the education department. The government says that it is spending more on education, but when one considers that a lot of that expense is just increased wages, the standard of education is not improving. During the course of these estimates thousands of teachers were on the steps of Parliament House, unhappy about their pay and conditions.

The evidence speaks for itself. This is a government failing on health and education, and it is failing miserably on law and order. Have we got rid of the bikie problem? Remember, they were going to be bulldozed. Have we got rid of the Gang of 49 problem? Are the courts adequately funded? Does the DPP have adequate resources? There is some extra money here, but can the courts and the prosecution service now fully meet the needs of the community? No, they cannot.

What about our gaols? We are going to get gaols in 100 years' time, I think—whenever they finish Mobilong (they have not even started it yet). The gaol system is failing. Those core issues, about which much was promised, have been left to flounder. Now we are off on frolics in the western suburbs building trams. My, my, my! I think the government has lost its way.

There are also those 21 children who were abandoned by our government and who had to be rescued, and the failure of the Families and Communities system, for whatever reason. It is fine to say, 'We are spending more money,' but I just want to get one point through the thick skulls of members opposite. It is not about how much you are spending: it is about how well you spend it. Most of us on this side of the house have run a business or a farm. We know how easy it is to spend money. Spending money is the easiest thing in the world to do. However, spending it well is another issue. The government has the money: it should have had the results. It should be out there delivering the genuine early intervention that these children and families in crisis need.

During estimates we heard the Premier trying to be populist about this and trying to be tough. He was going to rack 'em, stack 'em and pack 'em—that is, the parents. He was going to take the parents of these kids, and he was going to take the kids away. He was going to get the police involved. I have some news for the Premier. Some of these parents are themselves the victims of abuse, they have mental health issues, and some of them have drug and alcohol abuse issues. Some of the mothers have been subjected to the most horrible physical abuse. I will bet that, in most cases, they love their children and the children love them. However, the family is in crisis and is breaking down.

This stuff about 'We're going to take the kids away and rack, stack and pack the parents' is just a demonstration of how out of touch, shallow and populist this Premier is. Trying to tap into the anger of decent families by turning them on the parents of families in crisis, frankly, is sick. It is another demonstration of this Nemesque appeal to the lynch mob mentality. The Attorney is waving his arms around: he knows that if you try to organise a lynch mob you will get a crowd every day. Let us not worry about the causes of crime. Let us not worry about dealing with the issues. Let us go off on symbolic frolics that in a populist way attempt to whip up public fury but do nothing about solving the problems. That is what this government is all about, and I think it has been exposed.

I think it is a poor budget. It comes out of estimates, I think, in poorer shape than when it went in. It exposes a range of failings, and the only person who can be held responsible for those failings is the bloke at the top: the Premier. In my view, it is time for South Australians to have a serious look at this bloke (and I think that, increasingly, they are) and the sort of government he has delivered over the last seven years and also the media manipulation; the good news.

On the *adelaidenow* page of *The Advertiser* I saw a shot of the Premier with a sock in his mouth—the good news Premier. I saw, disappointingly, his attempt to soften the opposition's budget reply by scheduling an apology to those who were abused in state care on the same day as our reply was scheduled, which was seen by all commentators as a cynical attempt to manipulate the media. We have seen him during the course of these estimates have his game spoiled with respect to the Marion swimming pool. I took great delight in breaking that story, instead of the front page exclusive that the Premier had planned, complete with Olympic swimmers, at the Marion pool. He was caught out once again manipulating the good news. It is time for South Australians to have a good look at this bloke and what he has not done, what he has promised and what, in the best of times, he has failed to deliver.

In conclusion, I say that there are enough things in this budget to make one angry and, if our constitution was written slightly differently, the opposition may have looked at options to block it. We all know that on the question of blocking supply our constitution is a hall of mirrors. But, if ever there was a trigger for a constitutional crisis and for blocking supply, I think the cuts to country health in this budget (salted out, by the way, in the depths of night, following the afternoon of the budget, hopefully in order to slip beneath the radar) provide an example of that trigger, which, combined with the failure to act on our water crisis, ordinarily ought to give the opposition grounds to block supply. We all know that, because of the way our constitution is worded, it is a difficult thing to do. In another world with a different constitution things might have played out slightly differently. With those comments, I conclude my remarks.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (11:24): I concur with my leader that this is a budget that is not for all South Australians. It is, indeed, a budget that will continue our path down the road that we have been on for some time now, where, relative to the other states and our cousins across the state borders (those artificial lines), South Australia is going backwards. That has been happening for far too long in this state. Whilst we have the sort of budgets that we have seen from this Treasurer, this Premier, and this government, we will continue on that slide.

As a representative of a country seat, it would be remiss of me to not mention health, particularly country health. I am absolutely delighted to report to the house that yesterday evening the good people of Bordertown in my electorate came out in force and rallied. It was reported to me that some 1,500 people attended a public meeting in Bordertown yesterday evening. I spoke to one of the rally organisers earlier in the afternoon and said, 'The minister's backed down a fair way, and it looks like Bordertown will be reprieved, or at least he is saying that at the moment.' She said, 'Yes; some people suggested that we no longer need to hold the rally.' I said, 'Don't do that. I think you need to hold the rally. I think we need to show our stance on this right across country South Australia. Even if Bordertown does get a reprieve, the way this government works, it may be short-lived.' So, they did come out in force—1,500 people; I would suggest more than half of the total population—

Mr Pederick: More than half.

Mr WILLIAMS: More than half of the total population of that town. The children were not there; it was the parents. Nearly every adult in Bordertown was out there rallying for their hospital, because they know how important it is, yet this heartless, cold and callous government was quite prepared to shut it down and will continue with its plan to shut down other hospitals in other country communities across the state. It is an absolute outrage that Premier Mike Rann stood up after an election win and said, 'I intend to govern this state for all South Australians.' Nothing could be further from the truth.

The estimates committee is an interesting process. I was talking on air with Leon Byner this morning about the outrageous increases in registration fees for recreational boaters, or any boats. The average boater with a five to six metre tinny will see a 26 per cent increase in the registration fee. That is the average boater, but there is a whole heap outside of the average. I said to Leon, 'Typical bully boy tactics: you pick on the most unpopular kid in the schoolyard and you go over and pummel him.' That is what bullies do, and that is what this government has done to those people who dare to buy a jet ski. This government knows that they are not overly popular. A lot of people do not like the noise they make and the speed that they travel at so, 'We'll pick on them', and their registration fee will go from \$72 a year to, I think, \$268, or something of that order. It is outrageous, typical bully-boy behaviour: pick on the unpopular kid down in the backyard and really pummel him—and that is what has happened to jet skiers.

Leon Byner said, 'Mitch, with regard to fees, everybody doesn't mind paying a CPI increase and that sort of thing.' He said, 'Shouldn't we have a situation where some sort of organisation can vet these increases, something like ESCOSA does with our electricity prices?' I said, 'Leon, the reality is that we've got that system; it's called budget estimates; it just doesn't work. And without any more cost to the state, we are already paying the politicians, we are all there doing the work, but the budget estimates just don't work.' I had the unfortunate experience of sitting through at least one budget estimates committee where not only did the minister not answer my questions but the chair gave a running commentary on just about every question I asked, which I found was a waste of time. It did not help the committee, and it certainly did not help the opposition get any answers, and I suspect that was the motive behind the whole thing.

I yet again put on the record, as I am sure will many people over the course of this day, that it is time we sort out budget estimates and make it work. Get rid of the time limits so that ministers do not filibuster. Do what they do in the Senate, where you can sit down and ask

questions and get to the bottom of issues. You can ask questions about certain issues relating to what the government is doing.

Let me say that big old Borrow and Spend Kevin is at it again. If we look at the budget and apply a net borrowing and lending basis to budget assessments we will see that some \$548 million is his deficit. He goes out there on a daily basis and says, 'I'm running surplus budgets,' but, really, he is running up a debt of \$548 million. And people are saying, 'Gee, that's a fair bit of money, but we need some infrastructure. Maybe we can.' He keeps talking about all this infrastructure, but people do not realise that around the corner he has another organisation called SA Water, but that is off budget. I happened to ask the minister how much SA Water will borrow in this budget period.

This is after the Treasurer said last December that we would increase the cost of water—that we would increase the average rate in South Australia by 12.7 per cent, and that we would do the same next year, and same the year after that, the year after that and the year after that. About 12½ per, the Treasurer said, for five years in a row—and that is to pay for the infrastructure.

I asked the minister how much was SA Water going to borrow in the next 12 months, knowing full well that Treasurer Kev is already borrowing \$548 million. It is expected that another \$316 million will be borrowed by SA Water. So, the taxpayer of South Australia, who owns SA Water and who is ultimately responsible for those borrowings, in the next 12 months, will be asked to go into the market and borrow at least \$864 million, and there are some other organisations around that same corner that, no doubt, will be out there borrowing as well.

You would have to ask, 'Why is SA Water borrowing so much money?' The government says, 'Well we're going to build all this infrastructure. It really is a good organisation, and it works well.' Well, this is how good SA Water is: we all know that a deal has been done between the government and the Catholic Church to take over the lease of the new building going up down there at No. 1 Victoria Square, and SA Water is spending \$46.1 million just to fit out the building. Some other government agencies are going in there at a multimillion dollar cost as well. But SA Water is spending \$46.1 million.

When we asked the government, 'Why are we spending all this money just to fit out a building and then paying an exorbitant rent on top of that?', the government said, 'Oh, SA Water has to move out of the building it is in because the lease has expired.' When we looked through the budget and we got a few more details on that, we found that the government is involved in a deal in relation to that building down in Franklin Street (I think it is 77 or 117, or something; SA Water House, I think it is called).

Because of the State Bank collapse, some dealings have been done on that building. The government has an underwriting contract on that building, and the lease is expiring and the building is on the market. Do you know what? Part of the lease agreement is that, if the building fails to make \$39.5 million, the government has to make up the difference. But that amount happens to be \$7 million less than we are paying just to fit-out the new building, which we are then going to pay rent on as well. The government could have bought the building SA Water is in for \$39.5 million. We could have owned that building, and there would be no more rent or lease payments and no fit-out costs at all—they are already in there. How amazing! But that is the sort of budget we are running.

I was involved in a number of the committees, and I will briefly go through some of the things that were revealed. We know that this government keeps standing up and saying how important the government policy has been to bring wind generators to South Australia. When I asked the minister for energy how much of the wind power generated in South Australia was actually purchased in South Australia—because it is the people who purchase the power that is generated who drive the construction of the generators—he did not know. Yet he went on at length talking about how people in New South Wales should be paying for new transmission interconnection infrastructure to shift power around, obviously because they are buying the greened energy.

The drivers of wind farms in South Australia are the MRET schemes of the former Howard government, and the new MRET scheme of the New South Wales and Victorian government is where the drivers are. The minister refused to tell the committee how much of the wind power generated in South Australia is actually sold in South Australia. I do not believe that the minister does not know the answer to the question, but he tried to convince the committee that he did not know the answer.

I spoke to the same minister about infrastructure. I asked him, 'How many traffic management reports have you had prepared on the project for the tram extension down to the

Entertainment Centre?' I also asked him, 'How many reports were prepared for a business case study of that project?' I read through the *Hansard* last night—and it ran for over a full page of *Hansard*—and, at the end of the minister's answer, I said, 'That is the sum total of the reports?', and we got another half a page of abuse from the minister. He could not cite one report, one traffic flow management study and not one business case study for that particular project, or any of the other tram extension projects.

So, I put to the members of the government: what is going to happen to the traffic as it tries to cross the River Torrens down there at the start of Port Road when you remove two lanes? I remember the minister saying that the trams going down King William Street would reduce congestion, and I remember him saying that we were going to get rid of most of the buses because the people would be on the trams. When we asked him, 'How many lanes of the road are we going to use?', I remember the minister saying, 'I don't know; I can't answer that.' He did know, but he did not want to answer because he knows what is going to happen down Port Road is what happens straight out in front of this building morning and night: traffic chaos. He knows that, but he would not answer the question.

This government, as the leader has pointed out, continues to make bold announcements but it cannot live up to them because this government is actually incapable of delivering: it has proved that. I have tagged here a number of cases where that was proved to me through the estimates process.

The leader talked about Mount Bold. I went back and pulled out *The Advertiser* of, I think, 8 or 9 June last year. There was a large artist's impression—it was probably done by SA Water; it was probably not done at *The Advertiser*. The government would have supplied the photo to *The Advertiser* to put on the front page of the newspaper—and there were dots and lines showing where the new dam would be located.

Mr Pederick: A mirage in the Hills.

Mr WILLIAMS: A mirage in the Hills! Well, it is not even that. There is going to be a pipe connecting the northern and southern systems—Hope Valley to Happy Valley. I asked the minister, 'How much water do you propose to pump through the pipe? What is the design capacity?' The government has been out there saying that this will cost \$304 million, but it is not in the budget. However, members should remember that the desal plant will cost \$1.4 billion, \$300 million of which is for this pipe.

When I asked the minister about its capacity, he said, 'Don't know.' When I asked him how much water would be pumped through it, he said, 'Don't know,' and when I asked where he got this figure of \$304 million from, the answer seemed to be, 'We gaze out the window and to the first number that comes into our head we add our age and double it.' The answer from SA Water, from transport and from every other portfolio area seems to be, 'Don't know.'

I asked the minister about the desal plant in Upper Spencer Gulf and about whether the government had made a commitment, and the answer was, 'No; we haven't really made a commitment; we've signed a memorandum of understanding with BHP.' I asked what it said, and I was told, 'It says that we're going to investigate something with them.' 'But you haven't made a commitment?' 'No; there's no commitment.'

I asked the minister why, on 18 October last year, the Premier came into the house and said that he was delighted to announce that we would have two desalination plants, one near Whyalla, with a South Australian government and a federal government component, which would supply desalinated water to Whyalla, Port Pirie, Port Augusta and parts of Eyre Peninsula. That sounds like a commitment. The Premier went on to say in *Hansard*, 'The fact of the matter is we are committed to two desal plants: one for Upper Spencer Gulf and one for Adelaide.'

What did the minister say to that? She said, 'We are, and we are working through the detail of that with BHP. We have signed a memorandum of understanding, and we are working through the detail.' Are we committed or are we not committed to a desal plant in Upper Spencer Gulf? Are we investigating or are we indeed sitting back to see what BHP does?

Whoops! BHP is not going to build a desal plant that will produce water you can drink. That is what the Treasurer told the house in an explanation when he was caught out. BHP was a bit offended by that and said that the water it would produce would be well within World Health Organisation drinking guidelines, that it would be drinkable water and that it really did not know what the Treasurer was on about.

I know what the Treasurer and the Minister for Water Security were on about—trying to cover their backsides because they were out there saying that they had made commitments when, in reality, they had not and there were no commitments and, as we worked our way through budget estimates, that is what we found.

Yesterday, the Premier issued a press release stating that he would be thumping the table and getting \$500 million for infrastructure out of the commonwealth government while he was at the COAG meeting. He would thump the table, beat his chest and come home with \$500 million.

I happen to know that the Premier was putting the case in Canberra last week. I know how he operates, and I can guarantee that in tomorrow's headlines he will say, 'How good am I? I beat them into submission, and I got the money.' I happen to know that he went over there with over \$1 billion worth of projects. I am damn certain that he already had a tick in the box for \$500 million worth, but he has been out there spruiking and saying, 'I'm going to fight for these.'

We already know that they are in the bag, but why will that be the headline? Publicity? That is almost correct, because the headline he did not want was the real one of importance to South Australia, and particularly to irrigators and those living around the Lower Lakes—that is, that he has failed. The Premier has been dudded yet again by John Brumby. He will be dudded by Morris lemma and Kevin Rudd, just as we have been saying he would be ever since that historic sign-off in March 2006.

The state has been dudded, and the Premier has been dudded by his mates. He is the National President of the ALP, but his mates have dudded him—and the people of South Australia have been dudded by the Premier. I do not care about his being dudded by his mates: I never expected him to do any better because he has already proved that he is all huff and puff and very little substance. However, I certainly care about the people of South Australia being dudded by this Premier and by this government.

The hallmark of this government is big announcements but no results. He talks about being the education Premier, and they talk about being the health government and the law and order government, but there have been no results in any of those areas and no results on any of the issues that I asked ministers about in estimates.

There have been plenty of big announcements over the past couple of years but, to date, there have been no results. The worst thing for this state in the current financial year is that Borrow and Spend Kevin is at it again (at least within his own Treasury and SA Water), with \$864 million of debt, which I do not believe this state can afford and which I do not think this government knows how to manage.

Time expired.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen) (11:44): Rather than talk about the budget estimates, and the answers we did not get, I want to look first at the larger theme of budget estimates and the way we conduct them. Certainly, in his contribution, the member for MacKillop made a couple of salient comments on this issue. Every year, ever since I have been in this place, when I start budget estimates I make the same comment about what an abysmal process and waste of time it is. I have had to work hard my whole life, and I hate wasting time and having to do things that are a waste of time and money.

In fact, at the beginning of my first session in this year's Estimates Committee A, I mentioned that if we did a time/cost analysis of this process it would fail by miles on any reasonable standard. The thing about budget estimates is that no-one denies that the government is the government. It has the majority of numbers in this house and, therefore, it has the right to govern. In turn, it gives them the right to decide how the many billions of dollars that we receive as a state will be spent and how the government will prioritise its spending.

No-one denies their right to do that, nor should anyone deny the opposition the right to question the government about exactly how it will be spending that money. Yet what we have now is a process that is almost a cat and mouse game of ministers trying to hide the real problems in the budget which might cause concern to the wider public. For instance, the announcement about country health and the plan for it was put onto a website at 5 o'clock on a Friday afternoon, rather than being really announced.

If it was a process of which the government was proud there is no doubt in my mind Mike Rann himself would have been beside minister John Hill making a big announcement about how the government would improve country health. Instead of that, it was quietly slotted onto a website.

I do not think we will know the truth of what will happen until we see the budgets produced by the individual hospitals in a couple of months.

Indeed, over the next couple of years, if this government continues down this path—personally I think they should change their minds and think about what they are doing—there is no doubt it will do more surreptitious damage to country hospitals, all the while trying to stop people from realising what is going on. As I said, it has become something of a cat and mouse game.

When I came into budget estimates I saw a number of public servants sitting in this chamber, often for many hours. Many of them never made it onto the floor of the chamber—they were in the Speaker's Gallery. On some occasions I counted as many as 16 public servants—and, in fact, on one occasion more than that—sitting there and waiting in case someone on the opposition benches managed to ask a question to which an answer was not available instantly from the one or two people who were flanking the minister at the table.

I would love to do the time/cost analysis of that because no doubt it would cost a lot of money when the most senior public servants in the state—for instance, CEOs earn \$300,000-plus—are sitting here for hours. Then there is the next layer of underlings, and the next layer, and the various heads of agencies that are called in before us. I doubt many people on less than \$100,000 a year would be part of the crew who come in to do the budget process. Members should think about the hourly rate of all those people and the cost of their sitting here for all the hours the budget estimates continue and, more importantly, the number of hours they all have put into the process of preparing for budget estimates.

As a result of my contact with various government departments and agencies prior to coming into this place, I know that people become anxious prior to budget estimates because they have to prepare 'in case a question is asked'. It strikes me as just a silly mechanism. The way in which we go about it is an incredibly time-consuming, expensive exercise which does not achieve anything.

I maybe old-fashioned and out of touch and not willing to move into the 21st century, but I was a public servant many years ago. In those days public servants were clearly seen as impartial people, not there to do the bidding of a particular government but, rather, run the departments. Certainly, they would take their direction from a government, but they were not just the handmaidens of government. They were without fear or favour. They were meant to be able to give advice without fear or favour to both Labor and Liberal governments—I am not trying to suggest that only the Labor Party has been guilty of this—even if it was advice that the government did not want.

Increasingly, we now have a Public Service where people are paid high salaries. We have lost, largely, the concept of permanency in the Public Service and security of tenure. When I was a public servant the reality was that if you chose a career in the Public Service—and it was very much the 'public service' you were working for—then you did so knowing that you would never be remunerated at a rate equivalent to what you might earn in private practice but, on the other hand, you had the benefit of security of tenure, holidays, long service leave and sick leave, and all the sorts of things I know from my time in private practice that you do not get very often when you are running your own business.

My personal view is that it has been a mistake for successive governments to increasingly trend towards a situation where jobs for the boys are created, and people without the necessary qualifications and experience are placed into high ranking Public Service positions—executive directors of agencies, commissioners and CEOs. They are placed on contract. I often think that having people on contract will diminish their ability to give advice without fear or favour.

We pay them at a rate that is really commensurate with what they would earn in the private sector and, in many cases, in my view, is well in excess of what they would be competent to earn in the private sector. I am not looking to blame public servants for any of this. I just think that, as a way of running the state, over many years, we have made a mistake and reduced the quality of our Public Service. I often say that our Public Service has now become rife with people with double degrees in buck-passing and backside covering—and that is high on the agenda for most public servants.

Instead of having an agenda of how can we help you, every public servant looks at every decision thinking, 'How might this get me into strife and how can I avoid it?' At the very first economic development summit before the Economic Development Board was established, one of the very first findings of our group who met in the parliament was that that is exactly the problem

with our Public Service at the moment; that is, we have this attitude of backside covering and fear of making a mistake because of the fear of the political consequences of that mistake.

Whereas, I take the old view that people such as ministers should be responsible and the public servants, who are simply carrying out the directions of the minister, should not be expected to take the wrap. However, when you start paying them at these high salaries and take away their permanence, then you start to get a very muddled picture of just what is the role of the public servant.

As I said, the whole process of estimates is a ridiculous waste of time. It is very much a cat and mouse game, with the government trying to hide things in the budget and really allowing insufficient time for the real examination of the budget. No more telling evidence of that is needed than the fact that the government consistently has its Dorothy Dix questions. That is just a total inane waste of time. It is really meant to use up the time, because the timetable is structured by the government to minimise the chances that the opposition will find out what is really being done in the budget.

As I said at the outset, I have no argument with the fact that the government is the government: it has the majority; it is entitled to govern; and it is entitled to set the agenda and the priorities. The problem is that it does not seem to recognise that the opposition is equally entitled to understand what the priorities are and to question how the money is being spent, because our job as an opposition is to test the government and to ensure that money is not being simply wasted. The member for MacKillop gave a number of examples of waste over the years and, indeed, in more recent times and in the current budget by the current government.

Again, I do not make this complaint about just this government. I think both sides have been guilty. It has probably grown up and become more of the farce we know today over many years. It is also often a case of ministers protecting their public servants or vice versa because sometimes the public servants are protecting the ministers. One of the things that also concerns me about this process is that it can often result in damage to relationships that should be working relationships, whether that be between ministers and shadow ministers or others on the opposition who are questioning the minister, or between shadow ministers and the senior public servants who are sometimes engaged in almost direct debate with the members.

It seems to me that there must be a more productive way in which we could use our time than the process that we have just spent two weeks going through. For what it is worth, I will offer a few suggestions about how I think our budget estimates process could be improved. It is not an exhaustive suggestion list, but here are a few of the things that I think we might do. For a start, it seems to me to be a nonsense that we can allow Legislative Councillors in here as ministers to answer questions but we do not allow Legislative Councillors in here as shadow ministers to ask questions. That seems to me to be nonsensical, and I can see no rational reason why one would not change that.

I also think that we could use more rooms over fewer days. There is no reason why we need to have simply committees A and B. We actually have the Old Chamber, the Plaza Room and various other rooms that we could use, and we could run the budget estimates over a much shorter time than the two weeks it takes at present, if we were to make that more flexible. We could delete the Dorothy Dixers, and note that, in my view, this is a good trade-off point because, if we deleted Dorothy Dixers, then the government MPs (all the backbenchers) could work in their electorates. I am sure that they would find that much more productive than sitting there for hours at a time asking Dorothy Dix questions.

As I said at the outset, I just hate wasting time. The other thing I would do, though, is allow the opposition to set the timetable over the days. I say that because, at the moment, for instance, in my attorney-general and justice shadow portfolio, I had 45 minutes to examine the Attorney on the Attorney-General's portfolio, which has a budget of nigh on \$100 million. I had 30 minutes (two thirds of the amount of time) to examine him on the State Electoral Office. That has a budget of just over \$2 million. It has half a dozen people working for it, it does a very good job and it is really non-contentious.

It strikes me that it would be a more productive process if we looked at the budget and gave a bit of forewarning as to what areas we would like to engage in further discussion. Indeed, I think it would be better to be more of a round-table process than the formality of the question process that we have at the moment. After all, the object of the exercise is for us to understand what the government is doing with our money, that is, the taxpayers of South Australia's money, and to be able to test the government on whether it is in any way wasting that money. I think that

there could be a much more productive discussion if we were able to identify the particular areas over which we would like to ask questions but not put time limits on the amount of questioning, because that makes it very difficult.

If we had a more mature discussion about these issues, it seems to me we could then cut down dramatically on the number of public servants who have to be here. I did not recognise all the people in the gallery, but, when the Attorney-General's line is being examined, you could have everyone from the Ombudsman to the Public Trustee and the DPP—all sorts of people. If I did not have any questions on that particular area, there would be no need to involve that highly paid individual sitting in the gallery in case a question is asked. It seems to me that there is a lot more we could do more sensibly.

Another problem that I have with the budget estimates process is not only the time limit but also the fact that there is an opening statement by the minister. I remember that one former minister—one of the ministers in the previous Labor government—took 23 minutes of a one-hour allocation of time to make an opening statement. If there must be an opening statement, and I do not see that it is necessary, I suggest it should be limited to about two minutes.

Then there is the necessity to read in the omnibus questions. Why could we not just have a rule to say, 'Here are our omnibus questions. They apply to every minister and every agency or department under that minister's control'? Let us put the omnibus questions on the record in the way we put second reading speeches on the record in this place. When I worked in the parliament of New South Wales, I had to write different speeches every time a bill went before the parliament—lower house or upper house—because it was always read in full. There was none of this just sticking it onto the record by saying, 'I seek leave to insert the remainder of the speech.' Yet, we are forced to read those omnibus questions countless times over the six days, thus again using up the time but not actually doing anything to produce an outcome.

Another niggly little thing is the idea that we all have to be signed in and out for this process. Why on earth can the opposition not just turn up with whoever it wants and ask the questions, instead of having this silly process whereby everyone has to sign bits of paper saying that the member for Bragg has been replaced by the member for Heysen and the member for Heysen gets replaced by the member for Schubert, and so on? It is a ridiculous time-wasting and paper-wasting exercise that has no effect.

Those are my comments on some of the things that I think we might do to improve this process. I have now been through several of these committees, and I think I am getting better at it, but I still find it an incredible waste of time to go through budget estimates in the way we do. I am sure a rational committee, comprising people from both sides, could come up with a better system. In fact, anyone could come up with a better system if they sat down for five minutes and thought about how we might approach the issue. Once again, I say that I have no issue with the government's being entitled to decide its priorities. It is the government, it has the majority and it is entitled to govern. We, as the opposition, are entitled to test the government and make sure it is not wasting the taxpayers' money in this state, but why can we not have a process that is more productive and less time-wasting?

Time expired.

