

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 24 July 2008

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

LEGAL PROFESSION BILL

The **Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Northern Suburbs, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability)** (10:31): I move:

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

Motion carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (10:32): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be and remain so far suspended so as to enable all Private Members' Business—Bills: Orders of the Day listed for this day to be taken through all remaining stages, without any further debate, forthwith and that all Private Member's Business—Other Motions: Orders of the Day listed for this day be taken into consideration and the question put, without any further debate, forthwith.

This is a motion in similar terms to that which I moved yesterday. It seems to me that when the house is to be prorogued we lose the opportunity to debate or vote on all the matters listed on the *Notice Paper* which have not been dealt with up to the point of prorogation. It is a sad day for the parliament because members are robbed of the opportunity to contribute on the various issues.

I realise that yesterday the government had no concern about the remaining items, which were mainly standing committee reports, disappearing into thin air upon the parliament being prorogued. So, I moved the motion yesterday to ensure at least that committee reports would be noted before parliament rose for the break, and that was rejected by the government and also the opposition, I might add. I am sure that the government will have no compunction in throwing out this motion today which otherwise would at least get a vote on the many private members' items which are before the parliament.

To give an idea of the significance of what we are talking about, not only is one bill yet to be moved: 32 bills are already on the *Notice Paper* as orders of the day and, in terms of other motions (leaving aside those motions which have not yet been put), we have no fewer than 38 motions which have been moved and yet which have not had the opportunity of a decision by the members of this house.

It seems to me that it would be a neat way to wrap up a parliamentary session if we were to have a vote on outstanding matters. I realise that this, of course, is not acceptable to the government, but there has to be a better way of dealing with business than having people move bills and motions and then having those items sit there for months on end only to have them finally vanish. That may be a perfect state of affairs for incumbent governments from time to time but it is not good for democracy. That is why I have moved this motion: to see that we get a decision on some of these important issues that non-government members have brought to this house.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (10:35): The government opposes this motion as the member for Mitchell has outlined. We oppose it for the same reasons we opposed his motion yesterday. In a good democracy bills are debated and members' views are heard. To have those views heard is important for the democratic process, as it is important for the parliament and the people of South Australia to hear the views of all 47 members of this house. To simply guillotine debate, which is what in effect the member for Mitchell wishes to do, I think takes away our democratic freedoms. I think that using the guillotine—and this may haunt me one day—is an abuse of the parliamentary system and a measure that should be used sparingly, unless it is in the public interest.

An honourable member: Good point.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, I was thinking that as I was saying it.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: But I do not think you will be around to use it by the time I—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: That's right. I oppose this motion and I also inform the house that it has been a practice and a tradition of this house that, when the parliament prorogues, all these things are taken off the *Notice Paper*. It has always happened in the past; it will happen again in the future. It is simply the way the house has chosen to manage its business. There may be better ways of managing it; we agree with the member for Mitchell in that respect—and I see the father of the house listening to my speech probably for the first time in his career—but I think the important part about bills and motions from private members is the debate and, by guillotining that debate and simply voting on matters without having any debate, we lessen our influence in this place. So, while I am sympathetic to the member for Mitchell—

Mr Hanna: How meaningful the debates are.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: How meaningful the debates are is important. That is why we have *Hansard*, that is why we have the galleries open, so that people can hear our views.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The member may say that, but the government opposes this, it is undemocratic. Guillotines should be used sparingly rather than as a rule.

Motion negatived.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (LITTER) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (10:38): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Local Government Act 1999. Read a first time.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (10:38): I move:

That this bill now be read a second time.

In speaking to this bill, I will be quick because I appreciate that this is the last day of sitting and there are a number of private members' matters following this that members want to speak on, and hopefully vote on, so I will be brief. I accept the fact that this bill will not be voted on before the parliament is prorogued, but I do want to table it so that it can be out for public consultation during the break.

This bill is in relation to amending the Local Government Act to deal with the litter problem in South Australia. The state litter laws are rubbish. While South Australia has traditionally had lower levels of litter than other states because of our container deposit legislation—which has been so successful—we still have significant amounts of litter.