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:04): When the member for Little Para (the former minister for health in this government) described the health system in South Australia as 'stuffed', I was a little surprised; but now, in the last two years, having shadowed the issue of health on behalf of the opposition, I find that if it was not stuffed before it certainly is now. It was seriously haemorrhaging at that point and everything that the government has done that it projected and promised would improve the situation, I suggest, has been shallow and insincere in its promise and commitment and absolutely empty in its delivery. Let me highlight today, after budget estimates, confirmation of why that is the case.

First, we have the announcement of the government two years ago that it would, at a cost of \$1.677 billion (nearly \$1.7 billion) plus another \$2 billion to clean up a rail yard, build a new hospital. The opposition said, and our position remains, that that is a complete waste of money and that the government had the opportunity and should have continued to rebuild the Royal Adelaide Hospital on its current site. We then found that it was the glossy, shiny presentation to cover what was to be the decimation of other metropolitan hospitals in a health plan that the government published the day before last year's budget.

During estimates this year we found that the \$1.677 billion disappears from the budget, and it is explained by the fact that the government now does not know how much it will spend on this

project because it has now decided to proceed through a PPP proposal and, therefore, the information as to what this project will cost is now no longer available. It seems that it has been available in the past for prisons, schools and other projects that will be developed under PPPs but now, suddenly, the figure the government thinks it will spend for the new Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital has disappeared.

We also had the staggering admission by the minister that he has not proceeded to undertake preparation of the report to comply with section 23 of the Adelaide Park Lands Act 2005 and, during estimates, he stated to the committee that he believed the project would be approved as a major work pursuant to a ministerial PAR and he was progressing that. That is how he started in the questioning on this and, right at the end of the period of nearly four years of questioning, he jumped in with a little bit of additional information to tell the committee that by the end of the calendar year a report will be prepared as is required under the act.

So there should be because, of course, the prescribed time limit is 18 months from the time of the announcement. It seems that sometime between the beginning of that questioning and the end of the questioning by the committee, someone told him that he would have to prepare a report, that it would be underway and that it would be provided within the time limit.

This is very important because throughout the committee, the minister continued to say, 'We're going to proceed with this project, don't think anything's going to stop us.' I point out the arrogance of the government in saying that this was going to happen no matter what, given the legislation and its obligation to provide a report and the opportunity for parliament to consider the report and refer any of its recommendations and/or concerns to the Environment Resources and Development Committee. These are all parliamentary processes which obviously the minister holds in contempt; he thinks they do not need to be attended to. Clearly, the government has not obtained consent for this and it has no idea of the cost, yet it is progressing into the second year of spending multi-millions of dollars before it even has the parliament's approval to do so.

This is a shocking mess and a disgraceful waste of money. If members want a small example of where the government is wasting money along the way, it is the \$15 million that it wants to spend on relocating the Renal Transplant Unit from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the additional surgical facilities that will need to be moved. It wants to spend \$15 million on moving this unit to a hospital that it is going to bulldoze to build its new hospital. What an utter waste of money.

Then we move to mental health. This was illuminating information. We have already had the announcement by the Premier that he is going to build a \$44 million movie theatre—a movie hub and studio—at the Glenside Hospital. The budget reveals that his department is going to pay \$2.5 million for what we now know after estimates is a 2.77-hectare property in a prime location on the Glenside site, with improvements. The government claims that it had a valuation for this little pick-up on behalf of the Premier, to cherry-pick out the heritage centre of the Glenside Hospital, and that he is, in fact, going to buy it.

The most disgusting aspect of this is that not only is this portion of the site going to be carved up for the movie theatre but the government suddenly has \$44 million-plus to buy a piece of land to develop a movie theatre when we have people on the street who are in desperate need of mental health services. What is utterly disgusting is that it has told the local community that it has to sell off 42 per cent for private housing, a supermarket and the development of retail facilities, when the region around this hospital is probably the best serviced in the whole of South Australia, but it says that it has to do that because it needs the money for this redevelopment for mental health.

What utter nonsense. The government has multimillions of dollars to spend on a movie theatre. Then we find that the two and a half million dollars that the Premier is going to pay to buy his little piece of beautiful real estate is not even going to go towards the mental health budget. That money will go into the Department for Environment and Heritage and goodness knows where it will go from there, but it will not even go back into the mental health revenue stream.

Given that this site has been operating since 1870 for mental health services in this state and is now the only stand-alone facility provided in this state and the only facility for country people, it is utterly contemptible of this government to say that it needs to have the money and then, when it sells off bits, that the proceeds are not even going to go into mental health.

I receive letters regularly from distraught patients and relatives of patients. I received one just this morning from a grandmother of a paranoid schizophrenic 32 year old. He has been living in 10 or so different places and he has had multiple admissions to acute mental health services in the

state. He has attempted to live with his mother; he has been violent and destructive. She has tried to be sympathetic to his cause, but is clearly at risk herself and has been advised to take out a restraining order. He has been a patient at Glenside and she asks, not surprisingly, 'What good is a film studio if we cannot afford to care for our mentally sick citizens?'

She asks a very good question. It is about time the government came clean about why it is not providing for real people with real sickness, instead of relocating a movie studio when the SA Film Corporation has a perfectly good facility at its Hendon site in the industrial region. It is utterly despicable that the government should give this priority when it knows that there are people in the community who are heavily burdened with the responsibility of caring for people (mostly family members) who are chronically psychiatrically ill.

The Country Health Care Plan was launched on the website of the Department of Health about an hour and a half after the budget was delivered in this place and about half an hour after the parliament closed down for the session. How convenient! Why this did this not get the same fanfare from the Premier and the minister as the metropolitan health plan did the previous year? Obviously, it is because bad news has to be buried.

The response to this plan has been an enormous groundswell from people who live in the country and right across professional organisations sympathetic to their cause. Never in the short time that I have been in the parliament have I known so many people from different walks of life come together—to condemn this health plan. We have the Australian Nurses Federation, the Rural Doctors Association (both federal and state), Women in Agriculture and Business, and the Country Women's Association. Communities from across the state are holding rallies and information sessions in town halls and on the streets to get information and to express their absolute disquiet, at best, and disgust, at worst, in respect of this program. Let me say that the Liberal Party's position is absolutely clear: it will not close any country hospitals or change the services that it provides—unless the local community asks for it.

The Country Health Care Plan, if in 640-odd days I am the Minister for Health, will be binned, for a number of very good reasons. Notwithstanding the government's mantra that the 450,000 people who live in the country will be better off health-wise, will have to travel less and it will be more equitable for them, on every count the country health plan fails.

First, the rural communities will lose their doctors if they do not have hospital facilities, including acute care. This very simple message has come from the professional people and from the doctors themselves: if you have no hospital, no doctor and no workforce, you have no town. There is a very clear message there. Secondly, rural people also pay tax and are entitled to a share of the funding. They represent a third of the population, and are currently getting one-seventh of the acute care budget. That alone is absolutely unjust, let alone the inequity of the services that have failed to be provided in other areas.

Thirdly, the government claims that the plan will give better health outcomes, but refuses to provide evidence of this. Education centres simply cannot replace a hospital bed. It is one thing to educate people to drink less alcohol, to eat less food and to eat lettuce sandwiches and do all the things that are good for preventative health. However, the reality is that, in the real world, there are people out there who have illnesses and have continuing requirements and people who have accidents and, certainly, whether they are on the road or in a mine or anywhere else in those communities, they need those health services.

I note that there was mention recently in the government's report on health services that emergency department demand in the country has gone up. It mentions that demand has risen in the city, but it must have completely ignored the fact that it has gone up in the country. We have one of the worst suicide rates in the country in South Australia. There are major issues out there, and the government thinks that through this plan it will provide people with better health services. What utter nonsense.

Fifthly, the plan proposes placing general hospitals in the most ridiculous locations I have ever heard of. If the government is going to enhance major hospitals with services to ensure that people can go to them instead of travelling to Adelaide, one would think the smartest thing it could have done would be to locate them where they would be closer to Adelaide rather than the ridiculous locations it has selected. Most of the people in the country live east of Port Augusta or north of Keith, and it will be quicker for them to go to Adelaide than Berri, Port Lincoln, Whyalla or Mount Gambier (three of which, I note, are in the seats where the government has cuddled up to the Independents in the Labor cabinet or its only single Labor country member). It had to have a

fourth one, so I suppose the seat held by the Liberals had to get one, because they have such a massive number on the West Coast.

Sixthly, the plan claims that it will halve services in some hospitals with a specialist workforce, which is totally inconsistent with the claim that it will have to scale down other hospitals because it cannot get doctors or nurses. Members of the government should make up their mind: they can either get doctors and specialists in the country or they cannot. The other absurd thing is that they say, 'We are going to increase primary health services: dieticians, speech pathologists and anyone else out there who can provide services.' If they cannot get doctors and nurses in some of these locations, how will they get those other people there? There are absolutely no answers from the government.

Seventhly, no detail has been given as to what services will be provided in these hospitals and what will be removed in others or when this will occur. The claim is that they are still out consulting and, in fact, the government has said that it will appoint a task force with an independent chair (who is unnamed) and representatives (who are unnamed and unidentified). That is entirely a reaction to the outcry about this matter and it has not been given any serious consideration. Frankly, why has this consultation with rural people in these communities not happened before?

The eighth point is there is no corresponding provision for transport and accommodation costs for patients and families affected by the plan. There is already a shortage with respect to volunteer ambulance support, and for relatives to attempt these transfers has been identified as hazardous. I have received hundreds of letters on this issue alone from people who will not be able to visit relatives or friends or who will be in a hazardous and dangerous situation in transporting a family if they cannot get any other services in the local community to do that. This has been totally underestimated by the government, and the estimates hearing has indicated to me that the government has no idea what it is doing about this issue.

The government has not dealt with the statewide retrieval issue services. It has made no provision for extra funding for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It has made some extra provision for the SA Ambulance Service, which provides a road service in a number of areas in country South Australia. However, after weeks of asking the minister, both during estimates and on the last day that parliament sat, he still cannot tell us what the extra provision of those moneys will be used for in the country. He then had the audacity to tell us in estimates that they will not need very much because, under his plan, more country people who are currently coming to Adelaide will stay with these hospitals, with unknown services and services that have been cut. How ridiculous. This plan is full of holes and will clearly not do what it says it will.

The ninth point is that the consultation has been an absolute sham. The government should never have removed the boards from these hospitals, which were the influential voice for the hospitals, before the consultation concluded. So, the government will axe the boards, gag the staff but expect to have some kind of real input from people through this task force, which he will hand pick.

The 10th point is that the budget has already been tabled in the parliament and provides less money for current services in all the country hospitals before the consultation has even finished. So, the money has already disappeared. We will vote today on this budget, it will pass, and the cuts will already be there. It will just be a question of when country people will finally find out what they will and what they will not get.

Finally, the hospital staff have been ignored and instructed not to speak, when their livelihood is at risk. I am very pleased that the Australian Nursing Federation has come out and provided its own petition and conducted a survey of its members. Sure, it applauds any government that wants to enhance hospitals or add more preventative medicine measures. That is a great idea: no-one disagrees with that. But the government should not execute other services, and the nurses federation makes the point very clearly that it will not accept that condemnation. Even the head of the National Party came out with a statement to condemn this plan (although I note that he has tempered his words a bit with another plan, saying they are out consulting now). So, someone has obviously got to him, because he is a very naughty boy for doing that.

There are two other things that I want to mention about consultation. Firstly, no regional impact statement has been prepared with respect to this plan. That in direct contravention of the government's obligations in relation to this matter, which are to provide an impact plan for cabinet before it makes decisions on these things and while it is dealing with it. However, that has not been done. Interestingly, during estimates, the Minister for Health initially said, 'No, we are

considering the impact it has had on communities with respect to the previous loss of services.' There was no reference to the impact statement at all.

Later in the afternoon, the Minister for Regional Development told estimates that they were actually getting started on one of them, that it was going to happen—all of which is too late; this has already been published. It is all very well to come out with the detail, but, frankly, had they done a regional impact statement on how it would utterly destroy these towns and communities—with a loss of contracts to local service providers under new procurement arrangements, and all these things—there is no way that any one of them could sit there and make a decision to support axing the hospital care program in South Australian rural communities. It is utterly deceitful, and, clearly, the government does not care about it and does not want to know about it.

Even members of the Premier's Council for Women were not consulted about this important plan during estimates. These are women who are providing care for children, the aged and infirm. The nursing workforce is largely made up of women. It is women out there in those communities having babies, who are having their obstetric services cut out of the plan, yet the Premier's Council for Women was not even shown a copy of this nor asked its opinion about whether this is a good plan for women in South Australia. It is supposed to be a cross-portfolio responsibility, as a premier council, to advise the cabinet and the Premier on these issues, and it has been cut out of the loop altogether. It is an utter sham. Country people are speaking up. We had a rally of 1,000 people, and there have also been country meetings all around South Australia at which hundreds have attended and spoken up.

Time expired.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (12:24): I am in the fortunate position of not having to attend estimates, not because I know everything—I do not know much at all. I have been through that near-death experience many times, and, as the member for Heysen recently argued in this chamber, it is in need of significant reform. It is, to some extent, a waste of not only members' time but also that of the public servants who have to prepare for weeks and weeks on the off chance that they might get a question on some particular aspect of the area in which they work.

I will not say who it was, but a senior public servant once told me that he would be happy to hand over his folders to members of parliament, and that they could read them. This very highly respected senior person said, 'We are happy to hand them over to MPs to have a look at our complete activities.' I think that would be more satisfactory than the current selective arrangement for estimates committees.

First, I will comment upon the government and how it is performing. I understand that the Premier will reshuffle cabinet shortly, and I think that is a good thing. Without reflecting on particular ministers, after a while some of them get tired and ground down. Certain portfolios are incredibly demanding, and, for the welfare of those ministers and for the benefit of South Australia, some ministers probably need to be given a different portfolio. As I have indicated on previous occasions, I think it so important that we have one minister for water, covering all aspects above and below ground and all issues dealing with water, and not split it, as is currently the case.

I think the government is plodding along. There is still a lot of spin, but it has tried to deal with the perception that it has become arrogant and out of touch. There are some areas where the government is treading very dangerously—for example, teachers—and I will come back to that in a moment. My prediction is that the next election will be a lot closer than many people think. In that respect, I think the opposition is having an impact. Whilst I do not always agree with the Leader of the Opposition (I am sure the feeling is mutual), there is no doubt that the opposition is making an impact on the government and will continue to do so in the lead-up to the election. My observation is that the opposition needs to get all its shadow ministers firing if it really wants to make a big impact, and not just leave it, as it does often, to the leader.

I will address the specifics of some issues. Recently, we had a situation—and it is still ongoing in part—concerning salaries for doctors in our public hospitals. Frankly, the behaviour of some doctors has been most unfortunate and borders on blackmail. I do not deny anyone with a degree of responsibility, who has put in a lot of time for training and developing their skills, being properly rewarded, and I do not think anyone would deny that. I would have thought that if you cannot live on \$300,000 plus a year there is something sadly amiss.

We have the silly comparative argument that we have to get so much because someone else is getting so much, or that we have to have parity with other states. Sure, but that becomes a never-ending argument and self-justification for ratcheting up pay over time, which is fine if the economy is generating the additional wealth to sustain those pay claims; but pay claims that go

beyond what the economy is generating are foolhardy. Taken to extreme, if you are not careful, you end up with the situation confronting Zimbabwe, where the economy is in tatters because there is no regard for the realities of economic principles.

People say, 'Well, doctors have people's lives in their hands.' So do a lot of other people in the community; for example, paramedics, who do not earn anywhere near that sort of money. In fairness, people say that they have not had the same degree of training, but they still have that responsibility, as do pilots, nurses and a lot of other people. The argument that they have people's lives in their hands can be exaggerated. Sure, they should be paid an appropriate amount, but it should not be determined, in my view, through enterprise bargaining, which is basically a phoney exercise because the government is bargaining with taxpayers' money. It is not their own personal money.

It is not like a personal, private business, where the employer wants some trade-off of extra work and extra hours in return for extra pay. A government, whether it is local, state or federal, is in the phoney business of so-called enterprise bargaining because the money is not coming directly out of their pocket if they give an increase to a salaried medical officer or a teacher or anyone else. I think the sooner we move back to a full-blown conciliation and arbitration system the better, because what we need is an independent umpire who can take account of productivity in the community—and that system should apply to MPs as well as to anyone else.

In relation to teachers, I do not believe the government is in a position to offer more than it has, not because teachers do not deserve more but because the government has not allocated enough money to pay teachers what they should be paid. It is very dangerous politically for a government to get teachers offside. I have always had a theory in politics that, if you have your schools and your teachers on side, you are part way there to electoral success. So, I think the government needs to be very careful about not alienating teachers.

I think the teachers union, in particular, needs to back off in terms of some of its so-called conditions, requests or requirements because research evidence suggests that, once you get down to a certain number of students in a classroom, dropping below does not get a commensurate benefit in terms of educational outcomes, but the cost of reducing class sizes is significant. A better strategy would be to pay teachers significantly more and, at the same time, get rid of that small percentage of dead wood that exists in the teaching profession.

Only last night, I met with some teachers from the Adelaide Hills area, and they told me that at the school one of them attends one teacher is barely at school on time (she usually rocks in after most of the other classes are established and rocks out at 3.30), she puts in minimal effort and does not really like children. You would have to ask: why in heaven's name is someone like that allowed to continue as a teacher?

I am not anti-union—I was always a member of the union when I was employed in education—but the union backs up those non-performers and goes in to bat for them, and the department does not give the principal or the governing council any authority to get rid of a non-performer. This whole education issue is not simply about pay and, in the broader context, it is not simply about class sizes; it is also about acknowledging that a small percentage of teachers should not be in front of children. It is a form of child abuse and it should not be tolerated.

In regard to other issues, the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education indicated that the government is sympathetic to accelerated training for apprentices and trainees. In theory, that seems fine, but we have to be very careful that we do not end up compromising the skill level, and we have to make sure that people not only develop those skills and absorb them over a period of time during their training but also have the social maturity that goes with being a qualified tradesperson or technical person.

There are moves afoot to accelerate training for pilots. I do not know about other members, but I would prefer to fly in a plane where the pilot has not been put through a pressure cooker course but has been required to not only study and attend university but also has had many, many hours of supervised experience sitting next to a well-experienced pilot.

If we are not careful, under the guise of 'we need people quickly for the so-called skills boom', we will end up with people who are inadequately trained, and that would be a disaster not only for them but also for the wider community. So, I caution the government to be very careful about accelerated training. I know that interstate there is talk that, instead of a four-year training course for chefs, it should be 18 months. Well, that is a nonsense—and that applies also in other categories where you try to accelerate training rapidly.

In education, we are not seeing the significant reforms that I think DECS should be subjected to. It is still a highly centralised and bureaucratic system, with little authority given to principals and governing councils to make decisions about anything. To suggest that somehow the school is managing the salaries component because it is listed in its budget is an absolute nonsense: it is not managing the salaries at all. There needs to be a fundamental overhaul of state education in this state, otherwise we will see a further decline in the state school system.

Other issues that have arisen and been touched on in estimates relate to the question of global warming and climate change. Once again, it is a very important and complex topic. What we are seeing now is a move towards bringing in special levies to deal with climate change, and I question the need for and the desirability of these. I note this week that one council will increase its revenue by \$600,000 on the pretext of dealing with climate change.

If you want to deal with CO₂ emissions, you cut back on activities that produce CO₂. What we are seeing with so-called carbon offsets is a con job. We are saying that you can continue to produce carbon as long as you offset it by having some trees planted elsewhere. In my view, it is a bit of a con because it is a bit like saying that you can keep robbing banks as long as you make a donation to some approved charity: you are not cutting back on inappropriate activity or behaviour. You should be cutting it back or cutting it out, not being given a licence, in effect, to continue to contribute to the problem of global warming.

I suggest that, if any government goes down the path of putting a climate change levy on petrol, it would be sealing its fate, because the price of petrol will increase over time and act as its own deterrent to people using petrol when they should be more economical or use alternatives. This raises the point of what we can do in relation to alternative fuels. In Adelaide, I think we could do a lot in terms of using compressed natural gas, of which Australia has enormous reserves.

I spoke recently with Leon Holmes, who is the President of the RAA and a former head of Shell. He said that, in the metropolitan area, it is quite feasible to run private vehicles on compressed natural gas but, obviously, you need outlets that serve it. Some of the buses owned by the government run on compressed natural gas, and I notice that the week before last the government called for tenders to refurbish the refuelling facility using compressed natural gas at the Morphettville bus depot. We should be moving very quickly and Adelaide, and South Australia in particular, is an ideal spot to be innovative in terms of using alternative fuels such as compressed natural gas.

I have had dealings with many people who would like to use electric vehicles, but there are many restrictions and regulations that make it difficult to use electric motor bikes or electric cars. I think this is an issue we need to address quickly. However, to generate electricity we will contribute to global warming, particularly if coal-fired power stations are used. So, it is not a panacea in itself if the electricity is generated in a traditional coal-fired operation.

I note, too, that the government announced that MPs can now purchase or lease a different sort of vehicle from the traditional enforced V6. I have not seen the details spelt out but, until now anyway, it has been impossible to have a smaller car through the lease system. I think that they should be considered because hybrid vehicles are not cheap, and some of the smaller diesels (particularly little four-cylinder diesels) are probably the most economical and environmentally friendly vehicles available. I understand why the government has supported the bigger car—in order to support Holden and Mitsubishi (when it was producing the 380)—but, if the government is fair dinkum about the environment, it needs to move to a new level of allowing MPs and StateFleet to have smaller four cylinder cars, including diesel vehicles.

I note that there are significant problems in the government car auction system. The government is not receiving bids for many cars, and many are being passed in and then being privately negotiated. It is clear that the market has turned against the traditional V6 car, and I cannot see any change occurring in that consumption pattern in the near future.

In relation to transport, which was a big feature of this budget—and I commend, once again, the government for that—many of us would like to see all the transport initiatives done by yesterday, but the minister is to be congratulated on what is a far-reaching program to improve the rail network and, ultimately, electrify at least some of the major suburban lines.

I would like to see the government go further in relation to light rail. I applaud the proposed extension of light rail, but the government should be much more imaginative and spell out a light rail network which could extend to the Adelaide Hills using the freeway and to Mount Barker, Aberfoyle Park and other areas in the metropolitan area. The fact that it all cannot be done at once is not a problem and should not generate criticism for the government, but the government needs

to lay out a total public transport plan, even if it takes five, 10 or 15 years to implement. I have written to the federal government asking it to come to the party to assist the government provide the extended light rail system.

In relation to corruption measures, I agree with the government that we do not need a standing ICAC, but the government needs to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to trigger an inquiry if there is evidence of corruption. To that end, there needs to be a review of the powers of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has significant powers now. The Police Complaints Authority needs to be completely reviewed. I do not believe that we have genuine accountability of police in this state; I think that needs to be overhauled. The Auditor-General needs the power to have oversight of local government, including the business operations of councils.

If those things were done, along with a trigger mechanism to call someone from the independent bar for a corruption inquiry, we could avoid the \$15 million a year cost of an ICAC. I have written to the Premier and the Attorney-General suggesting that those aspects relating to the Ombudsman, the Auditor-General and the Police Complaints Authority be reviewed and overhauled.

In terms of planning, I will not have time to go into the detail but the government is seeking to simplify the system. That is a fine objective, but I hope in the process that local views and local opinions are not completely excluded. We want efficiency but not at the expense of consideration of the reasonable views of people living in South Australia.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (12:44): As one of the people who has had some degree of responsibility and been involved in all six days of estimates—not for each session, mind you—and having done that for three consecutive years now, I do feel as though—

Mr Kenyon interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: The member for Newland says that I am a glutton for punishment. You turn up bright eyed and bushy tailed on the very first morning, looking forward to what you will find out but, by the end of the sixth day, it is somewhat of a chore to still be sitting there. There are many opportunities to find out information, I must admit. Sometimes it might be the most innocuous little things which you pick up but which will be a future reference for you. There is no doubt that, when we come into this place, no matter what has prepared us for our role as a member of parliament, we certainly have much to learn.

The budget estimates process allows us to ask detailed questions and to pursue lines of questioning to ensure that the issues which are important to the people and the communities which we represent are covered and we get answers. I look forward to it. I hate being separated from my family, I must admit—and I am looking forward finally to getting home on Friday night—but it is a great chance for us.

I do recognise that the member for Heysen made some comments—and I was sitting in the chamber on the very first day when she made her comments—about the cost of preparing for estimates and the benefit being difficult to stack up. I respect her comments, but I still think that some form of opportunity for questioning needs to exist. I note in the federal parliament that Senate estimates run most of the year, and there is an opportunity to talk at length and to obtain information from public servants and ministers.

I think that what we do here is not perfect—and we would all acknowledge that—but it would be far worse not to have the opportunity to ask questions. I would much prefer to live in this society and operate under the rules and the constitution which we do and which allows for questioning to occur of governments than to live in other countries where that opportunity is not available.

A couple of things that occur are rather intriguing to me. The fact that government members are allowed to ask questions should not happen. It is interesting to note that the ministers who walk into either committee A or B and who are confident in their roles will not do that. They are happy to provide the opportunity for the opposition to ask as many questions as it likes.

The Treasurer is one of the best examples. He walks in with a positive body language. He believes that he has an answer for every question, although sometimes it is not the answer that we think is appropriate, and he makes sure that other members do that, too. I recognise that minister Hill has done it in the past, even when he has deputised for other ministers who are unavailable. For example, two years ago, when minister Wright was absent through illness, minister Hill acted for him. Even though he had not held some of those portfolios for about a year or so, he was able to answer the majority of questions.

It is important that we get it right. I would like to see the removal of government questions and just the opportunity for the opposition to enforce its line of questioning. I can accept that we would still have an opening statement, although I think the time should be restricted, especially when an area has only been allocated a short amount of time. The opening statement should be limited to probably five, seven minutes maximum, because if you cannot express matters of importance in that time, it is unfortunate.

In making my comments about my involvement in the past six days, first, I make particular mention of country health. I know the member for Bragg has spoken about this at length—and I know that other members will also refer to it—but there is no doubt that it is the key issue facing communities in my electorate. Since the release of the Country Health Care Plan on budget night via the website, I have been inundated with telephone calls, emails, letters and people talking to me in the street and at every function I attend about country health. People want to know what will happen to their hospital.

In an effort to give people the opportunity to be informed about the Country Health Care Plan, I convened a meeting at Yorketown on Tuesday of last week. I was confident of good numbers attending the meeting, there was no doubt about that. I had grown up in that community and I know many of the people. I knew that not only did so many of them have a direct association with the hospital but they also recognise the important role the hospital plays in that town.

Seven hundred people attended—and I must emphasise: 700 people. They filled the top and bottom part of the hall, they were standing on the sides and they were in the supper room listening through the public address system because they were interested. People spoke for about an hour. Local government members attended and the local doctor, Dr George Kokar, spoke. He received a thunderous round of applause. He has been practising in Yorketown for 35 years, so that did not surprise me.

I had the opportunity to speak and the shadow minister for health also spoke briefly; and, importantly, we gave representatives of Country Health the opportunity to put the plan into perspective and to provide a brief outline. Then the next 1.25 hours of the meeting was devoted to questions and comments from the floor.