In any one year in South Australia only about 150 litter fines are issued for the whole of South Australia. In the most recent year measured, only 212 fines were issued, with around 75 of those being for hoon drivers laying rubber on the road, so that the number of traditional litter fines totals around 150 per year. There are over 5 million cigarette butts in South Australia in the litter stream each year and we issue just 150 fines. I think it is pathetic.

If we cast our eyes interstate, we see that Victoria issues over 22,000 litter fines a year: 150 in South Australia; 22,000 in Victoria. Something is wrong and something is seriously wrong with our fine system with litter. While we would like to believe that South Australians are less likely to litter than Victorians, that does not explain the huge difference. Frankly, our litter laws are pathetic. I will be introducing this bill to parliament, which is based on the Liberal Party policy at the 2006 election, and it addresses the following issues: the fine under the current act is \$315 and it is simply too large. Many council officers will not issue such a large fine for the littering of small objects, such as bus tickets or ATM receipts.

This bill proposes that the fines be tiered. Littering of small items, such as bus tickets, attracts a fine of around \$80, other littering \$160, and then there is the new offence, called aggravated litter, which is litter that can hurt people, such as broken bottles, needles or lit cigarette butts, and they attract a fine of around \$315. This tiered system works well in a number of other states. Victoria has a very good community littering prevention program, where citizens can report others for littering. It has been a great success in Victoria. Of the 28,000 expiation notices issued in Victoria, 22,000 are paid; a 75 per cent strike rate.

The scheme is simple: citizens report cases of littering to the authorities who issue an expiation notice. This works well for littering from vehicles, such as cars and boats, and as with

speeding fines, people can indicate who else was responsible for the litter if it was not them. The community has accepted this program with enthusiasm in Victoria, with paid fines in Victoria growing from 8,142 in 2001-02, to over 22,000 in 2007-08. South Australia stumbles along at 150 fines a year. So, this bill introduces this program to South Australia.

Other forms of littering also need to be addressed. Chewing gum would be defined as litter. Councils spend hundreds of thousands of dollars paying to clean up chewing gum. Litterers will pay for that under this bill. Unauthorised posters stuck on stobie poles and fences advertising upcoming events become litter and would be fined. As police and councils have been so reluctant to issue fines, more agencies will be given the power to issue fines, including KESAB itself, with properly trained officers. KESAB, which has over 100,000 volunteers, contributes some \$40 million worth of time annually, has been lobbying the government for years for it to enforce litter control measures more strongly. The government has ignored these pleas.

Litter is ugly, it is preventable and causes damage to our environment. We should not tolerate it and my bill seeks to modernise the litter laws and, as I say, I accept the fact that I will have to reintroduce this once the parliament is prorogued, but the matter is now public for public consultation.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Koutsantonis.

CHILD SEX OFFENDERS REGISTRATION (REGISTRATION OF INTERNET ACTIVITIES) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 June 2008. Page 3453.)

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (10:43): The government will support this legislation. It congratulates the member for Davenport on moving it. The caucus has resolved to support his amendment. His amendment goes a long way to dealing with the scourge of child sex offences. I think there is not a member in this house who does not think that we should do all we can to protect our children from the evils of sexual predators.

Sexual predators are probably the scourge of the modern world and they are using modern technology, such as the internet, to prey on innocent victims. We have to do all we can. The government has been a leader in the field of protecting children from predators on the internet. Our federal and state police forces are doing an excellent job in setting stings and traps to catch these predators. The member for Davenport's amendments are sensible, are workable and the government supports them, and hopefully they will have a speedy passage.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (10:45): I thank the government for its welcome support on the bill.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (ETHICAL INVESTMENT—STATE SUPERANNUATION) BILL

Second reading.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (10:47): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill has been passed by the Legislative Council. It is legislation that is beneficial and harms no-one. It gives members of public sector superannuation funds a choice as to the nature of investments where their moneys might be deposited. It gives public servants an option to invest in ethical superannuation funds. There are a number of quite clearly defined products in the investment market that would fit the bill. I stress that it is a matter of choice purely for public servants. If this bill is not passed they are stuck with investments that they do not necessarily want their money supporting, so it is about choice for those liberal democrats in this house, I stress.

I note that the Liberal Party, Family First and the Democrats supported the bill in the Legislative Council. It was promoted by the Hon. Mark Parnell of the Greens, and I note that I inquired of the Treasurer many years ago why there was not such an option for our public servants. At that time the reply was that there was no demand for it, but of course public servants had never been asked whether or not they wanted such a thing. Clearly they do, and Mark Parnell went to the trouble of getting a large number of signatures to demonstrate that people want this choice. Whether or not they exercise it is another matter.

All we are asking is that public servants have the choice to tick a box on their superannuation form that will give them the choice for their funds to be solely invested in ethical investment options. I think members understand what it is about: it is a simple proposition, and I hope we can take this bill through all stages after suitable debate this morning.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (10:51): The government does not support this legislation or the amendments. Ethical superannuation sounds fantastic, like something we should all be excited about, but difficulties arise when you start defining what is ethical, and there is then the cost. Personally I would like to see this matter researched further, as would many members on this side of the house. The member for Ashford has done a lot of very good work on this matter and has taken it so far as to refer the matter to the Economic and Finance Committee, which is taking its time to consider and deliberate on her recommendation passed in this house, and a report will come before us when we return on 11 September.

The Hon. S.W. Key: Hopefully before I retire.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Hopefully, it will be a very long time before she retires. If anyone tries to force her, she can speak to me any time she likes. Amendments were moved in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Mark Parnell MLC, a member of the Greens. If enacted the amendments would have inserted in the Southern State Superannuation Act (which established the Triple S scheme, the state Lump Sum Scheme and the Parliamentary Superannuation Scheme) a requirement that members be permitted to invest their money in a class of investments based on a consideration of the impact of those investments on society and the environment, whatever that means.

The House of Assembly recently rejected similar amendments proposed by the Legislative Council for the Statute Amendments (Police Superannuation) Bill. Only a relatively small number of members have chosen this type of investment option in other schemes, and it is estimated to be less than 1 per cent in the experience of peer schemes.

The amendments as proposed will also cause conflict with the existing objective, contained in regulations of Funds SA, to achieve the highest return possible. This is for people who are saving up for a nest egg for when they retire. Given the increased costs in the world, with petrol prices and the cost of living going up, working families are under increased pressure.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I sat quietly through the member for Mitchell's remarks; I hope that he will give me the same courtesy. Given that he is on a defined scheme, I think he should remain very quiet about this sort of thing.

A further concern is that if the boards of Funds SA and Super SA have to create their own socially and/or environmentally responsible product in order to comply with the proposed amendments, they will have to ensure that all component investments on offer are in fact based on the consideration of the impact of investments on society and the environment.

This will place an immense administrative and compliance burden on the boards of Funds SA and Super SA. It would increase investment costs significantly at a time when global markets are experiencing a massive downturn. There is potentially a significant cost associated with this approach, and it is likely that that cost would have to be borne by all members covered by the Southern State Superannuation Act.

The same level of responsibility to verify that the assets on offer were, in fact, environmentally and/or socially responsible would not fall under Funds SA or Super SA if there were no legislation dealing with such an option and, as an alternative, a product sourced directly from an investment body specialising in such investments in the commercial investment markets were simply made available to Super SA members.

If such an approach were to be pursued, it would be better done outside legislation to ensure that the best possible product could be provided. This would ensure that a socially and/or environmentally responsible investment option would be viable (which is the most important aspect we are looking for), and it would be based on the notion that members choosing that product should pay the full cost and hence ensure no cross-subsidisation, given that only 1 per cent of people who have these options available in other funds are taking up the option.

I commend the Greens in the upper house, the member for Mitchell and members on this side who support the amendments. I read with interest the Hon. R.I. Lucas's contribution in the

upper house, where he supported the amendments and then went on to argue why they were a terrible idea, which is typical of the Hon. Rob Lucas: he says one thing and does another. He convinced me, even though I would not take financial advice from him, given that he ran budgets in deficit for the entire time he was Treasurer and that he bankrupted the state. He has an appalling record of financial management of this state—so much so that he was sacked as shadow treasurer by his new leader because of his incompetence. The teachers did not like him, and he closed my old school. He has been there a long time but, even though he was such a great financial manager, he was sacked by his own leader.