This was a big commitment. It was a cold night. We had 700 people in the hall and four roving microphones, trying to give every person who wanted to ask a question or make a statement an opportunity to speak, and I think we did so before exhaustion set in and people were ready to go home. But, in that hour and a quarter, it became evident to me that the passion that exists in that community for its hospitals is overwhelming. These people were quite controlled. They could have been abusive to any of the people sitting on the stage, especially the Country Health representative, but they chose not to be. There were a few comments but they were controlled. People were quite reasonable in the way they put their questions. They were not abusive towards anyone but they wanted answers.

It is regrettable that the Country Health representative, who turned up in good faith (I recognise that), was unable to give the sort of detail that people wanted to hear. Since then, we have noted that it is a bit of a changing feast. The minister has made a lot of statements in the last week and a half. I note that the *Yorke Peninsula Country Times*, which is a newspaper serving part of my electorate, had a 40-minute interview with the minister last week. His comments in that interview I think are on the front page of the local paper this week in great detail, and he certainly gives a commitment that the Yorketown hospital will retain a lot of its services. He notes the fact that obstetrics will be lost. I am told that one of the two doctors there is quite happy for that to continue, but there are issues regarding midwives as well. But, if the community had had that information, it might have been a different position.

The frustrating thing, however, is we are now told that Country Health hospitals are actually categorised into three or four different areas and some have commitments over the next 10 years, and some will suffer through a lack of suitable staff and a reduction in services. The question I would ask, however, is: what is the health system doing to ensure that the recruitment process is occurring early enough? When there is a possibility of a staff member leaving, and that is identified, what is being done to ensure the appointment of a replacement immediately upon the departure of the first person?

Frustratingly, we were told that when a vacancy is about to occur there is no automatic instigation of human resources processes to ensure that a replacement comes. They wait until the first person leaves and there is a relatively small advertisement placed—or however health staff are recruited—often resulting in these positions not being able to be filled in a short time, or even a

long time, and people do not accept that. They want to ensure their hospitals operate at full capacity, and it is important for us that we do.

While there were 700 people at the meeting at Yorketown, and I have another meeting at Balaklava tonight which I am sure will fill the hall also, we heard that at Bordertown last night there were 1,500 people—1,000 people in the hall and 500 standing outside. They stood and listened to people speak and, if that is not an overwhelming sign of what a community thinks (given that Bordertown has a population of 2,500), I have never seen it.

On a cold night in the South-East, for 1,500 people to come out shows that they are committed. They wanted answers, and I am not sure whether they got them all. Let us hope that, now the minister has appointed a task force, he will consult. Let us hope that some amendments come forward and people are informed about what is in the health care plan and they are not given just a collection of words that do not give any surety. Let us make sure we improve.

Over the six days I had an opportunity to be involved in the estimates committees—some in which I had direct responsibility to question ministers, in others I was a participant and in some I just sat and listened. I enjoyed the first day, especially, being with the leader and also the member for Hammond and involved in questioning the Premier, Treasurer and the minister for public sector management. I know the Treasurer in particular seems to enjoy the ongoing battle he has with the Leader of the Opposition.

A lot of emotions came out on that first day. We were far better controlled last week than we were 12 months ago. I commend the Treasurer on the fact that when he is asked a question he makes every effort to provide an answer. He has a good memory when it comes to information and he refers a little bit to the advisers sitting next to him, but the spontaneous answers he gives actually help the cause and he makes sure we have a quick succession of questions and the opportunity to ask a lot of questions. He is one of the ministers who does not require government questions to be asked, and that is a good thing.

However, I was frustrated, and it might be partly my confusion, I am not sure, because the budget process is a difficult one to fully understand, even after reading it a lot of times and memorising a lot of figures that come out of it. In questioning the minister for public sector management, I would have presumed that workers compensation issues as they relate to the public sector—and we had been advised that there is a potential cost in the vicinity of \$400 million for these claims—but I was told that is not his job, that it is the responsibility of the Minister for Industrial Relations (Hon. Michael Wright). That is frustrating, but that is how the process works.

I refer to the budget that has been adopted and the questions that we asked the Treasurer. In previous budgets that I have reviewed he has talked about efficiency dividends within departments, which I think were along the lines of 0.25 per cent. Now we find that the budget quite clearly identifies that, across all departments, there is an expectation of achieving approximately \$290 million in savings—\$40 million in the 2008-09 financial year and then a reduction in financial support to each of the departments of, I think, \$25 million in 2009-10; \$75 million in 2010-11; and \$150 million in 2011-12. I am all for public sector efficiency, there is no doubt about that. When government changes, we will be trying to enforce the fact that every dollar that is contributed by taxpayers to South Australia is spent in the most efficient manner, but it will be interesting to see how each department goes about it.

I know the Hon. Michelle Lensink, in preparing questions for her portfolio area (which I had the responsibility of asking), specifically posed that question, that for each of those forward estimate periods what type of measures was the minister considering in developing the savings required? I think that the minister said that they had to provide a preliminary report by a time line of September 2008. It will be an interesting challenge for all departments, there is no doubt about that.

I refer also to ICT savings and shared services. In questioning the Treasurer about this, he was very confident of the fact that ICT savings were on track. In questioning about shared services, though, when I asked the Minister for Finance (Hon. Michael Wright) a question about that, he was good enough to say that shared services is designed to create \$25 million in savings but that, because there have been some delays and some slippages, they are unsure of the numbers. They have had to consult more extensively, it has taken a lot more work to determine what can take place, and that they have to reduce that a bit. He is unable to qualify exactly what those dollars are at this stage. Certainly it would be in the millions of dollars, so we have asked some questions about that.

Shared services is a big issue, and 2,500 people will be affected by it. In regional South Australia alone, 256 full-time equivalent positions were to be removed and taken to the CBD. The minister has said that the scope for that might be a little bit reduced. He was unable to determine exactly what that figure was, but let us hope that he is able to do that soon and can give some surety to those people. I have spoken many times about the fact that there is a frustration in relation to shared services even here. We who live in the regions realise how important each person who lives in our community is, especially when those people have the surety of government employment, the fact that they contribute in so many other ways to community groups and sporting associations and to the community in general. The loss of those people through having to transfer their role to Adelaide is a great frustration, so I am all for delaying it even more, just to give people a chance.

I refer to some of the issues identified in questions to the Treasurer about unfunded superannuation liabilities. I realise that with, I think, 98,000 people who are physically involved in the public sector and about 78,000 full-time equivalents, the superannuation liability would be enormous. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

[Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00]

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

SUPER SCHOOLS

222 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). Will the Government's proposed six Super Schools require fewer teachers and school services officers under the existing staffing formula and if so, what financial savings will be generated?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): The Minister for Education and Children's Services has provided the following information:

The six new schools to be built as part of the government's \$216 million Education Works initiative will be staffed under the industrially agreed staffing formula, which is driven by enrolments.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPARISON

227 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). Has a public sector comparison been determined for the following proposed PPP projects:

- (a) the 6 Super Schools;
- (b) the Detention facilities at Mobilong;
- (c) the Aquatic Centre;

and if so what are the details?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that the development of a public sector comparator (PSC) is an integral component of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) procurement model. It reflects the risk-adjusted cost of the public sector delivering the infrastructure and services over the concession period.

Public sector comparators have been developed for all the PPP projects and are not publicly disclosed as they form the integral part of the negotiation process with bidders. As such, they are retained as commercial-in-confidence.

PUBLIC NON-FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS

238 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). What are the forward estimate distributions from each of the public non-financial corporations from 2007-08 to 2010-11?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that distributions from Public Non-Financial Corporations include dividends and tax equivalents.

Tax equivalents are payments equivalent to Commonwealth income tax and local government rates, which the entity would be liable to pay if it were not an instrumentality of the Crown in right of the State of South Australia.

At the time of the 2007-08 Budget, total distributions from the PNFC sector were forecast to be \$365.4 million in 2007-08, \$398.6 million in 2008-09, \$392.2 million in 2009-10 and \$422.9 million in 2010-11, as published in Table 3.18 of the 2007-08 Budget Statement, Budget Paper 3.

Distributions from SA Water, the Land Management Corporation and ForestrySA accounted for approximately 95 per cent of total PNFC distributions across the forward estimates.

Total distributions from the PNFC sector were forecast to comprise^(a):

Distributions (\$m) ^(b)	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
South Australian Water Corporation	277.0	318.2	334.7	350.3
Land Management Corporation	41.5	32.0	12.4	29.8
ForestrySA	30.4	34.2	30.7	28.1
Lotteries Commission of South Australia ^(c)	7.9	7.6	7.4	7.5
South Australian Government Employee Residential Properties	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2
Public Trustee	2.5	2.9	3.3	3.6
Electricity Lease Entities	2.3	—	—	—
West Beach Trust	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
TransAdelaide	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	365.4	398.6	392.2	422.9

(a) Totals may not add due to rounding.

(b) Includes dividends, income tax equivalents and local government rate equivalents.

(c) Excludes dividends from the Lotteries Commission of South Australia.

Total distributions from the PNFC sector exclude dividends from the Lotteries Commission of South Australia, which are classified as taxation revenue, rather than distributions, in accordance with the ABS Government Finance Statistics Framework.

At the time of the 2007-08 Budget, dividends from the Lotteries Commission were forecast to be \$18.1 million in 2007-08, \$18.0 million 2008-09, \$16.9 million in 2009-10 and \$16.7 million 2010-11.

BUDGET OVERSPENDING

245 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). What processes are in place to ensure that there is limited overspending in 2007-08 Budget?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that a budget monitoring regime is in place that provides the Expenditure Review and Budget Cabinet Committee (ERBCC) with regular information on the budget performance of each agency. Agencies provide year to date actual results and projected end of year outcomes to the Department of Treasury and Finance on a monthly basis, including commentary for major variances from the approved budget. In addition to the monthly reports, monitoring of the progress of individual budget initiatives, including savings, and progress on capital projects is conducted on a quarterly basis. These reports highlight to ERBCC where there is potential for over or underspending on specific agency projects.

TREASURY AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT

246 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). With respect to 2007-08 Budget Paper 4 Volume 1—page 3.2:

(a) what is the breakdown of the full time equivalent's in the Department of Treasury & Finance by branch, for each of the three years indicated in Table 3.2; and

- (b) what is the reconciliation of the movements in the numbers for each of the three lines on this table in each of the three years?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): The table below details the breakdown of Full Time Equivalent's by Branch:

Branch	FTE's at 30 June		
	2007-08 Budget Estimate	2006-07 Estimated Result	2005-06 Actual
Department of Treasury and Finance			
Revenue SA (excluding ESL)	151.3	148.3	131.6
Revenue SA - RISTEC	28.0	12.0	6.0
Revenue SA (ESL)	36.9	37.9	32.3
Finance Branch	53.4	52.4	49.4
Government Accounting and Reporting	45.4	46.4	43.6
Project Analysis	15.4	12.4	11.4
Revenue & Economics Branch	20.6	20.6	19.6
Policy Analysis Branch	10.0	10.0	11.4
Superannuation	112.8	103.8	102.6
SAICORP (a)	0.0	0.0	12.9
SAFA	54.8	54.8	39.4
Treasurer's Office	14.4	14.4	12.8
Executive Management	5.0	5.0	4.0
Executive Advisers	1.0	1.0	1.0
Shared Services Reform Office	51.0	24.6	0.0
State Procurement and Support Operations (b)	463.8	463.8	0.0
Corporate Services	103.5	103.3	92.9
Minor Adjustments	-0.5	0.1	0.1
TOTAL TREASURY AND FINANCE	1166.8	1110.8	571.0

GOVERNMENT FINANCE MONITORING

248 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). With respect to 2007-08 Budget Paper 4 Volume 1—page 3.5, what arrangements are currently in place to support the target entitled 'Finalise arrangements for quarterly monitoring of consolidated financial reports for the general government sector', what further changes are necessary and what is the timeframe for its implementation?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that arrangements are currently being finalised and the infrastructure is now in place for the production of quarterly consolidated financial reports for the general Government sector. It is anticipated that consolidated reports will be available to supplement the detailed agency monitoring and summary general government budget information already provided for regular Cabinet consideration, in the 2008-09 financial year.

PROCUREMENT REFORM PROGRAM

250 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). With respect to 2007-08 Budget Paper 4 Volume 1—page 3.5:

- (a) what are the details of Stage 1 of the program of the target entitled 'Continue the procurement reform program, including implementation of Stage 2' and what are the details of Stage 2; and
- (b) what savings are expected from this reform program and when will this be realised?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations):

(a) I am advised that procurement reform in the South Australian Government is overseen by the State Procurement Board.

Cabinet endorsed a staged approach to procurement reform. Stage 1 has been completed and a formal review has been undertaken and noted by Cabinet.

The review of Stage 1 found that the key elements of the reform strategy include:

- The approval of increased procurement authorities of up to \$11 million to public authority chief executives. The increases mean that public authorities are able to approve the majority of their procurement transactions, rather than having to seek approval from the Board. In 2007, the number of procurement transactions requiring Board approval reduced by more than 60 per cent compared with 2005 figures. This demonstrates the capacity for more responsive decision-making and less 'red tape' within Government operations.
- A significant reduction in the average time from 'Tender Close' to 'Contract Award' for contracts valued over \$110,000. This measure has reduced in excess of 30 per cent in the 2006-07 financial year from the benchmark of 139 days established in 2005.
- The production and launch of the Procurement Good Practice Guide developed by the Board in conjunction with the Government Reform Commission.

(b) Procurement reforms feature significantly in the red tape reductions that are being identified by agencies as their contribution to the Premier's commitment to reduce red tape by at least 25 per cent by July 2008. Further savings in relation to improved systems and the development of common use contracts will be identified and pursued by Shared Services SA, in collaboration with Contract Services and the Board, progressively over the next 24 months.

REVENUE SA

257 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007).

How many Revenue SA compliance officers were there in each year since 2001-02 and in which areas of taxation did they operate?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that RevenueSA adopts a risk management methodology in allocating Compliance resources during any Financial Year, identifying areas of risk or potential risk by various means including substantial data matching and environmental scanning and then targeting with appropriate programs those areas where there is, or is likely to be significant risk to the revenue and grant/subsidy/rebate expenditure. Therefore, the allocation of FTE's to any particular tax head can vary from period to period.

The following table shows the Compliance FTE's and primary tax areas to which they were allocated:

Financial Year	FTE	Tax Head						Debt Mgmt
		Payroll Tax	Stamp Duty	Land Tax	FHOG	Petrol Subsidy	Debits & FID	
2001-2002	38.40	13.37	12.27	0.49	1.22	0.36	0.97	9.72
2002-2003	41.45	9.30	18.25	1.11	2.71	0.37	0.10	9.61
2003-2004	55.00	14.60	20.02	2.31	2.43	0.55	0.73	14.36
2004-2005	53.80	10.10	25.62	1.60	2.51	0.43	0.00	13.54
2005-2006	51.00	10.23	21.21	1.26	3.09	0.57	0.00	14.64
2006-2007	66.70	15.46	26.69	3.45	4.46	0.59	0.00	16.05
2007-2008	67.46	16.58	24.95	3.87	5.28	0.55	0.00	16.23

SPECIFIC PURPOSE GRANTS

259 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007).

With respect to 2007-08 Budget Paper 4 Volume 1—page 3.34, is the \$20.35 million received from the Commonwealth Government for 'Specific purpose grants—concessions to pensioners and others' on-paid to an agency and if so, which agency and how this funding be distributed?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that Specific purpose grants received from the Commonwealth Government for concessions are deposited in the

Department of Treasury and Finance (DTF) bank account. The funds are recorded as receipts in the DTF administered items statement of cash flows in the item 'Commonwealth specific purpose grants—concessions to pensioners and others'. The funds are paid to the consolidated account and not paid directly to agencies.

SUPERANNUATION DATA

265 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (23 October 2007). With respect to 2007-08 Budget Paper 3—page 5.11, what is the projected data for table 5.11 for each year to 2034?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that due to limited information being available in relation to schemes not administered by the SA Government, the projected data for Table 5.11 for each year to 2034 cannot be provided. However, I can provide the requested information for the State's Defined Benefit Superannuation Scheme.

The SA Government is committed to fully funding its superannuation liability by 2034. The table highlights that the SA Government is on target to meet this commitment.

The table provided below shows projections to year 2034 for the state's defined benefit superannuation schemes as at the 2007-08 Budget.

Information on the estimated unfunded superannuation liability was updated as part of the 2007-08 MYBR. Further updates will be provided in the 2008-09 and future budgets.

Defined benefit schemes superannuation liabilities			
	Accrued Liability \$m	Assets \$m	Net liability \$m
2007	11,929.8	6,188.7	5,741.1
2008	12,205.5	6,414.9	5,790.6
2009	12,451.3	6,620.4	5,830.9
2010	12,665.5	6,804.1	5,861.4
2011	12,845.3	6,964.1	5,881.2
2012	12,992.8	7,103.2	5,889.6
2013	13,109.9	7,224.3	5,885.6
2014	13,191.5	7,323.3	5,868.2
2015	13,238.1	7,401.7	5,836.3
2016	13,256.2	7,467.2	5,788.9
2017	13,242.7	7,518.1	5,724.6
2018	13,204.7	7,562.6	5,642.1
2019	13,141.2	7,601.6	5,539.6
2020	13,058.3	7,642.7	5,415.6
2021	12,995.6	7,687.5	5,268.3
2022	12,840.2	7,744.9	5,095.3
2023	12,708.5	7,813.8	4,894.8
2024	12,562.9	7,898.8	4,664.2
2025	12,406.6	8,005.7	4,400.9
2026	12,239.0	8,136.9	4,102.1
2027	12,065.0	8,300.2	3,764.8
2028	11,883.6	8,498.2	3,385.4
2029	11,701.9	8,741.5	2,960.4
2030	11,521.7	9,035.8	2,485.9
2031	11,351.6	9,394.1	1,957.5
2032	11,202.6	9,831.8	1,370.5
2033	11,074.8	10,354.9	719.0
2034	10,969.7	10,969.7	(0.0)

GOODS AND SERVICES FIGURES

361 Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (18 February 2008). What was the value of all departmental goods and services purchased without authorisation and prior to the committal of financial resources in 2006-07?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): I am advised that the Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) purchased goods and services to a value of \$22.927 million in 2006-07. During the 2006-07 financial year, instances were identified by internal audit, external audit and ad hoc review where transactions to the value of \$58,770 were entered into without appropriate financial delegations.

Details of the transactions are as follows:

- two staff approved two transactions to the value of \$24,750 without financial delegation;
- a staff member approved \$34,020 of goods/services when his financial delegation was \$15,000.

All staff responsible for the incidents described above were counselled and their Directors advised about the incidents.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

375 Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (18 February 2008). What is the remuneration and roles of the six new senior officers located in regions to work in partnership with the Regional Development Boards to facilitate regional projects and developments?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): The Minister for Regional Development has provided the following information:

The six new senior officers, Manager Regions, are remunerated at the ASO7 level of between \$75,751-\$82,227.

Their role includes case management of projects and the regionalisation of South Australia's Strategic Plan.

They work in partnership with the regional stakeholders, including the Regional Development Boards, the Regional Facilitation Groups, Local Government, and local industry, to achieve objectives that support the regional implementation of South Australia's Strategic Plan and the objectives of the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06
Branch	Budget Estimate	Estimated Result	Actual
Administered Items			
Independent Gaming Authority	7.0	7.0	5.0
Funds SA	20.3	18.0	15.2
Motor Accident Commission	21.0	19.1	15.6
ESCOSA	26.0	26.0	21.1
ESIPC	9.0	9.0	6.0
SA Motor Sport Board	7.8	7.8	6.2
Electorate Offices	165.0	165.0	146.9
TOTAL ADMINISTERED ITEMS	256.1	251.9	216.0
Trainees			
Dept of Treasury and Finance	2.0	2.0	2.0
Electorate Offices	69.0	69.0	29.2
TOTAL TRAINEES	71.0	71.0	31.2
TOTAL	1493.9	1433.7	818.2*

(a) SAICORP amalgamated with SAFA in 2006-07.

(a) As part of the abolition of DAIS.

*Note: An addition error has been published. The correct figure is 818.2 and not 825.2

(b) The reconciliation in movement over the 3 years is as follows:

Department of Treasury and Finance

2007-08 Budget compared to 2006-07 Estimated Result:

The total estimated workforce as at 30 June 2008 of 1,166.8 FTEs is an expected increase of 56 FTEs from the estimated workforce of 1,110.8 FTEs as at 30 June 2007. This is mainly due to:

- An increase of 26.4 FTEs for the Shared Services Reform Office;
- An increase of 16 FTEs for the RISTEC project;
- An increase of 9 FTEs within Super SA for new services to members;
- An increase of 6 FTEs in Revenue SA for land tax anti-avoidance activity;
- An increase of 4 FTEs for improved capital and Public Private Partnerships projects monitoring; and
- Other minor increases of 1.6 FTEs.

The increases are offset by a reduction of 7 FTEs resulting from the savings initiatives approved as part of the 2006-07 Budget.

2006-07 Estimated Result compared to 2005-06 Actual:

The 2006-07 estimated result of 1,110.8 FTEs is 539.8 FTEs higher than the actual FTEs of 571 as at 30 June 2006. This is due to:

The transfer of 463.8 FTEs from DAIS to DTF for the State Procurement and Support Operations (SPSO) Branch;

- An increase of 24.6 FTEs for the Shared Services Reform Office;
- An increase of 14 FTEs for employees relating to compliance activities;
- An increase of 6 FTEs for the RISTEC project;
- An increase of 8 FTEs within Super SA for new services to members; and
- An increase of 29.4 FTEs due to positions that were vacant as at 30 June 2006.

The increases are offset by a reduction of 6 FTEs resulting from the savings initiatives approved as part of the 2006-07 Budget.

Administered Items

2007-08 Budget compared to 2006-07 Estimated Result:

The total workforce as at 30 June 2008 of 256.1 is an increase of 4.2 FTEs from the estimated workforce as at 30 June 2007 of 251.9 FTEs. This is due to an increase of 2.3 FTEs in Funds SA and an increase of 1.9 FTEs in the Motor Accident Commission.

2006-07 Estimated Result compared to 2005-06 Actual:

The estimated result for 2006-07 is 35.9 FTEs higher than the actuals of 216.0 FTEs for June 2006. This is due to:

- The inclusion of casual staff in the 2006-07 FTE numbers for Electorate Offices resulting in a net impact of 18.1 FTEs;
- Vacancies of 2.1 FTEs for the Motor Accident Commission as at 30 June 2006 and additional staff of 1.4 FTEs in 2006-07;
- Vacancies of 2.1 FTEs for ESCOSA as at 30 June 2006 and additional staff of 2.8 FTEs in 2006-07;
- Vacancies of 1.4 FTEs for Funds SA as at 30 June 2006 and additional staff of 4.9 FTEs for ESCOSA in 2006-07; and
- Additional staff of 1.6 FTEs for the SA Motor Sport Board in 2006-07.
- Trainees
- 2007-08 Budget compared to 2006-07 Estimated Result:
- The total estimated Trainee number is unchanged.
- 2006-07 Estimated Result compared to 2005-06 Actual:

The estimated result for 2006-07 is 39.8 FTEs higher than the actuals for June 2006. This is due to the Electorate Offices recruiting fewer trainees than were estimated.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

382 Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (18 February 2008). What was the total cost of the 13 departmental staff participating in the 'V6' leadership development program and what are the details of the activities they have participated in?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): The Department of Trade and Economic Development (DTED) has provided the following information:

The development program comprised 7 stages run over 6 months:

Stage 1—Development of leadership capability profiles for DTED

Stage 2—Assessment of individual participants via 360 degree review and leadership profiling

Stage 3—Development feedback and preparation of tailored development program for individuals

Stage 4—One on one leadership coaching

Stage 5—Group learning development via workshops in the area of high performing teams

Stage 6—Work based projects where the individuals were placed into 3 groups and were required to undertake a project relating to current issues within the workplace

Stage 7—Evaluation assessment

The cost of the program was \$110,000.

COMMUNITY BUILDERS PROGRAM

383 Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (18 February 2008). How many projects have been delivered through the Community Builders Program, what is the individual funding for each project and what is the total cost of the program?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): The Minister for Regional Development has provided the following information:

Over the eight year period ending June 07, twenty-eight Community Builders projects involving over 700 participants have been hosted by local councils, progress associations and Regional Development Boards around the State. Four programs are currently underway.

Each successful applicant receives a project grant of \$25,000.

\$122,000 is budgeted for the program annually.

INNOVATION COMMERCIALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

387 Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (18 February 2008). What projects received Innovation Commercialisation and Development Grant funding in 2006-07?

The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations): The Department of Trade and Economic Development has provided the following information:

The Government announced the availability of two new State Government grants, the Innovation Commercialisation Grant and the Innovation Development Grant in January 2007 with funds of up to \$50,000 and \$25,000 per enterprise respectively, to encourage SA business owners to grow their business by promoting innovation and assisting companies with commercialisation.

In the 2006-07 year funding was approved for the following recipients and their projects:

Innovation Commercialisation Grant

- Patient Safety International Pty Ltd—healthcare software product development to assist with hospital management processes to prioritise triage patients during a large scale accident or medical crisis.
- Radford Consulting Pty Ltd—Information technology solution to service retail, banking and hospitality sectors for monitoring customer satisfaction in real time.

- Stamina Lifters Pty Ltd—Development of a battery powered trolley device to enable easy transportation of patients in hospital beds by a single operator.
- Applidyne Engineering Solutions—Development of an innovative and low cost Rankine cycle heat engine design.
Innovation Development Grant
- Gate Drive Systems—Development of new technology in tamper proofing and monitoring high security fences and gates.
- Water Data Services—Invented software and the accompanying hardware components to pre-empt algal blooms in water catchments areas required for public consumption or use.
- Optoglobal Holdings—Inventers of ophthalmic indocyanine green-mediated photothrombosis to treat age-related macular degeneration—(repairing eye damage in older population).
- Remediate Pty Ltd—To build a turn key facility, as a proof of concept, to market world wide total management solutions for remediation of contaminated soil, water and waste.
- Oystek Pty Ltd—Develop a bio-mass analysis application and integrate into Oystek's grading technology for specialised application in grading and processing equipment for the aquaculture industry.
- Accent Wine Packaging—development of a new high technology wine storage container aimed at up market wine investors.

Readymade Productions—Development of DVD/CD education material capability for Australian and US markets.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

In reply to **Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop)** (13 November 2007).

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing): The Health and Safety Workplace Partnership Program is a South Australian Government initiative forming part of a broader strategy to significantly reduce workplace injury. This program aims to provide registered employee associations with membership in industries of demonstrated high risk with the opportunity to facilitate employee participation within improved occupational health, safety and welfare (OHSW) outcomes.

The government's intention is to provide the opportunity for employee associations to work with their members, other employees and relevant employers to improve consultation and OHSW problem solving in workplaces.

The program compliments the existing training of HSRs provided by employee associations that are Approved HSR Training Providers (ATP).