The government will not be supporting these amendments. I think that it is safe to say that a response will be coming soon to this place about ethical superannuation. I think it is a force that no-one can stop. I think people are looking for ethical investments. I do not want to invest in blood diamonds—

The Hon. L. Stevens interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Blood diamonds, member for Little Para, relates to when nations with a poor population are exploited by multinational companies, such as De Beers (thank God I have parliamentary privilege), where families are working in mines with very unsafe practices. They buy these diamonds at a very low rate from these poor, developing nations and then sell them at exorbitant prices to idiots like me who get engaged. That is why I would like to see more ethical investment. However, we do not want to see these funds bear a larger cost that would risk returns on working families and their superannuation investments.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (10:57): I indicate from the start that the Liberal Party supports the bill.

Mr Koutsantonis: However—

Mr GRIFFITHS: The member for West Torrens wants to put words into my mouth. I will outline a few things but, first, I want to defend the Hon. Rob Lucas in relation to some of the comments just made by the member for West Torrens. I am only a relatively new member in this house but, from the outside perspective I had of the difficulties facing the Liberal government from 1993 to 2002, I think Rob Lucas did a fantastic job.

Hard decisions had to be made, and quite often the government on the opposite side of the house will say that hard decisions need to be made and that we do not have the spine for it. I think that 1993 to 2002 demonstrated the opposite. I can say only positive words about the relationship I have with the Hon. Mr Lucas because, in my shadow finance role, if there are any areas on which I need some historical information, he is very happy to provide it to me at any time.

The ethical superannuation investment option is a difficult one to consider. As a basic principle, as the member for West Torrens alluded to, it has been discussed in the Economic and Finance Committee. As I said yesterday, my basic principle is to support ethical superannuation investment options, and that is why, when the member for Ashford moved her motion in the House of Assembly upon which the Economic and Finance Committee is undertaking its work, I rose to support it.

As we become more socially conscious as a community, we want to make sure that, where significant dollars are invested, and for most people their house and superannuation investments are where their largest investments are held, we want to make sure that we do it in a way that we are comfortable with, in all possible ways.

Some people, and it is very much a minority, make a conscious choice to invest their superannuation in different styles of funds. For most people, it is not necessarily an ethical choice: it is based more on the relative risk associated with the investment scheme they choose. Some choose a high-growth option, which in itself attaches a greater chance of return, but also a greater chance of a negative return. I have taken that up, and I have been caught significantly in the past six months with the dive in the sharemarket. It will take a while to recover from the losses I have experienced.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: I apologise to the member for Hammond; if I have cost him money, I am sorry. I was advised that something like 2 per cent of public sector employees actually make a conscious decision on where to invest their funds. Most employees leave it in the default option, which is just a general growth option. The member for West Torrens mentioned the fact that less

than 1 per cent of people in superannuation investment option schemes choose to take up an ethical choice option. Ethical choice in itself is a very subjective term. How do you associate it? Do you associate it with industry, do you associate it with products that might be produced, or do you associate it with services provided to which you might take offence? It is really hard to determine anything that is actually an ethical superannuation investment choice.

The Economic and Finance Committee has received some correspondence about funds managers who consider ethical superannuation issues in their suggestions on fund choices for investment of public sector funds. So, to some degree it is taken into consideration. However, when we debated the police superannuation bill, it was very clear from the advice provided by the Treasurer and the Treasury and Finance officers that the cost of providing an ethical superannuation option would outweigh the number of people who would choose to invest in it. That is why the government chose not to support it during the debate on the police superannuation scheme options. It is a difficult issue.

The Liberal Party is determined to support this bill; it has certainly voted that way in the Legislative Council. The shadow treasurer and I have discussed this matter. We recognise the fact that many people in South Australia, particularly in the Public Service, wish to take up ethical superannuation options. I recall a website where that option was provided for people. I do not think the numbers were that great. From memory, only about 50 people flagged the fact that they wish to take up ethical superannuation options—but it is there.