There are similar programs operating interstate, aimed at improving OHSW in the workplace by funding employee associations. Information on interstate programs is available from various state government offices listed below:

WorkSafe Victoria

Head Office

Ground Floor

222 Exhibition Street

MELBOURNE 3000

Phone: (03) 9641 1555

Fax: (03) 9641 1222

www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations

Head Office

75 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Phone: (07) 3225 2000
Fax: (07) 3225 1540
www.deir.qld.gov.au

Workplace Standards Tasmania

Head Office
Lower Level
30 Gordons Hill Road
ROSNY PARK TAS 7018
Phone: (03) 6233 7657
Fax: (03) 6233 8338
www.wst.tas.gov.au

WorkCover New South Wales

Head Office
92-100 Donnison Street
GOSFORD NSW 2250
Phone: (02) 4321 5000
Fax: (02) 4325 4145.
www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table:

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

Rules—Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation—Right of Representation and Assistance

CHILD PROTECTION

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) (14:03): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I refer to the cases of the families in Adelaide, which have created strong public interest both here and around Australia. I remind the house that there are essentially two families at the heart of these matters although, as I said in estimates last Monday, there is interconnection between them. Matters involving the family group recently arrived from Victoria are the subject of a police investigation. Criminal charges have been laid and Youth Court proceedings are afoot. So, I am limited in what I can say about them.

There is justifiable concern as to how this family could slip through the net. Therefore, I have referred this matter to the Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee, which is chaired by eminent lawyer and past president of the Law Society of South Australia, Deej Eszenyi.

The committee's establishment was a key recommendation of the Layton report. Ms Layton identified as one of its key purposes that it specifically determine the quality and effectiveness of interventions with abused and neglected children and their families. It has the specific mandate to identify legislative or administrative means of preventing future deaths or injuries. Significantly, the committee has the authority to compel answers, and so override confidentiality provisions which would otherwise apply to these matters.

I have asked the committee to report as soon as possible, and it will be provided with the necessary resources to do so. We need to know why the circumstances of this family group did not come to the attention of the child protection authorities earlier. I am advised that the mother attended a health service on two occasions for herself. Consistent with what I have previously stated, no child protection notification was made. I am advised that there was also contact with the local school about enrolment, but the family did not proceed with the enrolment. No child protection notification was made.

The Child Death and Serious Injury Committee is the appropriate body to review the contacts between this family and any agencies, either government or non-government. This matter has also raised the adequacy of the current arrangements between states regarding information sharing about families at risk. The current protocols between states did not require the disclosure of information to us about the child protection concerns that Victorian authorities had about the Victorian family, given that the Victorian authorities had closed their file on this family. The adequacy of these protocols is a matter that the Premier has raised for discussion at today's COAG meeting. It is also a matter the Prime Minister has raised as an issue for discussion. I am hopeful that, out of today's COAG meeting, there will be a commitment to an improved process for cooperation between jurisdictions, including the commonwealth, to ensure vulnerable families are better detected.

GP PLUS EMERGENCY HOSPITAL TASK FORCE

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:05): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: On Tuesday this week I announced the formation of a new task force to provide advice to the government on the services to be provided in GP Plus emergency hospitals in country South Australia. I am pleased to announce that Mr Peter Blacker will be the independent chair of that task force.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: A great man whose merit is applauded by the other side. I am glad to see there is bipartisan support for his appointment. The task force will also include representatives from the Rural Doctors Association, the Australian Nursing Federation, the Australian Medical Association and the Country Health SA Advisory Council. It has been very—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Dean Brown would've been good.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: He was my second choice. It has been very disappointing that, since the launch of the Country Health Care Plan, many misapprehensions about it have been maliciously spread. I make it plain that, under the plan, no country hospital will be closed; emergency services—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The big lie is being promoted again. Under the plan, emergency services will be available in every hospital, and more services will be available in the country. There has been a call for greater clarity about the services that will be provided in GP Plus emergency hospitals. The new task force will work with local communities over the next six months, in particular local doctors and nurses, to further develop—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: —the future service profile for each hospital. I have also released a detailed breakdown of the GP Plus emergency hospitals, making it clear which ones are likely to maintain current services over the 10 years of the plan (of course, that very much relates to workforce issues), and which hospitals may need to change their service profile in line with workforce changes and safety and quality compliance.

I hope that these changes will assure people in the country of what I have been saying all along: this is a 10-year plan, not a 10-minute plan. I look forward to further discussions with country doctors, nurses and community members during the period of consultation.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw honourable members' attention to the presence in the gallery today of community volunteers from the electorate of Newland (guests of the member for Newland).

QUESTION TIME

WATER SECURITY

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Has the South Australian government surrendered its water security to the sovereign state of Victoria? In November 2007 the Premier told this house that the Howard plan failed because it did not address overallocation of water in the Murray-Darling system. In March this year, the Premier took the water security minister and federal minister Penny Wong to the Lower Lakes and told the media that an 'historic agreement' that he had signed would deliver water flows. Today, both admitted on ABC Radio that addressing overallocation of water was no longer part of the agreement, nor were additional water flows. The minister said:

I don't believe that we will have any chance of getting extra water unless it rains.

Further, in relation to the people in the Riverland, the minister said, 'It's going to be catastrophic.'

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:09): The drought is having dreadful impact on regional Australia and regional South Australia. There is absolutely no doubt about the fact that there is not enough water to go around. Have we surrendered sovereign rights? No.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (14:09): My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What support is the government providing to encourage indigenous South Australians to undertake full-time undergraduate university studies?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Youth, Minister for Gambling) (14:10): I thank the member for Florey for her question and for her ongoing interest in this area. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk today about two very talented young Aboriginal people and also to remember a colleague and friend to many of us, the late Hon. Terry Roberts.

On 19 June, I had the great pleasure of presenting cheques worth \$2,000 to the recipients of the prestigious Terry Roberts Memorial Scholarship for Indigenous South Australians. At the presentation, this year's recipient, Jason Howell, received his first scholarship cheque, and last year's recipient, Rebecca Richards, received her second cheque.

This annual scholarship is awarded in honour of Terry Roberts' dedication as minister for Aboriginal affairs and reconciliation. As I have said, Terry was a friend and colleague to many of us, and I am sure many of you would understand that he would feel especially honoured that Aboriginal people are being encouraged and supported in their university studies through a scholarship named after him.

The scholarship presentation was a very uplifting event, made even more moving by the presence of Terry's partner, Julie Sinclair, and his four sons, Nick, Tim, Harry and Tom, along with many of Terry's friends. Several of my parliamentary colleagues also attended the presentation, and I offer them my personal thanks for their support of this important scholarship.

The scholarship is designed to encourage and support indigenous South Australians to undertake full-time undergraduate study at a South Australian university by providing financial assistance that goes some way to meeting living and study-related expenses. It provides \$2,000 per annum for up to four years, totalling \$8,000 per scholarship.

Both Jason and Rebecca are remarkable young South Australians, and they are already setting a very fine example for others to follow through their commitment to improving the lives of Aboriginal people. I am confident they will go on to make a significant contribution to the community throughout their chosen career.

When talking with Jason at the presentation ceremony, he made the value of the scholarship very, very clear to me. He had originally been in a position of having to defer his studies, but winning the scholarship has enabled him to continue his studies this year. Last year's inaugural winner, Rebecca, an Adnyamathanha woman from the Northern Flinders Ranges, is studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Adelaide, majoring in psychology and anthropology. By coincidence, Jason is also studying psychology at the same university.

Jason comes from Broken Hill but, like many people in that fair city, he has strong family links and ties in South Australia, and he also intends to work in regional or rural parts of our state. We should not underestimate the impact that young professional people like Jason and Rebecca will have in their communities, where they will eventually work.

Both Jason and Rebecca are outstanding recipients of the Terry Roberts Memorial Scholarship for Indigenous South Australians, which is a fitting legacy to the memory of Terry Roberts.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AGREEMENT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13): My question is again to the Minister for Water Security. Was the MOU signed by the Premier in March 2008 an historic agreement or a media stunt? At the time of the MOU, the Premier said it would deliver 'certainty for Adelaide's drinking water and a better outcome for the environment'. But when asked today on ABC Radio whether he would be demanding an immediate extra flow of water to the Riverland and the Lower Lakes the Premier said, 'We are dealing with different issues today. Today's about getting the intergovernmental agreement signed.'

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:14): The memorandum of understanding was indeed an historic agreement, and it had the signatories of all of the Murray-Darling Basin states to work together to deliver an intergovernmental agreement which would, for the first time, introduce a new basin-wide plan and a new cap on both groundwater and surface water.

The Leader of the Opposition and, indeed, members on the opposition benches are totally misrepresenting the situation in relation to this intergovernmental agreement. The intergovernmental agreement is about the new governance arrangements going forward for the management of water in the Murray-Darling Basin. The drought is an issue that is being dealt with by all jurisdictions as well as and concurrent with the negotiations for the IGA.

We have a Senior Officials Group, established back in November 2006 by the former government, which is reporting to the Prime Minister and which is dealing with the contingency negotiations in relation to the current drought.

In the last 12 months, the Murray-Darling Agreement has been set aside and new water sharing arrangements have been put in place. For this year, we have returned to the Murray-Darling water sharing arrangements, and those are that the resource will be shared equally amongst the states. That is a different issue. It does not matter what the government's arrangements are, or how soon they come into effect, the fact is that, at the moment, we are managing a very small amount of water that will in no way meet the needs of all the communities or the demands on that water.

The memorandum of understanding was certainly an historic agreement. It will bring into play for the very first time a national approach to the management of the River Murray. It still does not fix the drought because, no matter how good we are at signing memoranda of understanding or bringing in new governance arrangements, it will still depend upon rainfall in the system to break the drought.

TOURISM EVENTS

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (14:15): My question is to the Minister for Tourism. What is the state government doing to ensure that the maximum economic benefits are being realised from its investment in events?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Adelaide—Minister for Education and Children's Services, Minister for Tourism, Minister for the City of Adelaide) (14:16): I thank the member for Mawson for his question. I realise that he has a very keen interest in tourism events and is a great supporter of and participant in many of our mass participation events.

South Australia has been very successful at both winning and hosting events in recent times, and this has been a direct reflection of the state government's intent to look at our calendar of events and make sure that, throughout the year, it is full of and represented by activities and tourism attractions. Indeed, since coming into office, we have really focused on delivering significant economic and social benefits, as well as increasing media exposure through our events.

In addition, we have revitalised the events calendar by making some of our successful biennial events annual events, and this has had a huge impact, with events such as WOMAD and the Fringe now being very successful and occurring on an annual basis.

We have also enhanced the status of the Tour Down Under by making it a Pro Tour event, which has increased the number of visitors coming from interstate and overseas. We have supported the growth of those iconic events—the Festival of the Arts and the Clipsal 500—and they are now bigger and better than ever before.

We have also invested in new events that have brought tourists outside the traditional busy summer months, and we have expanded them annually, and the Rugby Sevens is getting bigger and more popular each year. The International Guitar Festival is a great event later on in the year (just before Christmas), as well as the OzAsia Festival. We are particularly keen on and looking forward to January next year, when we will host our first World Tennis Challenge.

In addition, we regularly review the calendar to make sure that the events occur at the right time—the optimum time—to provide the maximum return on investment by the state. From time to time, this review of events means that the dates alter, and I know that that is inconvenient to the member opposite because he likes to book in his recreational activities a year in advance. In reality, the calendar is designed so that the events are at the best time and have the best impact for the state of South Australia, not just for the members in this chamber who like to attend events.

After careful consideration, a decision has been made to hold the next Tasting Australia event at a different time from that which was previously scheduled. It will now be held from 6 to 13 May 2010, rather than in September 2009. For the first time, visiting media, food and drink professionals coming to the state will be able to enjoy the state during our vintage period, the vintage time for wineries.

Over the past six events, Tasting Australia has shown the world's food, wine and beer lovers that Adelaide and South Australia is the home of the best food and wine, as well as beer, and we expect that focus to continue. The major feature of the 2010 event, unlike former years, will be a focus on South Australia's local heroes. I will not give away the secret of those events, but some of you might like to ponder and imagine who the iconic providers of food, wine and gastronomic experiences will be. Those icons and heroes will be part of the event, together with producers, chefs, writers and educators. They have already raised the bar in gastronomic excellence, and I hope the member for Finniss will put those dates in his diary, because I know that he likes to plan ahead. The change of date will revitalise our successful and much loved South Australian Tasting Australia event. It means that we have a proven tourism drawcard to boost hotel occupancy when it is most needed and a wonderful opportunity to show off the best at vintage time.

WATER SECURITY

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (14:20): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Are the MOU signed in March 2008 and the intergovernmental agreement to be signed today—which deals with the symptoms of the water crisis rather than the cause—an admission of defeat by the Rann Labor Government? The MOU and the agreement to be signed today at COAG do not require Victoria and New South Wales to refer their powers to the commonwealth, do not provide for a strong independent authority free of state ministers' influence to take control of the river, leave Victoria's state plan for the Murray in place until 2019, and do not address the overallocation of water upstream.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:21): The answer to that question is definitely no. The memorandum of understanding, which was signed in March this year, actually established the principles under which an IGA would be developed. At the time of the announcement of the MOU, it

was always made very public that the next stage would be the signing of an intergovernmental agreement at the next COAG meeting—which happens to be today. The intergovernmental agreement is the legal and binding document to back up the memorandum of understanding.

During the course of negotiations with the commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland in relation to the details of the intergovernmental agreement, there has been much discussion about a whole range of different issues, but certainly what is still on the table is that there will be an independent authority. The IGA makes provision for dealing with overallocation in the system, as does the \$12.9 billion Water for the Future Fund—which has been established by the federal government and which will deal with leaky infrastructure and safe water for the environment—and a \$3 billion fund to purchase water out of the Murray-Darling system from willing sellers to deal with the issue of overallocation.

CONSUMER GOODS, GREEN MARKETING

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (14:22): Will the Minister for Consumer Affairs inform the house about what is being done to prevent South Australians from being misled about the environmental credentials of consumer products?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Minister for the Status of Women, Minister for Volunteers, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister Assisting in Early Childhood Development) (14:22): Our state government has been leading the way in a number of issues in relation to the impacts of climate change with fixed targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, along with a range of other very innovative measures. Prompted by the drought and numerous reports of global warming, awareness of environmental issues has never been higher in the minds of South Australians.

In response to growing community concern there has been a rapid rise in the green marketing of consumer goods. In the words of advertising and marketing, 'green is the new black'. The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Are you all still cranky? You have been so rude. When my boys became a little cranky and unruly, I used to give them a dose of Combantrin to get rid of their worms—and I think that is what members opposite need.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Get some Combantrin and you will feel better.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for MacKillop!

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs, along with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, is concerned at the rise of the so-called practice of green washing, which is the promotion of products as being eco-friendly without actually delivering on that promise.

Authorities here and overseas are increasingly recognising the emerging risk of consumers being exploited by unsubstantiated green claims and are acting to bring some integrity to the market, which in Australia is worth an estimated \$12 billion to the economy. Manufacturers are being warned not to overstate their green credentials as it could put them at odds with fair trading and trade practices laws. When we see the amount of toilet paper, air fresheners, freezer bags, washing powders, detergents, cleaning products and so forth that are badged with the promised environmental benefits, the reality is that the green promise may be confined to the cardboard packaging used on the product and not the product itself.

It is now vital that traders ensure that environmental claims used on packaging, advertising and promotional activities do not breach the Fair Trading Act, which prohibits traders from making false or misleading representations aimed at unfairly luring their customers. The maximum penalty for those found in breach of the law is \$100,000 for a body corporate, or \$20,000 in any other case. The kinds of claims being made currently include statements about energy and water efficiency, environmental sustainability, and the impact on animals or waterways.

These are important issues to South Australians who want to be sure that the money they are spending is making a real difference. If the statements are untrue, it is a clear case of

deception aimed at cashing in on consumers who are becoming increasingly aware and more conscious of doing the right thing for our environment. It is also important that the integrity of environmental claims is not compromised, so that manufacturers who are doing the right thing can genuinely compete with an honest advantage and other manufacturers can strive to improve their practices.

Earlier this year, the Office for Consumer and Business Affairs began officially tracking the number of green related complaints it was receiving and they will continue to monitor the situation. Around a third of complaints related to the use of ambiguous terms in describing products. People also complained about misleading advertising relating to the emission levels of vehicles and the biodegradability of products. Manufacturers wanting to claim their product is green in any way should be honest and truthful, outline the specific aspects of the product or the production process which is green, use straightforward language in any promotional material or labelling and explain the significance of the benefit and, most importantly, be able to prove it.

To help business understand their obligations when making environmental claims, the ACCC has produced a guide called 'Green Marketing and the Trade Practices Act' to inform businesses about their obligations when using these environmental claims.

MURRAY RIVER DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Does the minister concede that it will rain within the Murray-Darling catchment this year, but that rainfall that will be captured and retained in Victoria and New South Wales will not flow into South Australia?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:27): I do not concede anything.

MURRAY RIVER DROUGHT MANAGEMENT

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:28): I have a supplementary question. Exactly how much rain is required to avert the Lower Lakes and Riverland catastrophe the minister foreshadowed on ABC Radio this morning?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:28): Well and truly above average rainfall.

INFANT MORTALITY

Ms BREUER (Giles) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Health. What recent health indicators demonstrate that South Australia's health system is providing better health outcomes, whilst coping with increased demand?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Karna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:28): The latest statistics from the annual report of the South Australian birth defects register recently released by the Women's and Children's Hospital indicate a downward trend in the proportion of deaths associated with birth defects in South Australia. The proportion of post neonatal deaths associated with birth defects that occur between 28 days and the first birthday has dropped from the 20-year average of 6.8 per cent from 1986 to 2005 to 3.2 per cent in 2005. In other words, over 20 years (up to 2005), on average, it has been 6.8 per cent; at 2005 it has dropped to 3.2.

The proportion of infants who tragically die before 28 days has declined from a 20-year average of 14.4 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Combined, this represents close to a 50 per cent reduction in the number of deaths associated with birth defects, which is truly an outstanding outcome, as members opposite say.

The South Australia: Our Health and Health Services report, released on Tuesday, demonstrated that across all births nationally, South Australia has the lowest infant mortality rate in the nation. The infant mortality rate in South Australia has decreased from an average of 5.6 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1991-93 to an average of 4.4 deaths in the 2004-06 period. So it has dropped from 5.6 per thousand to 4.4 over that period. Put differently, the average number of infant deaths has dropped from around 111 deaths per year to an average of 79 deaths per year. This means that every year, on average, 32 infants, who would have otherwise died 15 years ago, now survive. These are quite remarkable figures and are a growing endorsement of the South Australian medical system—the doctors, nurses, midwives and others who work within it.

The core function of our public health system, of course, is to preserve life. Our system performs this function exceptionally well and continues to improve year after year. I think, unfortunately, many of us lose sight of these outstanding outcomes when we get frustrated by having to wait a few additional minutes for something such as a service in an emergency department. The overall outcomes of our system are profoundly good.

The extremely high standard of the public health system in this state was also emphasised by the life expectancy figures contained in that report. There has been a steady increase in life expectancy at birth for both men and women over the past 20 years. Between 1984 and 2003-05 the average life expectancy at birth for males increased by 5.2 years, or 7.1 per cent. Female life expectancy started from a higher base and increased at a rate of 4.5 per cent and now stands at 83.4 years. As I think I mentioned a week or so ago, the Australian expected life span now is second only to Japan.

These improving health outcomes have been achieved despite the incredible increased demands placed on our system. Over the last three financial years (and that is year to date May), emergency department attendances have increased by 14.8 per cent, or an average of 4.9 per cent annually. Similarly, we expect that 40,500 elective surgical operations will be performed in this new financial year, which is a 13.8 per cent increase on 2001-02. So, despite the extra pressure—more attendances in emergency, more elective surgery and more work in the system—the outcomes in terms of live births, decreased infant mortality rate and increase in life expectancy demonstrates that our system is working very well, and I congratulate all of those who work within it.

WATER PURCHASE FUND

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (14:32): Again, my question is to the Minister for Water Security. What has happened to the Premier's very public promise to establish an irrigation water purchase fund? On 15 November last, during the federal election campaign, the Premier produced a media release which called on the Prime Minister to provide federal government loans, administered by private banks, for the purchase of water entitlements. The Premier said the federal government should deposit \$250 million with the major banks to fund irrigation growers with permanent plantings at an interest rate of 3.5 per cent for the purchase of leased water for a period of up to three years. Since the federal Labor government was elected, the Premier has fallen quite silent on his proposal.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:33): There was a proposition that was put forward by the irrigation community for the federal government to consider longer term low interest loans for irrigators to be able to purchase water. It was rejected by the Howard government and it has also been rejected by this federal government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

LEGAL AID, HOMELESS PEOPLE

Ms PORTOLESI (Hartley) (14:34): My question is to the Minister for Housing. What services are being provided to people who are homeless to improve their access to legal representation?

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) (14:35): Since coming to office this state government has allocated over \$23 million to initiatives designed to reduce homelessness. The projects that we have put in place demonstrate that homelessness is preventable and that housing is achievable with the right support. We have found that many of the issues faced by people who are homeless have particular legal concerns. Many homeless people have reached the point in their lives where they cannot or will not seek help to enforce their rights. However, with a little legal support they can develop a pathway out of homelessness.

It was because of this that I supported the establishment by the Welfare Rights Centre of the Housing Legal Clinic. This is a place where lawyers from private practice come and offer their services pro bono. The housing clinics provide work for the most vulnerable people in our community and, in the last financial year alone, they provided \$770,000 worth of free financial and legal support. That is an extraordinary amount of volunteer effort. Last year an evaluation of the

four city-based legal services was undertaken and I am pleased to say that the evaluation came back as a resounding success. Last week I had the pleasure of launching a new Housing Legal Clinic in Port Adelaide. That is the fifth clinic and the first one based in the suburbs. There is something incredibly powerful about people who are powerless having a lawyer speaking on their behalf. People who used to give them a very hard time suddenly sit up and take notice.

Ms Chapman: It doesn't get them a house, though.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It gets them into housing. Often it is assisting them with evictions, which might be associated with debt matters. There might be just a few simple phone calls to reorganise someone's finances, yet having a lawyer on the line saying, 'I'm acting for this person,' is an entirely different matter. This pro bono work that is being done on behalf of the legal community demonstrates, I think, the legal community at its best and we support them in that. An expression of the success of the legal clinic was its recent win of the Give Well Good Giving charity award for the best community project in Australia. This award is a significant achievement for a program that has been operating for just two years. I pay tribute to all those lawyers who volunteer.

WATER SECURITY

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:37): My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Has the minister diverted water from environmental flows to critical human needs and what contingency plans does the government have in place should the quality or quantity of water in the Murray put Adelaide's critical needs at risk?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:37): Under the Senior Officials Group reports and the Prime Minister and the Premier's agreement, critical human needs is the first priority, of course, in supplying water out of the Murray-Darling Basin. Through the negotiations at the national level, critical human needs have been set aside for this water year, which commenced on 1 July, and during the course of this year South Australia will be required to accumulate a reserve for the next water year.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Mr KENYON (Newland) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. What are the state government's recent achievements on recreational trails and how do they help boost physical activity?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:38): The state government is celebrating the completion of another iconic recreational trail for South Australia. The Kidman Trail, which extends 255 kilometres from Willunga to Kapunda, is South Australia's first multiuse trail for horseriding, mountain biking and walking. The Kidman Trail is set to become another state icon trail, complementing other popular South Australian trails, including the Heysen, Mawson and Riesling trails.

Recreational trails provide excellent opportunities for physical activity for all members of our community. I am advised that research indicates that trails provide a strong incentive to exercise and are also used as a way to spend quality active time with family and friends. The government's commitment to trails has been further strengthened with the release of guidelines for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of recreational trails in South Australia.

South Australia is the first state to have a generic set of guidelines for the development of trails. These guidelines will ensure that South Australia is a leader in terms of developing sustainable trails with minimal impact on the environment. Taking time to enjoy a trail is an enjoyable way to be physically active, and I encourage all South Australians to explore and experience our state's excellent trails and, in particular, the new Kidman Trail.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Health. Who will now run the child protection unit, which provides for forensic assessment of suspected child abuse victims? After three years of vacancies in this unit and advertising both nationally and internationally, at a meeting at about 12 o'clock today the

resignations of the two remaining forensic paediatricians in this state became effective, and there are now no forensic assessment paediatricians in this unit to undertake these duties.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:40): Of course, the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service will continue to run the service. The resignations, as I understand it, have yet to take effect, and I am hopeful that they will not be finalised. I met with the two forensic paediatricians earlier today and assured them that the government valued the work they do. I recognise the difficult circumstances in which they do it. I assured them that the offer we had made of 76 per cent was a genuine offer to better pay them for the services they provide and that, if they believe they should receive more, the industrial relations process is the way to proceed.

I explained to them that, under the EB arrangements the government was negotiating, there would be a mechanism by which additional over-award payments could be argued for, and that would take into account issues such as retention and attraction. We had a very pleasant meeting, and the meeting concluded.

Medical services to children will not be compromised in any way whatsoever as a result of any potential resignations in this area. They provide a range of services, and all the services that are medical in nature will continue to be provided. They also provide a forensic service, which of course is an important service, but it is not in itself a medical service. So, any child who requires services will continue to receive medical services from that source. It would only be the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who was gleeful about this issue, and I think it is a great regret that that is the case.

Mr WILLIAMS: Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I understand that it is out of order to impute improper motive, and I think that is what the minister is doing.

The SPEAKER: Sorry, I missed what was said by the minister that the member for MacKillop said was imputing improper motive. I did not hear anything.

Mr WILLIAMS: The minister implied that the deputy leader asked the question gleefully.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! That is not the meaning of imputing improper motive. The minister would have to be accusing the member of having—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the member for MacKillop interested in my ruling or not? No. I will just rule that no improper motive is being imputed.

RENMARK HOSPITAL

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:43): Will the Minister for Health explain why the Renmark hospital—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Transport will come to order.

Ms CHAPMAN: Will the minister explain why the Renmark hospital is being downgraded under his Country Health Care Plan only a month after work was completed on a \$3.1 million upgrade to the hospital?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:44): I am very pleased that the deputy leader has asked this question, because it gives me an opportunity to answer it in great detail. Of course, her question (as is often the case with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's questions) is based on a false premise.

The government is not downgrading the Renmark hospital whatsoever. In the advice that I have provided in a ministerial statement today, and based on a statement I made to the community just the other day, I said we expect there to be no change in the services that are provided by that hospital over the period of the next 10 years or so. It depends very much on the decisions made by independent doctors. Over the last year or so the doctors of Renmark Hospital decided that, in

future, birthing, which used to take place Renmark Hospital, will now take place at Berri Hospital. That is a decision they came to based on their judgment about what was needed. Renmark Hospital will continue to provide the current range of services while a workforce is there able to provide them. That is the point that I have been making consistently over the last four or five weeks, which has been misinterpreted in a malicious way by the opposition and some of its colleagues, for crass political purposes.

HOUSING SA

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:46): Is the Minister for Housing aware of who are the lawful tenants of the Elizabeth Housing SA property that was occupied by the mother of seven who has now been charged with criminal neglect, which has now been referred to today as an investigation by the minister in relation to the criminal activity of child neglect? Has an investigation been undertaken as to why those tenants allowed the other family to reside in the house?

During estimates this week the minister confirmed that this family was actually in a Families SA house. I note today in the ministerial statement given by the minister that there will be an inquiry in relation to why the Department of Education and his Department for Families and Communities did not pick up this issue, but I am asking why Housing SA knew nothing about it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member has gone way beyond an explanation. The Minister for Families and Communities.

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) (14:47): Of course, all of that amounted to a misrepresentation of my ministerial statement, but I will leave people to read it. I did take some care in setting out that I was constrained about what I could say, because—

Ms Chapman: What a weak excuse.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, it is not a weak excuse. Those who have followed the debate would realise that I have been out on almost every day of this event seeking to provide as much information as possible in the public sphere, because I knew that there was public interest in this information. We went as far as we possibly could. You would have noticed that most of the information was not about the family of seven, because that is the family that has been the subject of a criminal neglect charge, and it has also been the subject of Youth Court proceedings about which there are orders about what can and cannot be said. And, now, of course, we have an entire review, which is not confined to the activities of Families SA, Housing SA, the Education Department, the Health Department, or any other agency. It concerns any agency, government or non-government, that may have come in contact with the family.

Those matters will be fully traversed. If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks that it is appropriate for me to come in here and start discussing details about matters that police are currently investigating, where there are criminal charges and where I could say things that would prejudice that matter, I think she is sadly mistaken.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (14:48): Can the Minister for Health advise the house if, under the new Country Health Care Plan, there will be a change in procurement procedures to purchase from regional hospitals back under the control of a central body? In an estimates committee the minister stated:

I know that one of the issues in country health, for example, is that, until the country health arrangements change, every hospital in the country (40-odd) went through its own procurement process. Clearly, there are real advantages if you can procure across a bigger system. However, central procurement in the past meant goods were not purchased locally from small businesses. Goods were often stale before they reached their destination, and local jobs were lost.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:49): I thank the member for Flinders for her question. She asked me about procurement processes, and I gave an answer in estimates the other day in which I made a general point that if you procure across a broader range of institutions you get a better unit price. But, of course, in relation to country hospitals, a protocol will be put in place, so that minor matters—I imagine the sandwiches that are bought for offices and so on—

would still be purchased in the local community. I am really talking about the bigger items, the items that are required in bulk.

There was a case in one of the country hospitals, as I recall, where a procurement process went very badly wrong and, if it had been allowed to continue without intervention, the hospital would have been without a particular service. So, it is important that we have a standard in place for procurement that ensures not only that the goods and services provided meet the mark in terms of quality and safety but also that we get the best price for the community. If the opposition is seriously saying that we should have a different approach to procurement from that, I am happy for them to argue it.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AGREEMENT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:51): Will the Minister for Water Security, as the member for Chaffey, as a representative of Riverland people and as leader of the Nationals, resign from the Rann Labor cabinet today in light of announcements made at COAG just moments ago? At a just completed press conference held by Prime Minister Rudd and the premiers, Victorian Premier John Brumby proudly boasted that it was a good result for Victorian irrigators. He said, 'Victoria has received another \$103 million of benefits as part of the deal.' Nothing has been provided in the way of new water flows for South Australia. When the Prime Minister asked our Premier whether he would like to speak at the press conference, he declined.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! A question of a minister as a private member is out of order, but the essence of the question was whether the minister would resign, and she can resign only as a minister. Minister?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (14:53): No.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Goyder.

SHARED SERVICES SA

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Finance.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the member for Goyder.

Mr GRIFFITHS: And I was speaking loudly, too, sir. Can the Minister for Finance advise how long it will take to fill the vacant office space set aside for the Office of Shared Services, and how much rent has been paid for these unused properties?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Finance, Minister for Government Enterprises, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:54): Suitable accommodation of the required size comes onto the Adelaide market infrequently, and the Adelaide CBD office accommodation vacancy rate is currently running at 2.6 per cent. We have investigated and secured accommodation that meets the organisation's requirements.

The implementation of shared services reform is at a crucial stage, with the transition of accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll services, involving approximately 1,300 employees, due for completion by December 2008. Given the lumpy availability of suitable accommodation in the Adelaide CBD, Shared Services SA has secured the necessary space as close as prudent to the date of transition of these staff and services.

Shared Services SA occupies nine levels in Westpac House and the accommodation will be fully occupied by the end of this year by accounts payable and accounts receivable services. Lease conditions for Westpac House comprise several favourably negotiated considerations, including a rent-free period and fit-out provided at no cost. This has had the effect of minimising the period during which rent was paid for unoccupied space. In the short term, to further mitigate cost and to ease other agency accommodation pressures, part of Level 3 in Westpac House has been subleased to the Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology. In addition, Wakefield House, which is a government-owned building, will be progressively occupied by Shared Services SA. Currently, it occupies only three levels of this building, with the remaining floors occupied by other government agencies until Shared Services SA requires those floors.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (14:55): Will the Minister for Health advise the house who provides security at our regional hospitals at present and will that remain the same under the new plan? I have been advised that the security contracts for our schools, SA Water, United Water and correctional services are to be taken over by PSSB, a branch of SA Police, taking substantial contracts away from small businesses.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:56): I did not hear all the question, but I take it that it was: who provides security to regional hospitals and will that change in the future? I assume that the security contracts that are put in place are done on a tender basis; presumably, in the past it has been done on a hospital-by-hospital basis. How it will be worked through under the integrated country health services I cannot answer, but I am happy to get a report for the member. However, the two criteria we would want to make sure apply are that we get a good security service and that it is cost competitive.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart) (14:56): I also direct my question to the Minister for Health. He seems to be a popular minister today.

The Hon. J.D. Hill: Thank you very much for that recognition of my popularity.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Only here—not out in the country areas! I was distracted, Mr Speaker. Will the minister advise the house how his Country Health Care Plan fits in with the comments made by the government during the election campaign and as announced on 2 February 2002, when the Premier said that not one public hospital would be privatised or closed under Labor in the country or in the city?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Just be patient. The house would be aware that the Country Health Care Plan, released after the budget, put forward a number of recommendations that will remove services, downgrade hospitals and deny country people what is their basic right: a decent health service.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:58): I thank the father of the house for his question, and I indulge him his commentary. I thank him for acknowledging my great popularity, particularly in regional South Australia. The reason for that popularity—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Well, it may not be acknowledged yet, but I am sure that in future times, as people understand how I am improving country health, I will indeed be very popular. What we have in place in country South Australia at the moment—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: These are profound words I am about to give to you, so I suggest you listen. At the moment, in country South Australia, particularly in smaller communities, we have a history of services disappearing from towns over time as a result of decisions made, largely, by private practitioners—either they retire or they move to another community. So, one day in a particular community we might have birthing, but the next day the doctor leaves and that stops. Where do people then go? There are no arrangements necessarily put in place once the doctor decides to go. In some communities, we have surgical procedures put in place and then, when the doctor goes, those surgical provisions are no longer available.

Our strategy is to try to put in place a platform of services so that people in country South Australia can be guaranteed access to a proper range of services into the future. So, as part of our strategy, we will identify the four major hospitals where we will build up services across a whole range of areas and, over time, salaried medical officers will staff those hospitals, be involved in training and provide services across a broader range of areas.

In addition, we will have about 12 hospitals in moderate sized communities—places such as Clare, Millicent and Kangaroo Island—where we will also build up services. There will not be as many salaried officers in those places but, rather, more fly-in specialists, who will work closely with

the GP specialists and GP proceduralists to ensure we have a sufficient range of services so that there is a broad range of surgical, medical and birthing arrangements in place. It would mean that 85 per cent of country South Australians would be within an hour of one of those 16 hospitals.

In the 43 other hospitals, which are the smaller hospitals, services come and go as doctors come and go. As a result of concerns expressed in the country, we have identified 30 of those smaller hospitals where we think there is unlikely to be much change over the next 10 years because of staffing arrangements or doctors currently in place. We have identified about 13 hospitals where a very small range of services are currently provided. They are hospitals where no birthing happens now and no surgery happens now. All they do is deliver GP services and some medical acute admissions.

I will give members a flavour of what happens in those hospitals. I will refer to a number of them. In the case of Karoonda (in the electorate of Hammond) there were 185 days in 2007 when there was not one patient in that hospital—for about half the year there was not one patient in that hospital. In the case of Snowtown (the member for Frome's electorate) there were 178 days in 2007 when there were no patients. In Pinnaroo (the member for Hammond's electorate) on 170 days there were no patients in the hospital. In Hawker, which borders the electorates of Stuart and Giles, there were 100 days in 2007 when there were no patients in the hospital.

The question I put to the opposition is: how can you justify empty hospitals? What we are saying through this Country Health Plan—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order. The Minister for Health.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. What we are saying through the Country Health Care Plan is that we will work with the 13 or 14 individual communities which I have identified and which have only minimal services. We will work with those communities and the health advisory boards in those towns, under the chair of the task force (which I have announced), to determine the appropriate range of services to meet the real needs of the people in those communities.

This is about trying to work out what services are needed in those towns. They do not have surgery now and they do not have birthing now. They have a minimum range of services. We want to increase primary health care, particularly in those communities. We want to ensure that wherever they are in country South Australia they have better access to surgical and birthing options in other hospitals in nearby communities.

That is what the plan is about. It is about a strategic approach. The continual references to downgrading and closing, and so on, are just absolute nonsense. They are totally dishonest claims. This is about the provision of better health services right across country South Australia. Members opposite are playing short-term politics and not looking at the big picture, which is about the long-term interests of country South Australians and their health.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:04): I have a supplementary question. How many empty rooms, wards and corridors are there in public hospitals in Adelaide, including Modbury Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Women's and Children's Hospital?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:04): I hardly see how this is a supplementary question. We all know that various sections of different hospitals are closed down and not funded. That is true. I am saying that in a number of these hospitals there are not empty rooms but, rather, empty hospitals. There are no patients in them whatsoever for about half the year—not one patient. In all the hospitals which the deputy leader named there are plenty of patients.

TRAMLINE EXTENSION

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Transport. Will the minister advise what impact the proposed tram extension to Port Road will have on traffic flows between the city and Hindmarsh Bridge at Thebarton, and will it take out an entire lane of traffic?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Elder—Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Energy) (15:05): The Leader of the Opposition was recently at the civil construction federation awards (I think) where he had the pleasure of handing an award to one of our projects,

the Bakewell Underpass. I note that one of the other projects nominated but, unfortunately, while in the finals, not given an award, was also the tram extension. These, of course, are not judged by us. The reason I mention this is that what was demonstrated has been the approach we take with contractors in these arrangements, getting into early contractual arrangements, just like I might say with the Anzac Highway underpass, which, before completion, has already won an award for design.

That is the reason that, when we go out with these jobs and with those arrangements with the contractor, we expect to get the best possible use of their expertise and innovation in the final design of the project. That is what you do. What I do not do is sit in my office, look at a drawing of the road and decide how I would like it to go. I can only say that that approach has proved to be very successful.

Mr Goldsworthy: Answer the question.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am just trying to explain to you—

Mr Williams: You are spending hundreds of millions of dollars and you do not know what is going to happen.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I know what is going to happen; I know exactly what is going to happen: we are going to have a tram extension to the Entertainment Centre. We are going to do that in a very sensitive way in managing traffic, just like we have done—

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I note that, on the question of tram extensions—don't worry, I have a long answer for you on this one—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Can I say, sir, haven't they demonstrated themselves to be so rude today? Could it be that they have seen the poll and, after all the hyperactivity of the Leader of the Opposition, mid term they have gained a per cent from an historic thrashing a couple of years ago? Mid term they have gained a per cent, which, of course, the Leader of the Opposition would tell me would get him how many seats?

Mr Koutsantonis: None.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: So, no wonder they are a bit rankled today; no wonder they are all a little unhappy. I heard the Leader of the Opposition saying that the member for Davenport is welcome to go—I am not surprised by that, after all—because the by-election will be a test of the leadership of Mike Rann. We want that Davenport seat back because we last held it—I don't recall, I don't think we ever have. It will be a test of someone's leadership, all right, especially with that poll we just saw. But we will have difficulties, won't we, because when we call the two preselections in Davenport and Mayo, we will have people backstabbing each other, fighting, spilling blood—oh, no, that's them; that's right. No wonder they are all a bit rankled today. I just had to say it: it has been a bit dull, hasn't it?

Mr Koutsantonis: Have you put it on your website, Marty?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: They have not got the new poll up on their website, I note. The tram extensions are something with which the opposition will endlessly play politics. I point that out—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: And, of course, we get the forced laughter from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Vicki Chikerovski. The reason I say that is that I have very good grounds, and I say that seriously in explaining this question. Of course, in 1997, under John Olsen, they promised us a tram extension north of Victoria Square. As soon as we announced it, they opposed it. They announced they are going to build a tram extension to Football Park. Of course, as soon as we announce it, they oppose it. I note that in the Messenger this week (and he is not here) the member for Morphett has joined with his leader, even though he supported it previously, to oppose all the tram extensions but thinks one to the airport might be a good idea. Of course, no tram or train extension in Australia going to an airport has worked, but it is a better idea than anything we thought of.

I say all that so that members understand what is going on with tram extensions. The truth is that very good ideas by this government would be opposed, plainly and only, because they are

very good ideas of this government. We are going to be extremely sensitive to traffic management and I am extremely confident that the tram extension will sit very easily. And we have a few ideas, but I will not tell the opposition what those ideas are ahead of a final—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: It is so tiring. What I will say is this, Mr Speaker. They have been inventing stories that there has not been a study into this. There have been endless studies since 2005. But I would point out—

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a point of order, Mr Speaker. Surely some leniency has been allowed. The minister has got onto everything else except answering the question about how many lanes will close.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The Minister for Transport.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I am very confident that traffic management on this piece of road will sit very nicely with our tram extension. It is a very good idea. I believe that luminaries such as Rob Gerard think it is a good idea. However, he is not always right. He has backed some shocking losers in the past, but I think he is right on this one.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I hate Gerard—why do you say that? I have had very civil meetings with Rob Gerard every time I have seen him, and quite recently. We take a new approach with Rob: we try to show him the error of his ways. Mr Speaker, the bottom line is this: these people had an opportunity in 2006 on the tram extension—a very clear point of difference. They went out and opposed it—something that, of course, they had promised to build earlier. They opposed it because we were doing it and we support it, clearly unequivocally. Well, the results speak for themselves.

So, all I say to the member for Kavel when he is trying to make these points is this: you will have another opportunity. We will go to the election with this very clear plan, and you can oppose it again, and I am very confident the result will be similar. But, regarding the notion that keeps being promoted that these are not planned, the best thing I can say is: I invite you to go and look at the work done by the property council. Now they are all pretending they are not interested, and we will get fake laughter from the member for MacKillop at any moment. Go and look at the work that was done by the property council, completely independently. Go and look at the work that was done completely independently by the peak property group of South Australia and, lo and behold, it looks spookily identical to that done by the government. That is because, when you go out and look at things objectively, in the best interests of the economy and the state, you get similar answers.

So, we will proceed. We know we will suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous oppositionists, but we will proceed because—

Mr Williams: Why won't you answer the question?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: I will start again, if you like.

Mr Williams: Why won't you answer the question?

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

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: There is a number of different ways in which the tram might interact with the traffic. We have considered some of them. We will be going to an early contracting arrangement, in all likelihood, and it will be the preferred method of procurement, one which has delivered us award winning results in the past. That is why I am not going to give the opposition any specifics of what will be where. We are going to take the—

Mr Williams: Yes, you know the disaster is coming.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The disaster is coming. It has already been called the tram to nowhere, just as they called the other one the tram to nowhere. It is a disaster coming. I just say again, you opposed our last tram before the election, you lost massively. You are going to oppose this one, you are going to lose massively. I truly enjoyed the poll results today. At this rate of turning around the vote you should be the government sometime in 2046. I have amused myself for long enough. I hope I have informed my colleagues. I cannot help the other side because, after all, you cannot put in what God left out, but I do hope all on this side are better informed.

DESALINATION PLANTS

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Trade) (15:15): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: As the first step in the procurement process of the Adelaide Desalination Plant, SA Water will tomorrow issue a request for expressions of interest from national or international consortia to deliver the project. Respondents with the highest level of expertise in design, construction and operation of desalination plants are being sought. They will need to show specific expertise in marine intake and outfall structure modelling, design, construction and operation. In particular—

Mr VENNING: Sir, we are having trouble hearing the minister speaking on this side of the house.

The SPEAKER: Perhaps the minister might avail herself of one of the other microphones, if that one does not seem to be working. I take it the minister's statement has been distributed, anyway.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: Yes, it has, sir. Respondents with the highest level of expertise in design, construction and operation of desalination plants are being sought. They will need to show specific expertise in marine intake and outfall structure modelling, design, construction and operation—in particular relating to the diffusion of brine and managing environmental impacts.

The state government recognises the critical importance of ensuring we take every precaution in the procurement, construction and operation of this project. The environment is at the forefront of our planning for a desalination plant at Port Stanvac.

I would like to take this opportunity to outline some of the environmental investigations that are underway. There is the Marine Ecological Characterisation Study, habitat mapping and marine Species Review. These investigations are focused on identifying marine habitats, communities and species at the Port Stanvac site and wider region with the objective of identifying habitats or species of ecological significance and informing requirements for the design, construction and operation of the plant to minimise any potential marine impacts.

Bathymetric and seismic surveys are being undertaken to inform the design and construction. This information will also be built upon through the marine geotechnical investigations. Water quality investigations have commenced to provide baseline water quality information for the Port Stanvac site, and this information is informing the design requirements also. Hydrodynamic modelling investigations are being progressed that incorporate dispersion modelling and mid field modelling to inform the diffuser design and mixing requirements.

A whole Gulf St Vincent salt brine modelling analysis has also commenced to examine the overall water budget and determine any potential influence on the overall salinity in the gulf. A number of studies to assess potential impacts associated with entrainment of marine larvae are being progressed as part of identifying management measures to incorporate into the design. Eco-toxicological investigations are undertaken to determine the possible impacts and sensitivity of associated marine biota to the discharge.

Geotechnical and site contamination assessments are being carried out to provide an understanding of potential site contamination issues and any requirements for management or remediation for during construction. Air quality, noise and odour investigations studies are focused on collecting baseline information about current conditions at the site, identifying possible impacts for the project either during construction or operation. The studies will be used to identify management measures that will be needed. Assessments of offshore acoustic impacts are also being undertaken. Terrestrial and coastal flora and fauna assessments are being undertaken to identify areas of biodiversity significance at Port Stanvac and inform design considerations.

As part of the state government's Four Ways to Water Security strategy, the Adelaide Desalination Plant is an investment for the future that will allow us to be adaptable and flexible with our water supply management. We are ensuring that we fully consider our environment as we move forward on this most significant water infrastructure project in the state's history.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE**MURRAY RIVER**

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (15:20): Today I want to talk about water. We have just heard the minister announce that at last the government is to take the first step in the procurement of water: it will call for expressions of interest. After allocating \$96 million in this year's budget in the first step towards building a desalination plant, it is going to call for expressions of interest from the experts. After spending tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money mucking around with something it knows little about, it is going to get the experts in.

In my firm opinion, this is at least 12 months too late and it is one of the reasons why this government has had to take over 200 gigalitres of water, which would otherwise have been environmental flows coming down the river in the last water year and which would have flowed beyond the pumps at Mannum, Murray Bridge and Taillem Bend and into the Lower Lakes: 200 gigalitres of water has been taken.

In answer to a question in the house today, the minister suggested that that was because of some decision taken by a group of officials, with the involvement of the Prime Minister. Some 200 gigalitres of water that was assigned to South Australia last year, under very difficult circumstances, had to be held back to provide for critical human needs, principally for the city of Adelaide, in the next water year (which started a couple of days ago), because this government refused to accept the need to build a desalination plant. It was in denial for almost 12 months, and that was time lost.

Now, even after the government has accepted that, it has taken almost another 12 months to start to get expressions of interest from the experts, the very people who are doing this every day of the week all around the world. Back in March, I spoke to some of those people in Spain. They are building desalination plants in the Mediterranean Sea, where the water is a lot saltier than it is in our gulf. It is also much more restricted than our gulf. Why have we not been talking to some of those Spanish companies? They are experts. SA Water has mucked around for months and months and has spent tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars before going out and talking to the experts. As I said, the delay in building a desalination plant for South Australia is one of the reasons why we have such a diabolical situation in the Lower Lakes, the Riverland and the Murraylands.

Billions of dollars worth of produce comes out of that food basket—the Murraylands and the Riverland—each year. It is all on the cusp of being lost, because the Premier and the government have spent over 18 months playing politics. John Howard came out and said, 'I've got \$10 billion. We want to fix this up. We want to do something that has not been done since the 1890s. We want to get a common agreement. We want to get proper management and we will put a large amount of money in to do the things we need to do; to buy back overallocation and to buy decent infrastructure.'

But what has South Australia done? It has played politics. Premier Rann, the National President of the ALP, did not want John Howard getting one run on the board for that scheme, so he played politics with John Brumby to ensure that the scheme did not get off the ground at least until after the federal election. And, lo and behold, what has happened since the federal election? John Brumby has said, 'I don't mind this game. In fact, I'm not bad at it. I don't mind poking South Australia in the eye every now and again. I will do some more of it.' And that is what is happening today.

The Premier yesterday issued a press release about infrastructure spending in South Australia. John Howard put away the \$10 billion. He put the money aside, and it is available and will be spent on infrastructure. Why has the Premier been talking about that? Because he already did the deal. He knew he was going to get the money, but he lost everything else. Now, all his talk will be about the infrastructure, the \$500 million to \$600 million, because he cannot face up to talking about the real problem: overallocation and a truly independent management authority. He cannot talk about that because he was duded, and he has sold South Australia down the river again.

Time expired.

TIME FOR KIDS

Ms CICCARELLO (Norwood) (15:26): Today I would like to acknowledge a wonderful organisation in my electorate which is making a real impact upon the lives of disadvantaged

children in our community. I speak of Time for Kids, which began its life as the Society of Sponsors in 1960. It was founded by Stipendiary Magistrate William Scales, who, at that time, was in charge of the Adelaide Juvenile Court.

Seeing the children appear before him on a regular basis, Magistrate Scales noted that a common thread in their stories and lives seemed to be a lack of family support and positive influences. Concerned about the welfare of these children and wanting to make a difference, he and his wife founded the society and worked hard on developing a network of volunteer families who would take the children into their homes on a regular basis.

The aim of the society today, as it was back then, is to provide an opportunity whereby these children can participate in positive childhood experiences, receive the influence and guidance of a mentor and, perhaps most importantly, be the recipients of acceptance, love and care. In addition, it also serves the purpose of providing the children and their families with a much-needed break from the rigours of a sometimes stressful home life.

With these guiding principles forming the cornerstone of the organisation, Time for Kids has developed into a highly successful respite foster care program for at-risk or disadvantaged children in South Australia. Its commitment is unwavering and can best be summed up by its value statement, which states:

We believe that every child should have the opportunity to develop into a well adjusted and responsible member of the community. We value each child's potential and, through our program, seek opportunities to develop that potential.

The philosophy is simple. By connecting children with volunteer carer families on a part-time basis—usually one weekend a month in the metropolitan area or a week or so with a family in the country during school holidays—Time for Kids has ensured that the original aspirations of Magistrate Scales remain undiminished to this day.

Time for Kids assists about 150 children each year in Adelaide and in a number of country areas. Impressively, since its inception, it has now helped almost 4,000 children and their families. One only needs to look through the stories posted on its website or in its annual reports to see the enormous positive impact that Time for Kids is having on real families and real lives. Take, for instance, the story of Mason, a 21 year old who, since he was five years old, has spent time with the Killian family because his single mother had five other children and, although doing the best that she could, was not able to give the children the time and attention they craved. Mason recounted his memories of camping, fishing and birthday parties with the Killians, and he still enjoys a close relationship with the family to this day. In fact, Mason puts it best when he states:

But it was mainly being asked what I wanted for dinner or getting to sit in the most comfy chair at their house, receiving some attention and having time given to me.

These are simple things and pleasures that we might take for granted, but they have obviously made an enormous impact on Mason's life, so much so that Mason has enrolled to be a social worker because he realises what good he can do. He is currently finishing his degree, and has maintained such a close relationship with the Killians that he is now boarding with them while he finishes his studies.

Time for Kids has been the recipient of many state government grants in recognition of the outstanding work it does in our community. Last year I presented it with a cheque from the Volunteer Support Fund, and it also received substantial funding from the 2007 Community Benefits Fund. I am pleased to say that, last week, Time for Kids also received funding to the tune of \$62,500 from the 2008 Community Benefits Fund. I look forward to visiting Time for Kids soon to acknowledge its good work and to once again present it with well-deserved funds.

It is a privilege having such a committed and compassionate organisation in my electorate, and I extend my congratulations to all the staff at Time for Kids, in particular, the Manager, Kathy Garrett, and the Assistant Manager, Karen Lewis. To all of you, a job well done. And, last but certainly not least, I offer my heartfelt thanks to the many wonderful families out there who offer their time and their homes to give these children a shot at a better and happier life.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (15:30): In the short time allocated to me today, I want to bring to the attention of the house and to the attention of the people of South Australia the absolute desperate straits being perpetuated in the Lower Lakes and, in this case, in my electorate of Finniss, in the Goolwa/Hindmarsh Island/Currency Creek area. In saying that, I am more than aware of the situation in other lakes and up the length and breadth of the river in South Australia.

As was eloquently put by the member for MacKillop a few minutes ago, the lack of action and substance by the Rann government is, in my view, a criminal offence, and the government stands condemned for it.

In my electorate, there are desperate people—people who have reached the absolute end of their tether. They are seeing their livelihood wither up and die, and they are seeing their family being put under an enormous amount of pressure. They are wondering what the future holds for them, and they cannot get any drive or direction from either the federal government or the state government. After the announcement in the house this afternoon by the Leader of the Opposition about the outcomes of the COAG today, I think that will permanently finish off some of these people and their way of life and where they are going in the future.

I do not know how many members opposite have been down there to see what is going on, but let me tell members that there is little or no water coming down the river, and the waters are receding so quickly around Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island that, day by day, we are seeing more boats sitting on the bottom of the river, and we are seeing thousands, or more than likely tens of thousands, of long necked tortoises dying. But, more to the point, we are seeing the enormous impact on the community in those areas.

On Monday, I attended a meeting where some members of the community expressed their desperation and frustration about where we are going. What they want to know is where this is leading so that they can make a decision about where they will be in two years—about whether they continue in business or shut down it down, or whether their wife or husband goes out to work and about what their children will do—whether they stay in Goolwa or Hindmarsh Island in the region or whether they go away to work because there is no future.

The tourism industry is now faced with a progressive lowering of forward bookings, and they are in despair about the situation. A few businesses are still operating very successfully, such as hotels and such places where people go to relax as an outlet from the enormous amount of stress these people are under.

These people are in absolute despair, and they are getting to the point where they are lashing out. They can lash out at me as their local member; that is fine, I can absorb that. However, they are lashing out at the local councils and the mayors, and they are lashing out at the government; they are lashing out at anyone. That is what people do when they are stressed out of their brains. They have no other outlet but to lash out.

It is a very sad day for South Australia, and it is a very sad day for the people in my electorate who are in a situation where they just do not know where to turn. They have had Premier Rann make statements; they have had minister Wong make statements; they have had Prime Minister Rudd make statements; and they have had minister Maywald make statements. All they hear about is endless meetings, endless bureaucracy and endless plans and reviews—and no action.