I commend the Hon. Mr Parnell for introducing this bill. I know that considerable debate occurred on the merits of this bill—amendments were suggested by the Hon. Mr Hood—in the Legislative Council. It is appropriate that it was supported in the Legislative Council and that it has now come down to us. It is disappointing that the government does not appear to have provided the amount of information required for us to make a more objective assessment of it.

The government has indicated that it is not supporting this bill because of the increased costs, but it has not defined what those costs are. I think that, if we intend to make informed decisions, we need to be provided with that information. My colleagues on this side of the house intend to support the bill, and we commend the member for Mitchell for supporting the Hon. Mr Parnell and introducing the bill in the House of Assembly.

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (11:02): I simply make the point that the government's position means that, if the fund managers for our public servants—and, indeed, for politicians—chase the dollar by investing in companies which are the world's biggest polluters, or if they mine uranium or are involved in gambling or tobacco, or any of those things which some of us do not like, superannuants will not have a choice about whether to continue investing in those things, they will be compelled to invest in those things, and that is distasteful. However, the government has the numbers. I sincerely hope that this issue of choice for people—and ethical choice for Public Service superannuants—will be revisited one day.

Second reading negatived.

NATIVE VEGETATION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 June 2008. Page 3693.)

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart) (11:06): Mr Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: Would you like me to take my usual action and speak at great length? On a previous occasion, I indicated that the member for Fisher unfortunately appears to have read a different set of rules in relation to bushfire control and management. He criticised me at length for my attitude. I point out to the member for Fisher and other members that, if we have another of these disasters, those who have stood in the way of allowing land managers to take proper and responsible preventive measures will have to carry a very heavy responsibility. To say that firebreaks are not necessary and do not do any good is an absolute nonsense. Obviously the honourable member has never been involved in controlled burning-off operations or effective bushfire containment measures.

The provisions I put to the house were put in good faith. They are absolutely essential and necessary. I urge the house to support them and to do so in the interest of all South Australians,

because the cost to the taxpayer of not putting forward these particular proposals will be horrendous. The disruption to communities and the danger to life is considerable.

I commend the bill to the house. I will not be forcing it to a division, but I will be bringing this bill back to the parliament during the next session so that we can have a full and frank debate and, hopefully, the government will see the wisdom of what I am putting forward now that we will have the Minister for Environment and Conservation in this chamber and, hopefully, he has a grasp of the problems.

Second reading negatived.

FAIR WORK (PROHIBITION AGAINST BARGAINING SERVICES FEE) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 June 2008. Page 3460.)

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (11:08): The government opposes this bill at this time as it would be unnecessary and heavy-handed legislation. The bill is also pre-emptive of the new nationally coordinated industrial relations system, which is in the very early stages of development, involving the new federal Labor government and the states and territories. Fundamentally, the Fair Work (Prohibition Against Bargaining Services Fee) Amendment Bill addresses a matter that is unlikely to arise in the South Australian industrial jurisdiction as it currently stands. If it were to do so, it would be appropriately addressed in accordance with existing decisions in the South Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

It is generally recognised that a very high proportion of strongly unionised workplaces are now, as a consequence of the former federal Liberal government's WorkChoices legislation, within the federal industrial jurisdiction. This means that the federal prohibition against approval of bargaining fees and agreements, which has been in place since 2003, operates to restrict the potential use of bargaining fees in South Australian workplaces.

According to recent estimates made by SafeWork SA, at least 60 per cent of South Australian workers are now covered by the federal industrial relations system. This change of coverage, as the house knows, is based on the transfer of corporations to the federal jurisdiction. For such companies and their employees, the possibility of negotiating bargaining fees is simply removed by the prohibition contained in current federal legislation.

The new federal government has indicated that a prohibition on bargaining fees should be retained in the amended federal legislation due later this year. However, the precise details of the new national industrial relations system are still to be finalised, including the role of state-based law.

In terms of the other South Australian workers and employers who, in the meantime, still reside within the state's industrial relations system, as members of the house will recall, South Australian industrial law on bargaining fees was determined by the decision of the South Australian Industrial Relations Commission delivered in April 2004, when considering the enterprise agreement between Ian Gregory Morrison Pty Ltd and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union.

The commission made it very clear that the Morrison-LHMU decision would not be treated as a generally applicable precedent and that each submission regarding bargaining fees would be treated on its merits. This included appropriate measures to protect the interests of non-members. Indeed, the bar for successful approval of an agreement containing bargaining fees was set very high. The commission stated its position on this matter very clearly in the Morrison-LHMU decision and has applied those principles rigorously and responsibly.

Since that time, the commission has approved very few enterprise agreements with bargaining provisions (with only two successful applications, including the Morrison-LHMU agreement, as reported by the commission). There has been no flood of applications and such is very unlikely. This is especially the case when the rigour applied by the commission is considered in conjunction with what is expected to be an ongoing federal prohibition which makes bargaining fees unlawful in the context of those companies most likely to consider them.

Common sense also suggests that these matters would best be considered when more details on the composition of the new national industrial relations system is available. The government notes the very heavy-handed means proposed for dealing with bargaining fees by section 7 of the current bill, namely, establishing a series of new offences for seeking bargaining

fees. It is unnecessary, inappropriate and very poor legislative practice to create offences with fines of up to \$20,000 for matters that might, should the parliament determine, be effectively controlled by amendments that would simply disallow bargaining fees within enterprise agreements.

I am sure the people of South Australia will prefer that this parliament demonstrate some measure of restraint and common sense by only adding to our industrial legislation such offences and fines as are truly necessary.

Frankly, this bill is completely unnecessary at the current time as it addresses a matter that is unlikely to be even proposed by the industrial parties in the present environment, and an appropriate and measured system is in effect in any event.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

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

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 September 2007. Page 813.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:16): I rise to speak briefly to support this bill. This is one of a suite of bills introduced by the Hon. David Ridgway in November 2008 when it became obvious to the Liberal Party—and it probably became obvious well before then—that we were in for a major water crisis in this state. As things have unfolded, that has been so true. Along with every member in this place, I wish for heavy rain throughout the Murray-Darling Basin to relieve the situation.

When this bill was introduced, it showed the Labor Party's lack of understanding in relation to the supply of water to this state. We were looking for options to relieve pressure on the River Murray. The suite of bills introduced by the Hon. Davis Ridgway in the other place provided for the use of rain water, grey water and waste material.

I have seen some good developments, where waste material has been cleaned up for use in industry. In Perth a six gigalitre plant is linked into neighbouring industries. The industries applaud the quality of the water they are receiving. A lot of the phosphates and nitrates are cleaned out so it is exceptionally clean water. When I was talking to the operators of this plant they said that people could probably drink it, but they did not want to go through the pain of trying to get it past the people. We saw what happened in Queensland recently—if a government wants to word a referendum whichever way, it will get the result it desires.

We do have to be smarter with our use of wastewater. In my area a lot of people are putting in systems to capture grey water to use on their gardens. It is a commendable system that can be used. There is some initial expense but, as a result of increases in the price of water, it gives access to water that can be used on gardens. The gardens of Adelaide and South Australia have been suffering as a result of the drought since 2002 and level 3 restrictions.

I support the use of wastewater. We should be using 100 per cent of our wastewater, rather than cleaning it up and then pumping it out to sea. That is a flagrant waste. It could be used more effectively in parks and gardens. I believe it could have been linked with Christies Beach and Glenelg so that the water could be pumped to the Langhorne Creek vineyards in my area. It would have been more expensive—around \$200 million—but at least it would alleviate the need for another pipeline from the River Murray. We can have as many pipelines as we like, but if we do not have potable water or water which is not high in salinity it is not much good. I commend the bill and wish it safe passage through the house.

Second reading negated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ADVERTISING MATERIAL) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 3 April 2008. Page 2522.)

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (11:21): I thank members for their brief contributions. It is a simple proposition that there should not be junk mail in the boxes of those people who do not want it. That is all this is about. It imposes—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Mr HANNA: Except for material from political parties. There are a few notable exceptions. Religious affiliation parties would be another exception. But for commercial purposes it would be an offence with a small penalty to put junk mail in the mailbox of those who have stickers saying, 'No junk mail'. That is all the bill is about. I cannot see why there is such a fuss. It is a popular idea in the community. I hope government members will be with me on this bill.