They know we cannot make it rain, and they know it will take many, many months for water to come down the river if it was released today. But there is no direction and there is no future planning. They do not know where they are. On Monday, they were told, 'Oh, yes, there's another meeting in November to consider it further.' Well, I can tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I can tell the house that by November many of them will not be in business, because they will have had to shut down their businesses. They will not be able to make any plans for the future. They are desperate, desperate people in a desperate community, and my heart goes out to them.

I am fed up to the back teeth with the amount of spin, notification of meetings, and the absolute lack of substance coming out of the state and federal governments in relation to the people who make their living up and down the breadth of the River Murray and the Lower Lakes and, in this case, the people in the Goolwa, Hindmarsh Island and Currency Creek area.

For Victorian Premier Brumby to apparently boast today that he has done pretty well, I think is outrageous. I am worried that some of these people are going to do things they will regret. Their level of frustration and despair is such that they may take action they would not normally take. Some of them are not thinking normally, and it is a sad, sad day. I know the same thing is happening in my colleague the member for Hammond's electorate, further up the river.

Time expired.

HAMPSTEAD PRESCHOOL

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens) (15:35): Last week, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of Hampstead Primary School's preschool. The establishment of the preschool is a tribute to the persistence and dedication of the school community and, in particular, the school's principal, Angela Falkenberg, who is a truly enthusiastic and dedicated educationalist.

The school council approached me quite early last year, if not before, to enlist my support for a preschool at Hampstead Gardens. Clearly, there was a great need within the Hampstead Gardens/Greenacres community for a centre because of their lack of preschool services and the fact that, over the past three years, 50 per cent of Hampstead primary's reception students had not attended a preschool.

We know that this has serious implications for school readiness in the very young student and can create problems with regular school attendance, reduce the opportunity for access to early intervention programs and often lead to socialisation and self-confidence issues upon transition to school. The high level of students who had not attended a preschool created the need for teachers at Hampstead primary to introduce a curriculum more along the lines of a preschool in order to assist these children to develop the skills required for the beginning of literacy and numeracy learning.

In the past two years, Hampstead primary has been active in seeking to redress this issue within the school community. With no external funding, sadly, the school began a playgroup in 2005, which had an average of 10 children in attendance each week. A target group has been Aboriginal families living within the area, with three families regularly attending. It has been the school's intention to promote preschool education through the playgroup and to connect families with local preschool services; this has had quite some success.

Partnerships were established with the community and government agencies, and such partnerships have included the support of Adelaide Community Health, through a nurse attending the playgroup once each month, and assistance from Family Day Care, through help with the planning of playgroup activities and the identification of resources to support its operation.

The school has funded a school support officer for 2.5 hours per week to provide support for families attending the playgroup. Support has been given by the school chaplain, with information about community services and resources, and an Aboriginal education worker has been provided to connect with indigenous families and promote services. Students from Windsor Gardens Vocational College, who are enrolled in the Community Services pathways, also attend the playgroup. The school also provides resources and leads activities with children, and a parenting nurse from Child and Youth Health's Parenting Centre ran a workshop for families.

These strategies have provided a range of opportunities for local families for the specific needs of the Hampstead community. Hampstead primary covers an area with great socioeconomic disparities, and this is reflected in the number of very young students coming to the school with no prior engagement with the education system.

Hampstead primary has a broad demographic and provides services to many families from Aboriginal, migrant and refugee backgrounds, and these numbers are growing within the school community. The preschool will contribute greatly to the school's ability to service the local community. Hampstead Primary School is an important hub for the local community, and the commitment of its principal, Angela Falkenberg, to the establishment of the preschool has strong community support.

It would be remiss of me not also to thank our DECS Regional Director, Richard Costi, and his team for their support for the centre. I also thank the Minister for Education and Children's Services (Hon. Jane Lomax-Smith) for her support. Whilst the establishment of the centre is on a 12-month trial basis, with 30 enrolments already I have no doubt that the trial is a mere formality.

At the opening of the preschool many people and parents commented on what a wonderful facility it is. On the day the principal said that the effort of establishing a preschool in Hampstead Primary School was a tribute to persistence. Indeed, I think that is the case and I congratulate the whole school community.

MURRAY RIVER

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:40): I rise today to comment on the desperate situation in the Lower Murray and Lower Lakes. It is a disaster. It has just not been declared a disaster, as it should be. I note that as a result of an announcement there could be \$600 million of federal money

invested into the region for pipelines, but there is cautious optimism from people in the area. It is one thing to build pipelines, but it is another thing to build them on time to save communities from dwindling further and going toward destruction and to have water available for the pipelines.

It is interesting to note that the federal government has had to act on the Lower Murray and Lower Lakes and in the Riverland. I believe that some \$150 million of the package is going to the Riverland. It is obvious that the Minister for Water Security and the Premier have not secured water supplies for South Australia. Things could be done in desperate times. Some people are talking about a plan to find 250 gigalitres. It could be found in the Menindee Lakes and other water sources and purchased for emergency relief for Lake Alexandrina.

The bund was put in quickly on the Narrows between Lake Albert and Lake Alexandrina. They had a few problems because it was built from each side of the Narrows. It kept pushing the mud into the middle so instead of using 12,000 cubic metres of material, 38,000 cubic metres was used. At least one cement truck was tipped over and there were a few other problems. However, it does seem to be lifting levels in Lake Albert and helping to combat the acid sulphate soils. I hope that the acid sulphate situation is not used as an excuse to do other things.

The original trigger for Lake Alexandrina which is being mined to alleviate the pain on Lake Albert is minus 1.5. I am hearing anecdotal stories that it is heading back to minus one, which is half a metre above the level of the weir that was announced in November 2006, with no thought of environmental planning or proper costing by the Rann Labor government. It has taken 20 months for the communities of the Lower Lakes to get any action at all—20 months of people going out of business. It is 20 months of just not agriculture, irrigation and dairy families going down the drain but also recreation going backwards.

There is a perception, especially with houseboat companies, that there is no water in the river. Certainly, there is water in the river for houseboats. I acknowledge that the Department for Environment and Heritage is working with houseboat companies to find moorings on crown land; I acknowledge that. It is a great recreational holiday and people should take the opportunity to do it whenever they can.

I want to talk about the ferries that are not getting attention. Only one ferry is operating at Mannum. Recently, at a meeting at Mannum members of the community were asking representatives from the department, 'When will the second one run out of water?' It was obvious that the departmental representatives were not allowed to say anything. I can put my figure on it—there is somewhere between 600 millimetres and one metre of water to go and then they will not have a ferry because nothing is getting done. They need to have \$3 million or \$4 million set aside for the planning and extension of ferry ramps.

The government uses the excuse that we need environmental clearances and cultural clearances. Hang on, the irrigators have gone through these clearance processes. The recreational people, that is, the houseboat owners, have done it as well, so why can't the government? As far as these infrastructure programs coming into place, I hope it does happen for the Narrung Peninsula and Poltalloch Peninsula. I hope it does happen for the Langhorne Creek and Currency Creek. The one thing we have to secure is water not only for those pipes but for the lakes. As I said before, it is one thing to have infrastructure, but it is another thing to have water.

If seawater is ever let into Lake Albert or Lake Alexandrina in any amount, they will become stinking ponds and they will be no good for anyone; and this country will have to face the embarrassment of breaking its Ramsar agreement, an international agreement for significant wetlands.

Time expired.

ITALO-AUSTRALIAN MP FORUM

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:45): Today I would like to talk briefly about a forum which is meeting in this place later this afternoon and tomorrow, that is, the Australia-Italia MP Forum, of which I am the convenor and Richard Dalla-Riva (a Liberal from Victoria) is the deputy convenor. Members of this house and the upper house are also members. The object of the forum is that it seeks to promote and advance better economic, cultural and educational relationships between Australia and Italia. The forum advocates for closer links and better services and resources for Italian-Australians who have settled in Australia.

Membership to the forum is open to members of parliament from an Italian background from all Australian jurisdictions and members of the Italian parliament based in Australia. Officials from the Italian Embassy and consulates in Australia are also invited to participate in our forum

meetings. Reflecting its multipartisan membership, Liberal, Labor and other minor parties are members of the forum. At all times, the forum does endeavour to reach decisions through consensus. The forum seeks to add value to the work of existing organisations and processes and not duplicate the efforts of government and non-government organisations whose objects are similar to those of the forum.

The forum communicates with and works alongside existing key Italian-Australian organisations to achieve our objects. The forum seeks to develop links with key people and organisations in Italy and the European Union as a means of advancing the objects of our forum. As Italy is a key player in Europe, the forum seeks to work with the EU delegation in Australia as a means of enhancing links and communication with Italy, particularly in those areas where the interests of Italy and Europe overlap.

In relation to the program for the forum, a reception is being hosted by the Speaker of the House of Assembly—and I thank him for his hospitality—this evening and at which a number of community and business leaders will meet with MPs from across Australia. One of the highlights of tonight, apart from having a number of speakers, including the Italian ambassador, is a special screening of the *Italian Spiderman* video of which some members may be aware. *Italian Spiderman* now has—

Ms Fox interjecting:

Mr PICCOLO: I don't know. The *Italian Spiderman* is a cult video and has had over two million hits on the web. The director is a Flinders University student, Dario Russo. He is speaking tonight at the function about the project and how the program started. Tonight's program will also include a forum dinner, which will be attended by MPs of Italian background and also Marcia Fisher who is CEO of the Italian Benevolent Foundation. Our discussion tonight will be around aged care for Australians of Italian background.

The forum starts early tomorrow morning, with a forum breakfast at 7.30am, which is proudly sponsored by Com.It.Es(SA), the Italian Chamber of Commerce and the Italian Consul to South Australia. Formal forum discussions will take place tomorrow from 8.30am. On the agenda for tomorrow is a briefing by the Italian Ambassador to Australia, Stefano Janfolla, then we have speakers from Com.It.Es; the Italian Youth Group, ITSA; and also the Italian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They will brief us on issues affecting the Italian-Australian community in South Australia. We will also have an update of what is happening in the Italian parliament by Marco Fedi and Nino Randazzo, who are MPs elected to the Italian parliament but who are based in Australia.

In addition, we will look at issues regarding the teaching of Italian in Australia and whether the focus on Asian studies will impact in a negative way on the teaching of the Italian language and culture in Australia. We will also address the needs of Australian Italians in terms of aged care. We will undertake an audit of the Australian-Italian agreements and also work on a project which has been sponsored by the Australian Ambassador to Italy (Amanda Vanstone) to promote the Australian-Italian relationship.

Some of the MPs from interstate who will be involved in this forum include: Liliana D'Ambrosio from Victoria; Angela D'Amore from New South Wales; John D'Orazio from Western Australia; Amanda Fazio, a member of the upper house in New South Wales; Grace Grace from Queensland; and Donato Nardella from Victoria. Local MPs include John Gazzola and the member for Unley (Mr Pisoni).

Time expired.

CRIMINAL LAW CONSOLIDATION (DOUBLE JEOPARDY) 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 5, page 3, line 19 [clause 5, inserted section 331(1), definition of *acquittal*, (b)]—

Before 'discretion' insert:

direction or

No. 2. Clause 5, page 3, line 28 [clause 5, inserted section 331(1), definition of *administration of justice offence*, (e)]—

Delete 'an offence against' and substitute:

a substantially similar offence against a previous enactment or

No. 3. Clause 5, page 4, line 12 [clause 5, inserted section 331(1), definition of *Category A offence*, (h)]—

Delete 'an offence against' and substitute:

a substantially similar offence against a previous enactment or

No. 4. Clause 5, page 7, after line 16 [clause 5, inserted section 336(1)(b)]—

After subparagraph (ii) insert:

and

(iii) any other matter that the Court considers relevant.

No. 5. Clause 5, page 7, line 38 [clause 5, inserted section 336(4)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 6. Clause 5, page 8, line 2 [clause 5, inserted section 336(5)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 7. Clause 5, page 8, line 8 [clause 5, inserted section 336(5)(b)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 8. Clause 5, page 8, after line 8 [clause 5, inserted section 336]—

After subsection (5) insert:

(5a) If, more than 2 months after an order for the retrial of a person for a relevant offence was made under this section, an information for the retrial of the person for the offence has not been presented or has been withdrawn or quashed, the person may apply to the Full Court to set aside the order for the retrial and—

(a) to restore the acquittal that was quashed; or

(b) to restore the acquittal as a bar to the person being retried for the offence,

(as the case requires).

No. 9. Clause 5, page 9, line 16 [clause 5, inserted section 337(4)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 10. Clause 5, page 9, line 20 [clause 5, inserted section 337(5)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 11. Clause 5, page 9, line 26 [clause 5, inserted section 337(5)(b)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 12. Clause 5, page 9, after line 26 [clause 5, inserted section 337]—

After subsection (5) insert:

(5a) If, more than 2 months after an order for the retrial of a person for a Category A offence was made under this section, an information for the retrial of the person for the offence has not been presented or has been withdrawn or quashed, the person may apply to the Full Court to set aside the order for the retrial and—

(a) to restore the acquittal that was quashed; or

(b) to restore the acquittal as a bar to the person being retried for the offence,

(as the case requires).

No. 13. Clause 5, page 10, after line 6 [clause 5, inserted section 338(1)(b)]—

After subparagraph (ii) insert:

and

(iii) any other matter that the Court considers relevant.

No. 14. Clause 5, page 10, line 21 [clause 5, inserted section 338(4)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 15. Clause 5, page 10, line 25 [clause 5, inserted section 338(5)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 16. Clause 5, page 10, line 31 [clause 5, inserted section 338(5)(b)]—

Delete 'indictment' and substitute:

information

No. 17. Clause 5, page 10, after line 31 [clause 5, inserted section 338]—

After subsection (5) insert:

(5a) If, more than 2 months after an order for the trial of a person for an administration of justice offence was made under this section, an information for the trial of the person for the offence has not been presented or has been withdrawn or quashed, the person may apply to the Full Court to set aside the order for the trial and to restore the acquittal as a bar to the person being tried for the offence.

No. 18. Clause 5, page 11, lines 13 to 21 (inclusive) [clause 5, inserted Part 10 Division 5]—

Delete Division 5 and substitute:

Part 10A—Appeal against sentence

340—Appeal against sentence

Despite any other rule of law, if on an appeal against sentence the court is satisfied that the sentence should be quashed and another sentence (whether more severe or otherwise) imposed, the court must—

- (a) impose the sentence that should have been imposed in the first instance; and
- (b) order that the sentence—
 - (i) will be taken to have come into effect on a date before the date of the order; or
 - (ii) will take effect on a date on or after the date of the order.

Consideration in committee.

Mr PEDERICK: Madam Chair, I draw your attention to the state of the committee.

A quorum having been formed:

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

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Mrs REDMOND: Given that I have no idea what our position is on these amendments and as it is not on the *Notice Paper* for today, I can but indicate that, on the basis that the government has more numbers in this house than we do, our input is of little import anyway.

Motion carried.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SUPERANNUATION SCHEME) AMENDMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

APPROPRIATION BILL

Adjourned debate on motion:

That the proposed expenditures referred to Estimates Committees A and B be agreed to.

(Continued from page 3744.)

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:58): I will conclude my comments by talking briefly about superannuation and a few more things. Superannuation unfunded liability has grown enormously in the last financial year, from \$5.075 billion to an estimated result in 2007-08 of \$6.91 billion. I know

we have had a downturn in the market—the subprime collapse has caused a downturn in all economic indicators in the last six months—but this substantial increase of nearly \$2 billion must be a big concern to the government and no doubt a big headache for the Treasurer as to where he is going to find the money from.

During estimates we asked some questions about when it was intended for the maximum unfunded liability for the Public Service to be identified. In previous years' estimates it was identified that it was going to be 2010, and then in response to a subsequent year's question it was pushed out to 2012, but now we find that it has gone out even further to 2014 before the maximum level of unfunded liability is reached. We know that that liability is intended to be fully funded by 2034, but this is an enormous challenge. It is interesting that, when the government came to office in the 2001-02 financial year, the liability then was a fraction under \$4 billion. The Treasurer might give the impression that he is a very strong financial manager, but one of the largest liabilities in the state—unfunded superannuation—has grown enormously: there has been a 75 per cent increase over the last seven years. So, it is a big challenge for him.

I had the responsibility during estimates of deputising for other shadow ministers, and I spent a very interesting two hours with the Minister for Urban Development and Planning. He emphasised the review of the planning system that has been undertaken by the government over the last nine months, to ensure greater certainty of applications being approved in a much quicker time frame when they are lodged. I recognise that it is a very important area, but I wanted to emphasise to him that you can create all the plans in the world but you still need the people on the ground who can consider the applications within a reasonable time frame.

Having worked in local government, I know how hard it is to attract planners, building surveyors and assistant building surveyors, and the people who can consider applications and get them approved or know what to do with them are just not out there. Unless we get that sort of skills set into the state I cannot see that it will happen as quickly as the government would like. Let us hope we get that, because it is one skills set that we need to import.

I asked a very important set of questions of minister Caica, who I am directly shadowed against, with respect to employment, training and further education. A good day was spent with him. We certainly both recognise the fact that skills development for South Australia is of critical importance. We both understand that, in the next 15 or 20 years, South Australia's work force will need to replenish itself to the tune of 340,000 people or so.

The baby boomer generation is now in retirement mode. Those who were born in 1964 are the last of the baby boomers. Most of them will probably be retired within a 15 or 20-year period. As they are retiring, the large number of people born between 1946 and 1964 are creating enormous workplace difficulties in getting their skills set replaced as quickly as possible. Unless that happens, we will not have the economic benefit that the state hopes to achieve over the next 20 years. So, it is a big challenge not only for minister Caica and the government but also for future governments, of which I hope to be a part. Let us hope that it happens. Importantly, I think we need to recognise that immigration will be a big component of our solution.

It is true that South Australia's workforce participation rate is a little less than the national average—at about 63 per cent, I think, compared to 65 or 66 per cent. We need to maximise the number of people who can work and get them into the workplace. About 41,000 people in South Australia are unemployed at the moment. We know that 4,000 of them are young people between the ages of 15 and 19. Let us do all that we can.

We had a good hour with the Minister for Regional Development. I was very concerned initially about the delay in the Regional Development Board funding agreement coming through, but I recognise that it is now in place. Unfortunately, it is only a 2.5 per cent increase. I think the boards would have enjoyed it if they had had better resources and were able to continue the wonderful work they do.

I spent all day yesterday with minister Gago and asked lots of questions about plastic bags and radioactive waste. The minister gave us an assurance that the 80 sites around South Australia in which radioactive waste is stored are safe. Given that there is a relatively sparse level of checking on these facilities, we tried to get on the record the fact that better policies need to be in place. The government has stated numerous times over the last five years that it will develop a facility, but it has not yet done so.

Time expired.

Mr PISONI (Unley) (16:03): I am the shadow minister for education and children's services, and I had a big day on Friday 27 June, which was the day of the education estimates. I draw the attention of the house to a line in the minister's opening statement. She said, 'We cannot expect schools to address every community need.' It is true that we cannot expect them to address every community need, but they should at least address basic community needs. Unfortunately, there are some people in our community who have difficulty with their basic community needs, and we saw that played out extensively last week with the Minister for Families and Communities, the Minister for Education and Children's Services and the CEO of the Department of Education and Children's Services.

I have quite a bit of interest in what is happening in the schools in the forgotten north, and I asked a number of questions about schools in the Elizabeth area, in particular. I note that the member for Napier was not there. I would have thought that, being the member for that very difficult area, he would be very interested to know what was happening in the estimates committee with respect to education and would have done everything he could to be on that committee. But he chose not to—other things were obviously of more interest to him, and he was not there.

I asked the minister a question about how many breakfasts were served to children in our schools and, because it is not an official policy of DECS, the minister showed no interest in answering that question. I certainly thought that that was disappointing. It is also very frustrating to understand how the Minister for Families and Communities could make the following claim in the newspaper about the families that were the subject of media attention last week. He said:

Given the physical state that they are in, I think it would be difficult to imagine them being at school and teachers not immediately aware of their circumstances and making the relevant notifications.

I think that says it all, and we heard that during estimates. The Premier's own thinker in residence, Dr Fraser Mustard, was also surprised by the lack of communication between the Department of Education and Children's Services and the Department for Families and Communities. I think he described the relationship as 'chaos'. We certainly saw that chaos come into play last week and during the estimate committee. But perhaps we will talk about that a little later.

Our hardworking teachers cannot do everything, but our schools are important radars in picking up early signs of neglect and abuse. In my experience of being a parent of children at government schools over the last nine or 10 years, either as a member or chair of the school council, I have seen the hard work that teachers do and their dedication to their jobs, and I acknowledge that. They are certainly not motivated by money; I have experienced that. They are motivated by other reasons, and I congratulate them on that.

Of course, in estimates, both the education minister and the department CEO, Chris Robinson, confirmed that mandatory reporting had picked up problems associated with the recent high-profile cases in the northern suburbs. There was then a retraction from the CEO a little later, and one wonders just who wrote the retraction he read into *Hansard*. The minister went on later to contradict the statement made by Mr Robinson, so I think there is a bit more of that saga to come down the track. In the last four to six weeks—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PISONI: I notice the Attorney-General interjected 'Belinda Neal'. We have seen violence escalating in our schools and we had a government announcement for security fencing, even in designer styles. It may go some way towards protecting school property and keeping those who should not be there out of the grounds, but it will not protect our children suffering abuse at home. Nor will it prevent the widespread violence of disengaged and unruly students, and neither will providing teachers with mobile phones, which is quite innovative. After 20 years of the wide distribution of mobile phones, the government has come up with an idea to improve school security by distributing mobile phones to teachers.

It would be fair to say that, just as it is unusual to come across someone who smokes cigarettes in this day and age, it would be very unusual to come across an adult who does not have a mobile phone. This is a great, innovative—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PISONI: I meet very few people who smoke. The government's innovative program is to introduce mobile phones for teachers to report violent activities on school grounds, rather than look at the core social problems of some of our school communities.

We discussed the Premier's Be Active program, which these days is computer-based. According to the Premier, it is about getting kids to be more active, but we learned that it is a community-based program—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: How active are you? You don't look very active.

Mr PISONI: The Attorney-General is again making fat jokes, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I ask that you ask him to refrain. I am sure that the Hon. Mr Finnigan would be very offended by his fat jokes. It is not very Christian behaviour, Attorney-General. The Active Challenge, with a \$4 million a year budget, was cut to \$425,000 a year and transferred to a computer. I say to anyone who accepts the Premier's title in front of a program is to be very wary of a cut. The Premier's Be Active program was cut by \$3.5 million. So, please, anyone out there running a government program, do not put your name on it, and do not take up any offer from the Premier to have his name in front of your program, because you will be guaranteed a budget cut.

Then, of course, we heard the education minister boasting about the new EPODE program. There was a great Dorothy Dixier in the health estimates from the member for Morialta about the EPODE program. Unfortunately, neither the health or education minister understand the mechanics of the EPODE program, who built it, and what their interests are in promoting healthy aspects of junk food and alcohol industries. The budget estimates exposed an imported French program, which is coming to Australia, which the health minister could not sell to any other health jurisdiction in Australia. It was taken to a meeting of health ministers and no-one took it up other than the minister in South Australia. Obviously, he was starstruck by Dr Borys. I can understand that; he is a spin doctor. One of the prominent ministers in the media team that is Mike Rann Incorporated, the first spin government the state has had for a very long time—

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: On a point of order, the member for Unley is referring to the Premier by his Christian name and surname. I ask him to refrain from doing that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was distracted, but, if that was indeed the case, I insist that the member comply with the ancient procedures of this house.

Mr PISONI: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and in case you missed it, I said 'Media Mike'.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The only way in which a member can be referred to is by their electorate or title.

Mr PISONI: I will no longer refer to the member for Ramsay as 'Media Mike'.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, the member for Unley will withdraw that comment and proceed with debate!

Mr PISONI: I will withdraw the comment. The Minister for Health was starstruck, and in all his staff's emails (I have the FOI documents) that went to and from France we read how excited they were about their trip to France to meet Dr Borys and his PR machine, which promotes aspects of junk food as a health option, with clients such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Nestlé and Ferrero. Nutella is chocolate and sugar, yet we have seen that ad where they try to pass it off as a healthy alternative for our kids by pointing to the nuts. It is absolutely extraordinary, and this government has fallen for it. The Rann government spin doctors have fallen victim to the spin doctors of the junk food industry.

Then we went into a discussion about super schools. It is interesting that the education minister is continually in the media boasting about the super schools, but when I asked her for details, she said, 'That's not my department; that's the Treasurer's.' She had great difficulty with the concept of monoline insurance. She could not explain what it was or whether it was being purchased for the PPP projects for the super schools. Monoline insurance, of course, is a very important issue, because without monoline insurance there are enormous risks for taxpayers. We have seen what has happened with the availability of monoline insurance since the collapse of the financial markets, in the USA in particular. With the loan scandals we have seen happening over there, it has become very difficult if not impossible to get monoline insurance. However, I will leave that for the minister and the Treasurer to sort out, considering the minister was not interested in any of the processes of the PPPs for the super schools.

Then, of course, the estimates process revealed that the one-third of South Australian students who attend non-government schools, and the taxpaying parents who choose to send their children to non-government schools, will continue to rely on the federal government for funding, but mostly it will come out of the parents' own pocket, in the Catholic sector in particular.

Mr Santamaria would be so disappointed to learn that this state government has no interest in supporting them and their choice by providing only the bare minimum of additional funding. Under the Rann government, non-government schools funding will remain the lowest per student average in Australia.

The new studentcentric model, which has been a topic for debate for quite some in the new EBAs, was discussed. We on this side of the house believe that funding should be about the best outcomes for students. We will not tolerate any cuts to school funding that would disadvantage our small schools. We will not tolerate any funding model change that would discriminate against our small schools, and that is what we are seeing. Calculations have revealed that, under this new funding model, 170 schools will have less funding, and the government has no intention of giving them adequate top-up to make the new model work. The plan is that the government wants these schools to wither on the vine so that, in the end, when they cannot provide the subject choices or the resources they will put up their hand and say, 'All right, you've got us. Please merge us for the sake of our children.' In the meantime, a generation of children will have gone through those schools with reduced services. I must say that it is a very cruel way in which to deal with changing demographics in the community.

Then, of course, we heard about the massive infrastructure spend on our schools. However, if you read the budget papers, you will find that there is only \$1.9 million of spending on new projects. An amount of \$70 million was spoken about in the budget but, if you read the budget papers, only \$1.9 million is being spent on new projects this year. Of that \$70 million, \$20 million is coming from the federal government. The government is falling behind on existing projects—we have seen a lot of adjustments, blowing out the time frames on school projects by between six and 12 months. So, the bulk of that \$70 million has gone on playing catch-up.

Of course, the most disturbing thing about the estimates process is that we saw just how the loss of the \$30 million federal government funding over three years has affected our schools, our primary schools in particular. That is \$33 million of funding last year that is not here this year for capital projects in our schools, and that includes computers for our primary schools. So, we have a huge infrastructure hole that has not been addressed by either the federal government or the state government, and that is obviously very disappointing.

We then moved onto the digital revolution, where there was an extraordinary revelation when the minister for education said that in South Australia the digital revolution is about replacing existing computers. Yet, during the election campaign, we had Mike Rann, as the national President of the ALP, spruiking for Kevin Rudd, saying, 'Look at this great computer program. There are computers for everyone.' However, after the election, when we get down to the fine print, we find out that it is from year 9 to year 12. Then, when we look at it in finer detail, we find that it is one computer for every two students. Of course, the first round is for the most needy schools, where there is only one computer for every eight students.