The house divided on the second reading:

AYES (12)

Evans, I.F.	Goldsworthy, M.R.	Griffiths, S.P.
Gunn, G.M.	Hanna, K. (teller)	Kerin, R.G.
McFetridge, D.	Pederick, A.S.	Penfold, E.M.
Pengilly, M.	Redmond, I.M.	Williams, M.R.

NOES (22)

Bedford, F.E.	Bignell, L.W.	Breuer, L.R.
Caica, P.	Fox, C.C.	Geraghty, R.K. (teller)
Hill, J.D.	Key, S.W.	Koutsantonis, T.
Lomax-Smith, J.D.	Maywald, K.A.	McEwen, R.J.
O'Brien, M.F.	Piccolo, T.	Rankine, J.M.
Rann, M.D.	Simmons, L.A.	Stevens, L.
Thompson, M.G.	Weatherill, J.W.	White, P.L.
Wright, M.J.		

PAIRS (8)

Hamilton-Smith, M.L.J.	Atkinson, M.J.
Chapman, V.A.	Conlon, P.F.
Pisoni, D.G.	Ciccarello, V.
Venning, I.H.	Rau, J.R.

Majority of 10 for the noes.

Second reading thus negated.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING (OBJECTIVITY, FAIRNESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 28 February 2008. Page 2258.)

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (11:27): I notice the member for Mitchell standing up, trying to guillotine debate, again. However, the government will have its say on this bill, and I will have my say.

Mr Hanna interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I am too quick. I understand that members opposite have been addicted to government advertising. I know that members opposite saw with glee how their current hero and former federal leader John Winston Howard used government advertising to great effect. He used government advertising to such great effect that he was able to compete with the likes of Coca-Cola, Pepsi, KFC, McDonalds and others. In fact, for the first time in our federation's history, the largest advertiser on Australian televisions was the federal government, pouring out Coalition advertising campaigns day after day trying to sell the people something they did not want called WorkChoices.

These ads came in various ways. The federal government had paid actors talking about how great WorkChoices was. It had paid actors carrying tool boxes pretending to be plumbers and electricians talking about how they loved being worse off under WorkChoices and what a great system it was. We saw it with its advertising campaigns for all sorts of government initiatives, whether it be private health insurance, private schooling and government funding on issues simply to try to get a message across—

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I also inform the member opposite that displays in the house are out of order. However, having seen the evils of taxpayer-funded government advertising campaigns, this government acted swiftly. All our advertising is factual, verifiable and there to deliver information to the community.

Debate adjourned.

VIETNAMESE VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (11:33): I move:

That this house acknowledges the important contribution that the Vietnamese Veterans Association makes in commemorating and remembering significant dates in the history of the former Republic of South Vietnam.

This is an important issue which I know all members of the house will support. The fact of the matter is that the Vietnamese veterans who currently reside in South Australia and Australia, and other countries outside their former homeland, are intensely proud of what they have done and what they have achieved. They are intensely proud of their service to their former nation during the Vietnam War.

Some members in this place were not around then or were too young to remember the events of the tragic Vietnam War—

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: Or oppose it.

Mr PENGILLY: —or even oppose it—which ended in 1975. I go to events in my capacity as shadow veterans minister, particularly commemorations such as Long Tan Day, ANZAC Day and services at the War Memorial, as does this wonderful group of Vietnamese war veterans. They are a terrific group of people, and I am sure that no member here would dispute that. They paid an immense sacrifice for fighting for the then Republic of South Vietnam. At the end of the war, many of them were put into re-education camps, many were thrown into prison and probably many were executed. They chose to get out of that country and, in the case of these veterans, come to Australia and bring their families with them. Often, they had perilous journeys from South Vietnam in boats and other means of transport.

When you go to these functions, they are one of the happiest groups around. They are intensely proud of what they did but they are intensely proud of now being Australian citizens. They are extremely proud that they can march on our days of remembrance such as ANZAC Day and those other occasions that I have talked about. They are great people to talk to. The Vietnamese community as a whole has made an enormous contribution to Australia since all those people came across the waters, but this group of Vietnamese veterans holds a special place in the memories of what happened during that war that I mentioned so many years ago.