The minister for education told us that there would not be any additional costs, because these are replacement computers, not new computers. But that was not the promise that Mike Rann, as national President of the ALP, and Kevin Rudd, the prime ministerial candidate at the last election—

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, you instructed the member for Unley, most specifically, not to refer to the Premier by his Christian name and his surname.

Mr PISONI: Madam Deputy Speaker, I was not referring to the Premier: I was referring to the President of the ALP.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Unley, there is—

Mr PISONI: —and the Attorney-General knows that. He does not like what I am saying, so that is why he continues to interrupt with pointless points of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Unley, take your seat. There is no debate on points of order. The point of order is upheld. Please proceed, member for Unley.

Mr PISONI: So, it is obvious that the Attorney-General is embarrassed about the Rudd promise and the way in which the Rann government has handled the situation. The minister does not even understand the program—how it is supposed to put extra computers into schools, not replace existing computers. Remember: the promise was a computer for every child. Now we find out that it is one computer for every two students, but in South Australia it is a replacement program only. So, an embarrassing gaff.

When she was asked to explain why New South Wales had an extra quarter of billion dollars to install its new computers, this minister said in the media, 'Oh, I didn't know about that. I don't know what they're doing over there. I only know what's happening in South Australia.'

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PISONI: It was along those lines, Attorney-General. I suggest that you contact Media Monitors. I know you are embarrassed about the computers program because I know that schools in your electorate would be missing out because of the poor way this has been handled and because of the poor negotiating skills of the education minister. You should be embarrassed, Attorney-General, because the way that this has been happening is an absolute disgrace.

I was amazed at the fact that my line of questioning to the Minister for Small Business was ruled out of order time and again. Whenever it related to something that was important to small business, the minister said that it was not her area; for example, payroll tax, not her area.

Time expired.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (16:23): I rise in response to some of the comments made by the member for Unley. I had the misfortune of sitting on some of the estimates committees on which he also sat and saw him blunder his way through the estimates process for the second year in a row. He showed absolutely no understanding of the estimates process. I watched him ask ministers questions about areas that were not their responsibility. He should have directed those questions to other ministers.

He comes here today and once again complains that ministers did not answer his questions. The reason they did not answer his questions was quite simple: he was asking the wrong minister. The education minister is not responsible for building infrastructure in this state; that responsibility lies with another minister. So, if the member had questions about the building of super schools, he should have asked the correct and proper minister. Having watched the member for Unley's performance for a second year, I have some advice for him as someone from the furniture trade: had he used a polishing rag instead of sandpaper, he might have got a lot further.

However, in his questioning process, the member for Goyder was an absolute delight to have on the opposition benches. The way he framed his questions, and the courtesy he showed to ministers and the public servants who were in the estimates process, was applauded by both sides of the house. Estimates does not need to be a nasty couple of weeks. You can get your answers, but they would probably be more forthcoming if the questions were asked of the correct minister and asked in a fairly polite way.

I congratulate and thank the government for the many things the people of Mawson have received in this year's budget, not the least of which is an injection of \$12.3 million to improve the Victor Harbor/South Road intersection, which will of course benefit people not just in Mawson but also anyone who goes to Victor and tries to get back on a Sunday night or the Monday night of a long weekend.

There is a big bottleneck at that stop sign and, with this \$12.3 million injection, we are putting in three lanes and a set of traffic lights that help get people around there at times of peak congestion. Most importantly for the people of Mawson, that includes Monday to Friday morning traffic. I also congratulate the Rudd government on its important contribution (about \$3 million) to this project.

I think that the \$2 billion for our transport revolution also has people very excited, not just in the south but throughout Adelaide. We will have clean, environmentally friendly, smoother and much faster trains, and that will be a great boon for the people living in the south who catch the Noarlunga line. As a government, we have provided \$34 million to buy land eventually to continue the rail corridor from the Noarlunga Centre to Seaford and, one day into the future, onto Aldinga.

As I said, these moves have been welcomed by the people of Mawson, and I thank not just the Premier and the Treasurer but also our transport minister, who has had to sit in the queue for a while as we have seen a medical revolution, with our hospitals with a record level of doctors and nurses provided over the past few years.

We have seen a huge amount of money going into law and order, with all those extra police on the beat and the courthouses that have been built throughout the state, as well as new police stations, after 8½ years of the inaction of the Liberal government,

The Rann government continues to spend at record levels in the field of education, with \$7.7 million set aside in this budget for a total upgrade of the Willunga High School, which has

been welcomed by the people in the Willunga and McLaren Vale area. This comes on top of a \$5 million plus renovation of Willunga Primary School. So, we are seeing some really major investment into our schools in the seat of Mawson, and McLaren Flat is also undergoing a multimillion-dollar overhaul at the moment.

I also congratulate the government on its increased spending on the Ambulance Service. McLaren Vale has a new ambulance station, and the community are well served by 24-hour, seven-day-a-week crews. In this year's budget, there is an extra \$26.6 million for ambulance crews and, since the 2002 election, when the Rann government came to power, we have added 281 paramedics, and 12 ambulance stations have either been built or are under construction.

Again, I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer, and all those ministers who have undergone the gruelling process, on another outstanding surplus budget.

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (16:29): Natural catastrophes of drought and fire have come, and our small regional communities have coped. Low commodity prices, increased import costs and high exchange rates, and our communities have coped. But this Rann government have done their utmost to kill—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Has—'government' is singular.

Mrs PENFOLD: —regional South Australia with their population-based funding policy. They are hitting us with their shared services plan, their—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Its.

Mrs PENFOLD: —country hospitals plan, their schools funding plan, their—

Mr PEDERICK: On a point of order, the Attorney is quite keen to reprimand members on this side of the house. I call for some protection for our member.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Attorney is aware that interjections are out of order.

Mrs PENFOLD: Some members come from small regional towns that have very small country schools, not smart city schools.

Recently, minister Hill has foreshadowed a centralised goods and services procurement plan that will remove government contracts from small regionally-based businesses, putting country jobs into the city. All this is combined with a lack of funding in the budget for regional infrastructure while steadily increasing fees and charges across the board.

Our regional communities are like octopi. To some extent you can lop off a leg or two and they will survive, recover and adapt. However, as with any living organism, you can kill them by removing their hearts or just painfully lopping off all the bits until they shrivel and die a long painful death from starvation. Alternatively, with proper nurturing they will survive and thrive.

Premier and ministers, you are chopping off all our legs, and our rural communities are reeling. I have heard people talking of suicide, deciding not to stay in rural professional jobs, not retiring and investing in regional towns—all because this Labor government has made them feel that they do not have a secure future. Our regions are like ecosystems that will not die because a few octopi have gone, but killing one town will eventually lead to the failure of others and our remaining towns will not be good places in which to live—as they are now—once the system collapses in these regional communities.

I was interested to note in the much-heralded State Strategic Plan that psychological wellbeing should be equal to or lower than the Australian average for psychological distress by 2014. It states that the audit committee's assessment of this target is that it has been achieved. Well, I want to let them know that that is not the case in the regions—but perhaps we do not count when it comes to the State Strategic Plan.

The electorate of Flinders which I represent on Eyre Peninsula has 55,000 square kilometres and 33,000 people. It produces about 40 per cent of the state's grain and 65 per cent of the state's seafood. Tourism and mining are only just beginning to make their mark on the state's economy, but this Labor government's population-based funding model takes no account of the significant economic benefit that comes from our region or the distance and difficulties that we encounter to achieve it.

We are the modern day peasants who have to suffer in silence with a government and media who could not care less about our wellbeing, so as long as we continue to work hard to

produce the real wealth they can churn a few times in the city and live their comfortable, well-paid lives.

For some years I have toyed with the idea that Eyre Peninsula should secede from South Australia and go it alone. I am not alone in thinking along these lines. Julie Masters from Wharminda with tongue somewhat in cheek in the *Port Lincoln Times* today wrote:

In view of the apparent Labor government's abandonment of support for regional South Australia—downgrading of country hospitals, deplorable loss of funding in public education impacting mainly on country schools, lack of funding to maintain a decent road structure—the list is endless—I think it is time for radical change and propose that on Eyre Peninsula we draw a line and form our own territory. We could name it the Central Eyre Territory, have our own time (no more putting school children on the school bus in the dark), not pay the River Murray levy ever again, have the bulk of the fishing, aquaculture, agriculture (when not in a drought would be handy!) and the mining (we would take in Roxby Downs, of course!) industry for support. We would be a true 'country' territory that cares and understands about rural issues and living standards.

Tumby Bay and Cummins on southern Eyre Peninsula, in particular were portrayed in the media only a few years ago as dying communities. The people in these communities decided that they were not going to lay down and die—and they didn't. With sheer tenacity, hard work and their can-do attitude they fought back.

Cummins and Tumby Bay and all the other 41 small communities like them that are having their hospitals downgraded by the health minister in this government are not intending to go away and die now. They have survived largely because they have good hospitals and good schools with safe and caring can-do communities. People want to go to live in regional areas to do their business, raise their children and retire.

In fact, so successful has been the fight back that residential blocks of land in Cummins have been hard to source. Only today I received a call from a constituent who has been subdividing in Cummins to meet demand. He is very concerned that, as a result of the government's decision, people will not be able to retire in Cummins because medical services will not be available to support them.

Minister Hill speaks of 96 per cent of the people of the state being within 1½ hours and 85 per cent being within one hour of a hub hospital, as if this is not a problem and we are grizzlers. But would 66 per cent of the people who live in or near Adelaide drive 83 kilometres to Victor Harbor (about one hour away) to see their doctor? The additional time, lack of public transport and high cost of fuel would have our metropolitan cousins screaming. That is without the resultant job losses in the city hospitals and the fact that much of the shopping, fuel, food and accommodation would be sourced outside the city.

The social dislocation of friends and family not being able to visit, and children, work and other commitments not being fulfilled would be unacceptable. It would not be acceptable to our city cousins and it is not acceptable to those of us who live in the country.

Perhaps they would call their volunteer ambulance service to take them to the hospital at Victor Harbor and back home in their emergency? But when they are told to come back again tomorrow or, even worse, next week and, as a result, have to stay in the town, will they expect to pay the cost? Who will look after their family and pick up the children? Who will visit them in their hour of need?

How audacious is this government that it plans on implementing cuts to the very core of our communities without even bothering to undertake a regional impact statement on the effect the decision will have on thousands of rural South Australians? Mr Rann must revisit his pledge to South Australians. I remind him of his dot point No. 3—

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I have a point of order, sir. The member for Flinders has referred to the Premier by his honorific and surname. I ask that she refer to him as either the Premier or the member for Ramsay.

The SPEAKER: Order! I uphold the point of order. I remind all members to refer to other members by their parliamentary title.

Mrs PENFOLD: The Premier must revisit his pledge to South Australians. I remind him of his dot point No. 3, 'Better hospitals and more beds' and dot point No. 6, 'We will cut government waste and redirect millions now spent on consultants to hospitals and schools—Labor's priorities'.

I realise that the Premier's much touted and very expensive Thinkers in Residence program is not labelled as consultants, but I believe that the thousands of regional South Australians, who are having access to quality local health services removed by this government

decision, might wonder whether it is a very fine line when funds can be directed into programs such as that and away from funding for country hospitals.

The former health minister's policy statement 2003-07 is quite clearly thrown out the window now. It was interesting to re-read in her policy document regarding equity that the policy stated:

Reducing the current inequities in health status between different sections of the population and providing equal opportunity to good health to everyone.

Clearly, the current minister would add a little rider: 'as long as you live in very specific areas of the state or in metropolitan Adelaide'.

We have to wonder about the leadership and planning that goes into this state when we are told that \$100 million is to be spent on upgrading the AAMI Stadium and more trams are to be installed at a cost of \$62 million per kilometre, and then we discover that \$4 million is being wasted on office floor space in central Adelaide. The list of wasted opportunities and wasted taxpayers' dollars is almost endless.

A doctor from Port Lincoln has assured me that there is no way that the Port Lincoln Hospital can cope with any more patients—and I know that Whyalla is the same. He advised that, currently, about five more doctors are required in Port Lincoln, and that is without any more patients coming in from elsewhere to source their regional general hospital. He also pointed out that country doctors are being actively sought by city and interstate practices, with some offers over \$600,000 per year, without much of the call-out and overtime that doctors currently do in our regional hospitals.

Only yesterday, I received a call from a Port Lincoln resident who advised that there is currently a three-week waiting period to see a doctor in Port Lincoln, and I envisage that this will only get worse. Meanwhile, however, people in our smaller communities do have good and timely access to their GPs, but for how much longer? Why would any doctor stay in a small community without their patients being able to access the local hospital. Currently, they have lifestyle and good, financially viable practices, but this government seems hell-bent on changing that.

Many of my 16 communities happen to lie in the 4 per cent recognised by the minister; that is, recognised as living further than 1½ hours away from a hub hospital at Port Lincoln or Whyalla. Despite this, in answer to a question in parliament on 3 April on the need for additional funding for volunteer ambulances, the minister stated that no extra costs are expected to be needed. In answer to a letter regarding improved assistance for patient travel, we received a response that gave no answers nor any hope.

The Eyre Highway that passes through Ceduna, Wudinna and Kimba is used by more than 500,000 vehicles, with around one million people driving along it each year, but, as far as I can see, these significant numbers of travellers are not taken into account. All these towns are serviced by volunteer ambulance officers and emergency services. A concerned volunteer visited me this week to let me know that the reimbursement for travel is 68¢ per kilometre. This has recently risen from the 64¢ per kilometre which was reimbursed when fuel costs were 95¢ per litre, despite the cost of fuel now being \$1.65 per litre.

He said that recently he had seven call-outs, with one of those being a pregnant woman whose waters had broken and who had to be transported past the local hospital to Port Lincoln. That was in one day. He asked, 'How can the volunteer ambulance service possibly cope once the 43 hospitals are downgraded? Or if, as the minister says at present, patients are assessed at their local first-aid centre, who will transfer patients to the general hospital, particularly in emergency situations?'

There will always be examples of patients who owe their lives to the quick professional action of local doctors, but this was brought home clearly only 10 days or so ago. Mark Dodd from Tumby Bay had a massive heart attack while speaking with his neighbour. While his neighbour drove Mark to the Tumby Bay Hospital, his wife rang the hospital alerting staff to the impending arrival of an emergency patient. Mark was stabilised and flown to Adelaide where he underwent emergency surgery.

He is currently recovering in the neurological ward following a stroke that occurred as a result of heart surgery, but as the critical nurse stressed to Mark's family, he would never have survived if he had not received immediate acute care treatment by the qualified staff at the Tumby Bay Hospital. Mark's wife, Monica, rang my office to tell me how important it is to maintain our hospitals and not downgrade them to first-aid stations. Mark is living proof of that.

This week, the minister has dissolved 51 health boards and introduced instead health advisory councils (HACs), giving himself complete responsibility and accountability for managing South Australia's public health system. It will be interesting to see how much heed the minister will take of his HACs, whose role it is to provide advice and advocacy on behalf of their communities' needs. Minister, are you listening to your HACs now? I think not.

But it seems the devil will be in the detail, which, to date, has not been very forthcoming. The minister assures the good people of Cummins that 'transport and accommodation support will be developed to help country people access health care services they need when they have to travel'. You can understand the scepticism when people hear these wonderful reassuring words, as they are not backed up with any additional funding for the new status general hospital at Port Lincoln, to be able to cope with the influx of patients.

It is even more scary when the minister reassures us that 'all country hospital emergency responses will be supported by the SA Ambulance Service, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the SA Retrieval Services to ensure country people receive timely emergency care and emergency evacuations and transport in line with best practice guidelines', when the minister has not anticipated any additional funds will be required to provide ambulance services. Interestingly, on this point, the minister states that SA Ambulance has been consulted closely in the development of the plan. I wonder if the volunteers have.

One wonders, however, if the SA Ambulance consultation has been the same in depth consultation that has apparently supposedly been undertaken with country doctors—almost none. The Country Health Care Plan and its consultation has been eloquently summed up by my constituent, Viv Rusden, who stated:

The arrogance of We've joined the dots is breathtaking. My long and considerable experience with public and private entities is that we do not even know where the dots are!

She further stated:

This fact sheet is full of motherhood statements, assertions and future promises. It is very short on substance. How do you debate a mirage? This increasing avalanche of city centric policies are invading our life and atrophying our social infrastructure to the point of extinction.

Minister Hill, the people of South Australia do not believe your reassurances about better health services and outcomes for rural South Australians. They do not believe you are listening, they take umbrage to the glossy magazines and full page advertisements costing money that could be spent on better services. They are angry at your arrogance in riding 'roughshod over people who have worked their guts out since the 1930s to procure and help run efficient, modern medical facilities', and I have been requested to ask you to come and meet the people whose lives and town are affected. Again I quote:

You should be visiting every community whose hospital is on your hit list and face the people at public meetings. After all, it is your plan. You have told us often enough on radio.

At the end of the day, the message that is well and truly out there, to take a phrase from Gough Whitlam's 'maintain the rage' campaign, is something you can be assured country people will do, maintain the rage.

[Sitting extended beyond 17:00 on motion of Hon. M.J. Atkinson]

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (16:46): I have been advised by our whip that I have a limited time to speak so I will not take up too much time. So the other side has a limited time to interject! Mr Speaker, I would like to run over a few of the estimates committees that I was involved in and make some comments.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: I think we would all like to run over estimates and get rid of them, actually. However, that is a debate for another day.

The southern suburbs portfolio, particularly, I feel leaves a lot to be desired, given that it is basically just a spin exercise for the Rann Labor government. There is not a lot in it, apart from the information we got about an incessant round of meetings and arranging meetings. The fact is that the people of the southern suburbs need a lot more than meetings to pick them up and get them going again, particularly with the demise of Mitsubishi.

The proof of the pudding is that, although the Minister for the Southern Suburbs has endeavoured to organise some meetings and have some things happen, there are still hundreds of people who worked at Mitsubishi out of a job and still looking for work. As I said in the estimates committees, they do not want to leave the south: they want to stay in the south. They enjoy the south—the climate and close proximity to the beach. They do not enjoy the lack of public transport and the improvements that have not happened—they are not at all happy about that—but they want to stay there.

A graph that was displayed at one of the forums I was at quite clearly showed that very few of them wanted to traverse the city to work at the GMH plant. They prefer to stay and try to find work down south. There is some itinerant work through McLaren Vale at this time of year, particularly with the pruning of the grapes, and some people are picking up work; but there are substantial numbers in the south who are still not working, and all the meetings in the world will not get them back to work, and that is something that really concerns me.

So, there are a number of issues that came out of that estimates committee, and I will follow up on some of those to ensure that we get more than just spin and hollow words out of the Rann Labor government for the southern suburbs.

My local government estimates committee was, once again, most interesting, and my colleague the member for Kavel, who joined me that day, I am sure also found it intriguing, as did the member of Schubert. We really got little but waffle out of the local government estimates hearing, because there is no policy direction. There is nothing coming out of the minister for local government—absolutely nothing. She was asked a question about the policy regarding amalgamation of councils and, being the minister for local government, she decided to have a crack at the Liberal Party in government in the 1990s and talk about the amalgamations that happened then that were forced. Blind Freddie could see that they were not forced. If councils wanted to amalgamate, they were assisted. I recall that Ian Dixon, particularly, the CEO of the boundary adjustment board, and Tony Crichton, a senior public servant, did a lot of work to assist councils go through that process. So it was just errant nonsense for the minister to say in estimates that they were forced in the 1990s. It was just claptrap, quite frankly.

What I did hear is interesting. In the last 24 hours I have heard from the mayor of a metropolitan council that the minister indeed talked to, in this case, him about amalgamating some councils in the metropolitan area. So this hidden policy that the minister refutes in the house may have some legs and, indeed, the government may be looking at a substantial amalgamation process for councils in South Australia. So we will follow that one with interest. But, apart from getting the button pressed and getting a bit snaky, we really did not get much at all out of the Minister for State/Local Government Relations. In two hours of questions, I do not know that we got anything that was useful, and that was a great pity, actually. But we filled in the two hours, and I thank the staff. The CEO of the Office for State/Local Government Relations—

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: Indeed. The CEO of the Office for State/Local Government Relations, Mr John Hanlon, does a pretty good job. Coming out of the local government sector as a former CEO of the Burnside council, he has a good grip and a good understanding of local government. He knows what is going on, he knows the problems in the local government area, and he understands the lack of funding. The minister was at pains to throw up a heap of figures on money that had been provided by the Rann Labor government to local government. She conveniently got a bit cranky when we mentioned the fact that the GST—which the Rann Labor government did not want—has come in and given them a lot more money than they ever dreamed of having, but that was another story.

But I can tell members that the amount of funding that is going to local government in real terms is a problem for them. They are not getting anywhere near enough, and it does not matter whether they are metropolitan councils or regional councils—it does not matter where the councils are—they have significant costs in upgrading and maintaining roads. Quite clearly, they need far more assistance. We have to bear in mind that the only way councils can raise money is through rates and these wonderful things called levies. As I suggested in the hearing, the levies that they are collecting (the EPA and NRM levies) do not go to the councils. They go to other authorities. However, when the poor old ratepayer gets his rates notice he sees the levies and thinks that they are going to the council, so the council gets it in the neck—not a good idea.

I also raised some questions about the tourism portfolio and the government's direction in relation to several areas. I found it bizarre that we had the Minister for Tourism putting down the

Convention Centre, talking about the lavatories and how difficult they were to find. It was almost to the extent of being humorous, but I am hearing it loud and clear from the business community and the hospitality industry seeking a substantial increase in size and improvements to the Adelaide Convention Centre. It is not big enough for major conventions, it just does not have the room, it is antiquated and it is causing us to lose business conventions that we should get. For example, a big defence convention did not come to South Australia because the Convention Centre was inadequate. The Australian Tourism Exchange, which comes back in two years, faces the same situation it faced last time, when a tent had to be put on the lawns alongside the Torrens to accommodate all the activities, because there is simply not enough room in the Convention Centre.

These are basic infrastructure requirements for the convention industry. If we want to be competitive in South Australia in conventions and if we want to promote our attractions, such as the Flinders Ranges, the Limestone Coast, the Fleurieu Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, the Barossa Valley or the West Coast, we must have a facility that enables people to come here, hold a convention and then travel out to see many of the highlights that this state has to offer—and we have many. Significantly, hotel accommodation rates were down by approximately 10 per cent in March, I am given to understand, which is a major concern given the events in Mad March. I asked a question about how much the government pays to accommodate the Tour Down Under teams in city hotels. I did not get an answer on it, and I did not expect to, but it is a pretty significant—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PENGILLY: The Attorney seeks to interject, but he just—

Mr Goldsworthy: He's calling it a B grade event.

Mr PENGILLY: He is calling it a B grade event, shame on him. However, the fact of the matter is that the Tour Down Under was a good Liberal Party initiative when it was in government, and my recollection is that Joan Hall got that up and running. I stand to be corrected on that.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Where is she these days?

Mr PENGILLY: Dearly departed member, Joan Hall—she is not here now. However, she did get the Tour Down Under in place and, for the Attorney-General to call the Tour Down Under a B grade event does him no good whatsoever. I understand the Attorney is a cyclist, so why he is putting down the Tour Down Under I do not know, but enough of that.

As some of my colleagues have mentioned quite a bit over the past several days and also today in the house, I briefly mention the issue of country health. A catastrophic disaster for rural South Australia has been perpetrated on the people of South Australia by the Rann Labor government and by an incompetent Minister for Health (Hon. John Hill), who is just being a lackey to the bureaucrats. Unfortunately the former minister, the Hon. Lea Stevens, had a good grip of the situation. She would not bring in the Menadue report—

The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON: I rise on a point of order. The member for Finnis has twice referred to the member for Little Para by her Christian name and her surname. I would ask him to abide by the longstanding rules of the house.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not a matter of the Attorney asking anyone, he merely raises the point of order.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Yes, for your adjudication.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Finnis is a very naughty boy and he must not do it again. Member for Finnis.

Mr PENGILLY: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your kind words. The member for Little Para as the former health minister did a wonderful job, in my view, and I had dealings with her for several—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: I did actually, and the Attorney is quite wrong there, because I was the chair of a regional health board and I had regular bi-monthly meetings with Lea Stevens. We got on particularly well and did a lot for rural health, so he is wrong there. I did speak well of her and she knows that, and I continue to put her weights up on the direction she took with country health when

she was health minister and the fact that she was not going to be railroaded by bureaucrats into accepting the Menadue report, which unfortunately the current minister has. He has fallen over like a cream puff and it is a disaster.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: Yes, they do, if they are not made properly and they do not sit on the baking tray properly, they fall over. In relation to the two hospitals in my electorate (the South Coast District Hospital and the Kangaroo Island Hospital), although they do not appear to be on the hit list, South Coast District Hospital is going to wonder what struck it in due course because, now that boards have gone and any degree of local control has gone, the bureaucrats have won. Flinders Medical Centre, which has been trying to take over South Coast for a long time, has finally got its evil tentacles into the South Coast hospital. It will drag the money out of it to prop up its business at the expense of the people of the South Coast, and the people of the South Coast are going to know about it. They will recognise the disaster that has been perpetrated upon them and, in due course, they will react, don't worry.

Fortunately the Kangaroo Island Hospital, given its geographic location, is not going to have a lot of change to it, but the people of the South Coast will be reminded regularly of what the Rann Labor government is doing. When they have to go to town for another bit of treatment that they used to have locally, I will remind them again and again. Referring to the meeting with the department last Tuesday night, one doctor was reported in the paper as commenting, 'The South Coast hospital is going to be a crap house.'

With those few words, given the emasculation of country health in South Australia, which disgusts me and many of our members (and, I am sure, a few members on the other side), I will take note of your kind words, sir, and your gentle guidance on the point of order a while ago and resume my seat.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel) (17:00): I also wish to make some comments in relation to the process around the estimates committee. I was pleased, as a member of the state Liberal Party, to attend and participate in the committees on five of the six days that the program ran for and, in particular, to take the lead in the emergency services and correctional services areas on behalf of the Liberal Party.

I wish to make some comments in relation to the conduct of the estimates committees. It is becoming increasingly evident that quite specific tactics are being applied by the government to hinder the Liberal opposition in seeking and receiving reasonable answers to questions that are asked. There were continual rulings by the respective chairs of the committees against the questions asked by members of the Liberal opposition, and almost a wet nursing (if I can use that term) of the relevant minister through the whole process. There is quite clear evidence that the government is implementing tactics to hinder the members of the Liberal Party in seeking answers to important budgetary and policy issues, and I would like to highlight a specific instance.

During the estimates committee with respect to state/local government relations, I asked a question, highlighting the reference in the budget paper, where it specifically spoke about government policy and legislative frameworks (I think that was the exact wording) concerning local government. I asked a specific question about policy with respect to the government's position on local government elections. The chair of the committee initially ruled that question out of order. After raising a point of order with respect to that ruling, the chair and the minister were basically too embarrassed to back down and allow the question to be answered. We did not receive an answer, because the state Liberals know that the ALP policy of compulsory voting in local government elections is not being implemented by the Labor parliamentary party, as it is obviously at odds with its own policy.

As the member for Finnis highlighted, the minister basically babbled on with what looked like a pre-empted text that had been prepared for her in relation to the State Strategic Plan—about which we have real concerns on a whole range of issues. However, the minister chose to answer the question, which was very clear and unambiguous, by giving a fairly lengthy answer about the State Strategic Plan. It is quite clear that the government's own State Strategic Plan is also at odds with its policy. So, there is a contradiction where ALP policy is not reflected in the way in which the government positions itself here in the parliament. I think that issue should be further highlighted along the way.

I highlighted that thinking a couple of years ago, when I had responsibility on this side of the house for local government, and we did reasonably well. The state Liberals received some reasonable coverage. I think it was reported in the press, and I also remember doing some

interviews on radio in relation to it. The government cannot have it both ways: it cannot talk about something and act in a different manner. It has been a hallmark of this government that it is all talk and no action: it says one thing and does another. We will continue to highlight these issues right up to election day in March 2010.

The other issue that I would like to speak about (which I raised) with respect to a reversal in Labor policy relates to the decision to base an air crane helicopter in the state over the coming 2008-09 fire season. Previously, the Minister for Emergency Services basically said, 'We do not need one. The advice I received is that we do not need an air crane helicopter here during the fire season, so that is why we are not going to look to fund it on a permanent basis.' However, the Coroner in his report in relation to the Wangary fires recommended that an air crane be stationed here. There has been a complete policy reversal, where the minister has said, 'Oh, well, I think we do need one now.' It is a complete policy reversal in relation to having the air-crane helicopter based here during the coming fire season. I asked the minister a question about it, and I got the usual run-around and prevarication for which that particular minister is well known.

I think the minister's performance in relation to that issue and a number of other issues has raised speculation in the media that she may not continue with her portfolio responsibilities in the near future. Liberal Party policy 18 months ago, before the 2006-07 fire season and last summer in 2007-08, was that we would have an air crane helicopter based here. There was ample money, and there was surplus—

Mr Bignell interjecting:

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: The member for Mawson interjects. He has had his chance. He made his contribution in relation to the estimates. Did I hear him raise anything about bushfire safety in his electorate? No; I do not think so. Firefighting capability is a very important whole-of-state issue, particularly in the Adelaide Hills, part of which constitute my electorate. It is arguably one of the highest fire risk regions in the state. For two years state Liberals have called for an air crane helicopter to be based here permanently. The Minister for Emergency Services says, 'No; we're not having it.'

Recently, we have seen a policy reversal and the adoption of Liberal Party policy. That again is becoming the hallmark of this government. As our leader quite eloquently stated earlier today in the house, the government is coming over onto our ground. It has run out of its own ideas, except for running a tramline down to Port Adelaide, which is about 150 metres away from a train line that will be electrified. It will run parallel with a train line that will be electrified. Am I missing something here, Madam Deputy Speaker? It seems quite bizarre and a total waste of money to run a tramline parallel to a train line that is going to be electrified about 150 metres away. It is a complete and absolute waste of money.

The government is coming onto state Liberal ground in terms of policy, because it is bereft of policies. It has been in a policy vacuum for years. The government has no ideas of its own. The ideas that the government trots out are half baked, ill-conceived and poorly planned. Earlier in question time when I asked the Minister for Transport whether the tram extension from the city to Port Road across Hindmarsh Bridge will take up a lane of traffic, he could not answer the question. No design work has been done—nothing. They are all ill-conceived, half baked ideas.

An arrangement has been made between the opposition and the government to keep our contributions less than the allocated 20 minutes, but I will talk about two things to conclude. One issue relates to an ongoing and very important local matter concerning the Nairne Primary School crossing. I have highlighted this issue for the last six years since I came to this place, after six months into my first term. The minister for education will certainly know what I am talking about.

The Minister for Road Safety in another place is soon to depart, I understand, if speculation is correct, and her portfolios will be taken up by the member for West Torrens—and good on him. I asked the minister a specific question in estimates about the government's progress with the Nairne Primary School crossing. Well, what did we get? We got another lot of talk, another lot of rhetoric, and another lot of running out the same line that we have heard before, with more talk and more reports, with responsibility being pushed onto the local council for them to rezone some land, which is a complicated matter. I am aware of the local issues. The government absolves itself of the responsibility. It is a government responsibility, because the crossing is located on a government administered and managed road, the Princes Highway, the main road through Nairne. It is about the government trying to absolve itself of responsibility and push it onto the local council.

A consultant completed some comprehensive work on that issue eight years ago and came up with, from memory, four recommendations. The government has those recommendations. It

does not need to go through a whole other consultation process—reporting and all this palaver—because the solutions are there. For goodness sake, allocate some decent money to the problem, put some traffic lights on the corner of Woodside Road and Princes Highway and, if you can find a few more dollars, straighten up Saleyard Road to make it an intersection, and stop messing around with the safety of those schoolchildren who attend that school five days of the week. I am very passionate about these local issues, because it is about the safety of children.

The government should have the safety of every schoolchild at the forefront of its mind but, unfortunately, it appears that it does not. For goodness sake, just bite the bullet and allocate money, put traffic lights down on the main road, stop messing the council around, stop pushing the project out five, six or seven more years, and do something positive—because when we win the election in 2010, we have made the commitment that we will fix the problem.

In closing, members on this side have spoken at length about the real problems the new policy the government is rolling out will cause to country hospitals. There is one hospital in my electorate at the moment, but when the boundary changes I will have another one. Mount Barker is our main hospital in the Hills, and Gumeracha and Mount Pleasant hospital is in the member for Schubert's electorate at the moment. I join with my colleagues in expressing our grave concerns and the concerns those respective communities have about the ill-conceived Country Health Care Plan.

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (17:17): I commend my colleagues for cutting back their speeches a little to try to get us through before 6 o'clock. Water, health care, public transport, education, infrastructure and affordable living are the big issues for South Australians—the big issues that this year's budget failed to address, as has been adequately illustrated by our probing during the estimates debates.

Since the handing down of the budget on 5 June, it has become very obvious that the state Rann Labor government is out of touch with what everyday South Australians want from their government. South Australians want action. We need water desperately. As we heard during question time today, we are indeed in a perilous position. We have just had the driest June in 30 years. We have had four years of drought, and we are now in the fifth year, and if the drought continues, we will run out of water. If we do not take urgent action now, what are our plans? The desal plant should be nearly finished; we should not just be starting to do something, as we heard today. It will be two or three years before it is completed.

What are we going to do? We have to think about what we have to do urgently. If we cannot pump water from the Murray—because there will not be any water there—and the reservoirs will not last more than four or five months, we have to consider what then. What are we going to do? Has anyone ever gone through what is the worst scenario? Consider the scenario if it does not rain and we do not get water. Recycling and the desal plant—all this stuff should have been well underway as a matter of great urgency. Forget the politics and get on with it.

We need better hospitals and health care, with more services available, not fewer. We need better public transport facilities and a more efficient system, as fuel costs continue to skyrocket, not just in the western suburbs of Adelaide. We need to be taxed less and have levies reduced, not increased, as the cost of living continues to rise. If we are to be saddled with higher taxes, at least let us have something to show for it.

We need infrastructure for the future—roads, ferries and a transport system that will support the future development and growth of our state—and we need to raise the standard of living in the country. We need to maintain the state's inventory of public infrastructure, and we need to spend so much money each year just to maintain our assets. The budget fails to deliver on any of these things.

I want to refer to just one road, that is, Gomersal Road, which I have been hammering in this house for years. It is an extremely busy road, and I thank the government for sealing it. It was a concept of the previous Liberal government, and minister Laidlaw was the person who actually got the budget underway to pay for it. It is a very busy road, much busier than anyone anticipated, and two deaths have resulted. It needs to be redesigned because it is so busy. We need at least two or three slowing down and speeding up lanes on a couple of the intersections. For such a very popular road, two deaths already is a very sad indictment. Also, such a busy road cannot remain the sole responsibility of the Light District Council. It is ridiculous, and I have spoken at length about that matter. It is not fair that the council is maintaining a road that is used by thousands of motorists every day, and the road is already pot-holed.

So, we need to deliver on many of these important state assets. The Treasurer said in this house that the budget delivers action now for our state's future. Well, the budget does deliver for all South Australians. It increases emergency services, the River Murray and the NRM levies, and it increases car registration, public transport tickets, driver's licences and compulsory third party motor vehicle insurance, as well as astronomical increases in boating registration, and there is no relief in land tax and stamp duty.

Yes, it is true that, at a time when South Australians are currently struggling with increased cost of living pressures and the federal economy is also now faltering and petrol and food costs are skyrocketing, the state Labor government has delivered a budget that offers very little and charges more. I cannot understand why the state Rann Labor government has decided to increase charges to everyday South Australians when it was revealed this week that it is wasting millions of taxpayers' dollars on dead rent in buildings due to delays in its shared services reform. I have to agree with my leader when he described this budget as the most irresponsible set of decisions since the State Bank collapse.

Of course, if you live in Adelaide or the western suburbs, you will see some action from the government. But what about those living in rural and regional South Australia, especially those in the north and the south? What have they got? The answer is nothing. Madam Acting Speaker, you come from a country area, but this is the most city-centric budget I have seen delivered in my 18 years in this place.

The Country Health Care Plan does not deliver the extra services promised. It was announced two hours after the budget—at 6pm. What a disgrace! It was a deliberate act to deceive and to hide. Yes, there will be extra services at the four main regional centres—Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Berri and Mount Gambier—but what about those outside those areas? It is ironic that three of those hospitals are in seats associated with the government.

People will have to travel extra distances to get to one of the four main hub hospitals, and those who are admitted to GP Plus hospitals will have to be transported to another facility after a maximum stay of three nights. How many helicopters will we need to do that? How many ambulances will we need? Who will drive them, and where will they all fit? It is absolute nonsense. Who thought of this, and what consultation went on? Were any impact statements done?

I will talk about a real-life case, that is, the bus accident in the Barossa, when there were five casualties and a fatality. How could that have been handled without a fully staffed hospital able to take acute cases within a few minutes? It is just as well that Angaston Hospital was within five minutes of the accident and was fully equipped and operative. Had it happened half an hour away from a hospital, there is no doubt that we would have had three or four fatalities. We have to be very careful when we quote things like this because it was a real-life incident.

During estimates, the minister acknowledged that the budget provides an additional \$24.8 million over the next four years for the anticipated extra demand on ambulance services. Would this \$24.8 million not be better spent improving and upgrading our hospitals and health facilities currently in place, rather than downgrading some hospitals and removing services, forcing patients to travel greater distances and be transferred between hospitals?

The budget also includes efficiencies of \$81 million over the next four years, targeting a reduction in the cost of its services. As I said earlier, this budget fails to address the critical level of this state's water crisis. It has reannounced the desalination plant, with \$96.5 million being set aside to begin work at Port Stanvac. However, nothing new was announced, with the exception of the announcement today.

South Australia has now reached crisis point. Our people might have thought that more money would be invested in securing our state's water supply; however, the extra \$20 million from the previous year was merely the surplus carried over from the 2007-08 financial year. One must ask why we have a surplus when there is a drought, farmers are struggling and people are losing their livelihood.

There was no mention of the Mount Bold reservoir (and colleagues have spoken about this), which was the highlight of last year's budget. Yet, during estimates, the minister said, 'Mount Bold is still part of our investigations. We are investigating all options in the Mount Lofty hills to double our capacity within the Mount Lofty storages, and Mount Bold is one of those we are fully investigating.'

One year on we are still in the midst of a crisis (in fact, it is worse), but the government is still investigating. It seems as though taxpayers are getting the wool pulled over their eyes yet

again. The government cannot make urgent and important decisions. It is paralysed and moribund and in a state of self-denial, hoping that it will rain—even praying for it to rain—but we are now really in a very serious position, almost survival mode.

Estimates revealed that the dividend forecast for the 2007-08 year, as a result of the 6 per cent increase in the price of water as of 1 July, was \$107.8 million. Along with a 4.5 increase in the River Murray levy, this should surely be enough revenue to fast-track water recycling and reuse schemes to help our farmers and our irrigators.

Despite the minister's assurances during estimates that 'the state government has been very much aware of the critical nature of water supplies as a consequence of the drought', one must question this because, although there is a strong chance of losing hundreds of millions of dollars of permanent plantings in the Riverland, and severely damaging this state's economy as a result, there was no response from the state government about this issue.

This budget includes plans for \$160 million to be spent on an extension to the tramline to the Adelaide Entertainment Centre that will be completed by 2011. I cannot understand why this government wants to undertake the construction of another tramline when it cannot manage the current extension or the current services. The recent revision of the timetable on the Gawler train line was heralded by the government as being able to deliver a more efficient service. It failed miserably: just travel on the train to find out how and why.

It has been a wish of mine for some time to see the train line extended to the Barossa Valley. During estimates, the minister stated that it was not believed that a TransAdelaide report into feasibility had been produced by TransAdelaide. This issue was raised by the Hon. Dennis Hood in another place, and I have raised it here. I note that the minister is in the chamber and, for his benefit, I quote, 'No one has any record of it, and it is not the sort of language that is used. It may have a TransAdelaide letterhead (they are pretty easy to get), but no-one at TransAdelaide has any knowledge of it.'

However, in a letter that I received in response to a request for a feasibility study to be undertaken, in 2005 the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Transport wrote, 'TransAdelaide has carried out an investigation to examine the feasibility of operating a regular commuter service to the Barossa Valley'. If this is not the report the Minister for Transport and I referred to during estimates, I ask him to make public the report that was done. It is all very well to say that it is not the report but, if it is not, can we see a copy, because it was reported.

Where will the money come from for projects such as the \$162 million tramline extension, the \$110 million upgrade of AAMI Stadium (I thought there was enough money in football), the \$46 million upgrade of SA Water House (which is ridiculous as we do not even own it) and the \$1.5 million screen at the Adelaide soccer stadium, together with numerous building refurbishments and other wasteful outlays?

What about our road infrastructure? So many roads around the area, particularly in the Barossa Valley, are in serious need of upgrade. The answer is that funding comes from borrowings which will see the state debt rise from about \$82 million to \$1.9 billion by 2012—a State Bank disaster starting all over again—and from all South Australians through increased taxes, levies, fees, charges and fines.

I find it difficult to understand at times, when riverside communities are struggling to attract business, how Premier Rann and his government can justify increases up to three to five times the current rate for boat registration. The new increases will affect 20 per cent of South Australian boats, with registration for jet skis, personal watercraft and boats longer than six metres going through the roof. The increases for smaller boats, despite being less than the abovementioned rises, are still hefty, rising from around \$65 (including the levy) to about \$105.

During the estimates process, the Minister for Transport said that the government was aware of problems being experienced by River Murray towns in relation to tourism, how they are publishing and advertising messages that the river is open for business. If this is the case, why are they slugging those people—the boaties—who are most likely to visit the river with much higher registration costs?

The casual user with a tinnie in the shed that he might use once or twice a year will be severely penalised and impacted upon. This is taxing people's leisure. Is nothing sacred? Are they trying to stop people from enjoying recreational boating activities—activities which provide leisure and relaxation and which, inadvertently, help to bolster the economies of seaside and riverside towns through increased tourism.

The General Manager of the Boating Industry Association of South Australia has described the increases as absolutely outrageous and said that the response from the industry has been enormous. Where will the extra money go? Is it necessary, particularly at a time when the number of people being fined for speeding has skyrocketed in the past six years and seen the government collect nearly \$200 million extra in revenue?

I note the comments of the member for Heysen on the estimates committees process—and I fully agree. We have to look at it. I have been here for nearly 18 years and I think it is ridiculous that ministers from the other house can appear in this chamber but we are unable to use shadow ministers. I cannot work it out. In fact, I do not know why we cannot use the upper house people, anyway.

The whole process needs to be totally looked at. In many instances the government did not ask Dorothy Dixier questions—which is worthwhile and certainly a step in the right direction. The signing in and out of members is also a nonsense. It is a lot of work for the whip and I wonder why it is necessary. As long as three people are sitting here, I cannot understand why there is all the nonsense of paperwork, and the time and hassle of signing them in and out. It is ridiculous.

I finish by saying that I noted the pressure on the Minister for Water Security as a result of questions she was asked today. All I can say is that if a member is going to support the party in government they have to take the flak. I am sad the member took some flak today, but she must understand that, as the leader of the National Party in South Australia—and I have had a lot to do with the National Party over many years—there is a huge conflict. It is totally wrong that she supports a government that is hurting country people, particularly through the Country Health Care Plan. I heard what the new president of the National Party here had to say and, well, it is totally in conflict with what his leader is saying and doing in this house.

I cannot understand how the Minister for Water Security can turn her back on her own people. Hospitals at Renmark, Loxton and Waikerie in her electorate will be impacted upon by these decisions. I am sure that, like the member for Adelaide has done, she is able to distance herself from cabinet decisions. The member for Adelaide did that quite effectively. Why can the Minister for Water Security not do the same thing? She ought to do that. There is a huge conflict because she is in here supporting a Labor government on this issue.

Last night 1,500 people attended a meeting at Bordertown. Members opposite might say that we are beating up this issue. No way can a political party have this much clout. We might think we are pretty good, but we are not this good. This issue is gaining momentum with the doctors and the ordinary people. It is a nonsense for the government to say that it will not close hospitals. The bottom line is exactly this: if the government takes away services from a hospital, in other words a doctor's right to do a procedure, he or she will not stay there. They will go. The hospital will be open but there will not be any doctors there. Again, I will do all I can to keep our hospitals open. They are the hub of all rural communities and I will do all I can to keep them there.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (17:35): I rise to make a response to the estimates committees process. I take note of what has happened with country health. As was mentioned previously, certainly by the member for Schubert, the Country Health Care Plan put out under the cover of darkness on budget day will be the death knell for 43 hospitals in country South Australia. Most of the hospitals either in my electorate or adjoining and servicing my electorate are being cut back to GP Plus hospitals. One hospital will remain at Murray Bridge, which will become a country community hospital—but there is already a problem there. We are talking about keeping people out of the city with the so-called Country Health Care Plan.

Information supplied to me shows that both Murray Bridge and Port Pirie hospitals were sending on people last Friday because they were full. Where will the people go when they get channelled out from Tailem Bend, Meningie, Mannum, Karoonda, Lameroo or Pinnaroo? In the past couple of days the health department has amended its so-called Country Health Care Plan. I would love to know how much it has spent on advertising because the material uses words such as may or maybe: 'We might retain services,' and we might do this 'depending on staffing'. It is a kick in the guts for rural South Australia when it has been hurting since 2002 as a result of years of extended drought.

We will now have a country general hospital at Port Lincoln, and I think that is absolutely necessary for the West Coast, and surprise, surprise, one at Whyalla for the member for Giles. Then let us look at how far we have to travel to reach another country general hospital—all the way to Berri, which is almost on the edge of the state. There is not much more than Renmark on the other side. When you get to Mount Gambier, it is worse. I have asked in this place before what the

planning is behind making Mount Gambier the country general hospital. All it is doing is appeasing the current member for Mount Gambier for his allegiance to the Labor Party—he was a former Liberal Party member—and I hope he is proud of what he has done.

It just does not add up when people from even as far south as Millicent will have to travel north for their health care. They will have nowhere to go because Murray Bridge and Mount Barker will be overflowing. It will turn into a huge mess. I note Murray Bridge is being retained as a country community hospital, and that is a good thing. As I mentioned, it is already at overflow level. Now we have a confusing mismatch of four groups of hospitals under these so-called GP Plus emergency hospitals. I take that to mean bandaid centres. I believe this has come about because of pressure applied from different groups.

There was a protest meeting at Yorketown on the Yorke Peninsula which 700 people attended. There is one at Balaklava tonight, which I am sure will be well attended; and last night at Bordertown, 1,500 people attended a public meeting about their health service on a cold winter's night. Who in their right mind would downgrade a health service on the Dukes Highway, which is the main link to Melbourne and the second busiest road in this country?

I reiterate that I live very close to the Dukes Highway, and only the other day there was another terrible accident: a poor gentleman lost his life as a result of hitting a truck. This happens far too often. Where will they have to go—

Mr Kenyon interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Thankfully, there is a hospital at Keith. I just hope that the member for Newland never travels south-east of Adelaide. In fact, I hope he never travels outside of his home at Stirling (which obviously is nowhere near his electorate), because if he does have an accident and needs some care, he will be in some strife because his minister has let this state down.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: That is a bit harsh.

Mr PEDERICK: No, it is not harsh, minister. I have a good working relationship with the Minister for Transport. I acknowledge at this stage that, yes, he does afford me the time for meetings. I may not always get what I want, but he will listen, so I will give him credit for that.

Mrs Geraghty interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: I get very little, I can assure the Government Whip. However, I do appreciate having access to a minister when I want to raise an issue. Let us face it, they are in power and we are not at the moment, but we are hoping to change that around very quickly in 2010. I do say that, if any member of this present government or any of their friends or family runs into strife on the Dukes Highway and they wonder why someone loses their life or does not receive adequate care in time, there is only one person to point their finger at, namely, the Minister for Health, John Hill.

We have these hospitals now which we all thought were going to be bandaid stations, but now the government does not seem to know where it is at. We will find out one day how many millions of dollars have been spent on this advertising. We have four groups. One group will become GP Plus emergency hospitals and retain current services. Why are they listed as GP Plus if there are not to be any changes? I do acknowledge that it looks as though Meningie will retain its services. That is to be applauded because it is an area that is suffering. Perhaps some commonsense has prevailed somewhere in the system.

I know the doctors down there, and I include Dr Michael Kerrigan who, along with his colleagues, has worked very hard in maintaining not just the physical health of people living in the Lake Albert area but also their mental health. They are really struggling down there. Then we have a list of hospitals to become GP Plus emergency hospitals, which, according to the government, will retain current services including birthing and/or surgical, unless there is a dramatic change in workforce sustainability or safety and quality requirements. That reads: any excuse to do something different, we will. These hospitals include: Crystal Brook, Jamestown and Bordertown. Perhaps Bordertown will have a level of service but, as the minister noted in his ministerial statement today, we need clarity.

Then we have the list of hospitals to become GP Plus emergency hospitals with birthing and/or surgical services. That may change over 10 years, but they are to retain acute admissions. When this Country Health Care Plan came out, none of these GP Plus hospitals were going to have acute admissions. That was laid out in the plan. Either there has been a backflip, or the right

hand is not telling the left hand what is going on. Only the other day, the Victor Harbor *Times* reported—

The Hon. J.D. Lomax-Smith interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Well, that's how silly it is. That's how silly the plan is. It looks as though it has been written by someone with two right hands, because they have it all A-about. George Beltchev even mentioned that there would be no changes at Strathalbyn Hospital. We were advised today that it was not a 10-minute plan. I think it was a 10-minute plan. I think it was cooked up in 10 minutes, because that is about the level of detail in the government's advertising. That is why there are so many people in country communities coming out on cold nights to attend public meetings. This is where it starts to really hurt. The hospitals in this last tranche of GP Plus emergency hospitals, in the early stages, were amongst the 43 hospitals to lose surgical services and admissions. These hospitals do not provide birthing or surgical services, and they may lose acute admissions over the next 10 years. Let us go through the few that are in Hammond—Karoonda, Lameroo, Tailem Bend and Pinnaroo. I read out those names and that means there will be no health services east of the Murray. If you are east of the Murray, from Murray Bridge to the border, somewhere over 250 kilometres, you are in real trouble. You can head to Murray Bridge, which will probably be full.

I challenge any Labor member to drive to Pinnaroo and have a look. It is a bit far out because it is outside Glen Osmond and Gepps Cross, but go on the Pinnaroo to Loxton road. Ten kilometres of that road should be replaced. The ambulances have to come back to 60 km/h, and I can vouch for that because they took me over the road doing 100 km/h, strapped in, and I am glad I was. These are the situations the Labor government does not take into account—the transport provisions. The Rural Doctors Association put in its paper the other day that it thought there will be an extra 2 million kilometres of travel. I believe there is a zero not in there: I think it will be 20 million kilometres of travel to get to services.

I note there have been news reports, and I think some people are being hoodwinked in the Mallee region into thinking that nothing will change. My reading of even this updated document is that we will lose every acute bed that we have from Tailem Bend and east. In question time today, the minister said:

In the 43 other hospitals, which are the smaller hospitals, services come and go as doctors come and go. As a result of concerns expressed in the country, we have identified 30 of those smaller hospitals where we think there is unlikely to be much change over the next 10 years because of staffing arrangements—

obviously, they have bent under pressure—

or doctors currently in place. We have identified about 13 hospitals where a very small range of services are currently provided. They are hospitals where no birthing happens now and no surgery happens now.

This is the best bit—this is the bit that really grinds. He continues:

All they do is deliver GP services and some medical acute admissions.

All they do! Then I come to the next paragraph, which states:

I will give members a flavour of what happens in those hospitals. I will refer to a number of them. In the case of Karoonda (in the electorate of Hammond) there were 185 days in 2007 when there was not one patient in that hospital—for about half the year there was not one patient in that hospital.

He goes on further:

In Pinnaroo (the member for Hammond's electorate) on 170 days there were no patients in the hospital.

This just goes to show the absolute ignorance of the Minister for Health about country health facilities in the Mallee. All these hospitals—Pinnaroo, Lameroo, Karoonda and Tailem Bend—are also shared facilities with aged care. So the nurses are there whether or not there are acute beds used. I can tell members that when the people in the bush need an acute bed, they want it. They do not want to travel hundreds of kilometres just to get an acute bed, and I have spoken of that in this place previously. My father, who is getting on a bit in life, is 88 years of age and, because he has ulcers on his legs—

Mr Venning interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: He seems pretty well for his age, the member for Schubert comments, and he is, but occasionally he has to do extended stays in Tailem Bend. I would like a personal assurance from the minister that if my father gets ill he can be admitted, but I do not think it will happen. Do you know where I think he will end up if he has another problem with an ulcer on his

leg? In Adelaide. That is just where minister Hill suggested they do not want country people. But that is where this country health non-plan is going to send country people.

There are a lot of other things I could talk about in this budget. I could talk about the Mount Bold non-expansion. I asked minister Gago whether there were any environmental impact statements done for the Mount Bold expansion, or any other expansion in the Adelaide Hills. We must remember that Mount Bold was the backbone of the 2007-08 budget, and that has just disappeared into the trees. It is not even a mirage in the desert or a mirage in the Hills. It has just disappeared. There have not even been any environmental studies completed on what would happen with expansion of any reservoir in the Hills or building of any new reservoirs.

I will comment on transport just briefly. Obviously, the government put \$2 billion on the table for city transport and, as I acknowledged before, I have meetings with the Minister for Transport. I met with him regarding the Mallee transport scheme, which has changed over to a new operator. I was advised at that meeting with the minister that no services would be lost. Well, one was lost straight away before the service started. I will be keeping a close eye on what has happened with the Mallee transport and, hopefully, find out exactly how that contract was laid out. The government certainly will be held to account on this year's budget. I commend my remarks.

Motion carried.

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Adelaide—Minister for Education and Children's Services, Minister for Tourism, Minister for the City of Adelaide) (17:51): I move:

That the remainder of the bill be agreed to.

Motion carried.

Bill read a third time and passed.

TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

At 17:52 the house adjourned until Tuesday 22 July 2008 at 11:00.