At home on Kangaroo Island, I have substantial volumes of history on the Vietnam War. I lost a friend of mine called Tim Turner in National Service who was killed some three weeks after arriving in South Vietnam when he stepped on a landmine, and I have fond memories of him. He was a couple of years older than me and he got killed on my 19th birthday. Some 50,000-odd Australians went to Vietnam and fought side-by-side with what they called the ARVN forces (the Army of the Republic of Vietnam) and as much as those things—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: Fighting side by side with the soldiers in what was called the ARVN (the Army of the Republic of Vietnam).

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: No. Unfortunately in many cases, those Vietnamese soldiers were poorly led and they suffered tremendous casualties in battle, particularly after the pull-out by allied forces—America, Australia and other nations. They were left to fend for themselves and perished in great numbers, and it was a tragedy. So it is worthy that we do remember them, and it is most worthy that we acknowledge their presence in Australia today, remembering their fight in those days for the freedom of their country from the communist invasion. Much has been written and much has been said about the Vietnam war (whether it was right or wrong), but it was an event that took place in those days long gone by, and at the time people thought that they were doing the right thing. It is not for us to criticise now. It is only—

Mr Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: The member for West Torrens probably cannot remember it. He would have been too young to remember. It was live and it was in our homes. It was the first 'TV war', and I and others were eligible for national service. My marble never came up, but I had many mates who went. Indeed, I lost a mate, and I have great sympathy for those who still struggle on. I have numerous numbers of Australian Vietnam war veterans in my electorate, whom I talk to regularly. I do not treat this matter lightly. I think that, as much as we acknowledge our Australian veterans of that war (and thank heavens they have been acknowledged properly and are being cared for), we should acknowledge the Vietnamese veterans of the former South Vietnamese Army.

I look forward again to renewing acquaintances with some of these members when Long Tan Day comes up in the near future, on 17 August. Further, I look forward to those veterans and their families contributing to Australia for a long time to come. It has been a most interesting process, to see where we have come from with those vast numbers of South-East Asian refugees, who came into Australia from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia after that conflict finished and even during the time of that conflict, and the way they have assimilated into Australian society.

They are tremendously hardworking, and many of them are of strong Christian faith. The young people have picked up their hard work ethics from their parents, and they have been a credit tribute to the country they came from and are now a proud part of Australian history. With those few words, we seek to recognise and congratulate Vietnamese army veterans who now reside in Australia, and I ask the house to support the motion.

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (11:40): I move:

After the words 'Republic of South Vietnam' insert:

and notes that the former federal Liberal government rejected the initial request for funding from the joint Australian/Vietnamese Vietnam War Memorial and notes that the foreign affairs minister of the Liberal government said that no member of the executive would ever visit the memorial if the flags of Australia and the former Republic of Vietnam were flown together.

I rise to support this motion in its amended form. I hope that every South Australian has come to realise the wonderful contribution that Vietnamese South Australians have made and continue to make to our society. I am very lucky to have a large number of Vietnamese constituents in the seat of Morialta.

The first time Vietnamese came to our shores in large numbers was shortly after the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975. Their presence in our country since that time has enriched us as a nation. There is no doubt that they have brought with them energy, enthusiasm and an earnest desire for a better life. The Vietnamese community are highly regarded as hard workers. They are also enormously respected in the ex-service community, where the camaraderie they share with Australian Vietnam veterans is well known.

I know that this stems from their gratitude to Australia and its soldiers. Long before we, as a nation, realised how shabbily we treated our own Vietnam veterans, our Vietnamese brothers and sisters were showing the way in honouring them. Their gratitude to the Australian Armed Forces has never diminished and remains as strong today as it did when our armed forces fought side by side. How the integration into our society of citizens of the former Republic of Vietnam has progressed over the years is evidenced by the appointment last year of Mr Hieu Van Le as our Lieutenant-Governor. Mr Hieu Van Le is doing a splendid job, and we are proud to call him an Aussie. At the same time, his fellow countrymen are also proud to know he is a fellow Vietnamese, born in Quang Tri.

The Vietnamese know their history. It is a well-documented history that extends over thousands of years. I am pleased that many of the special days remembered by the community of our Vietnamese veterans are being recognised here in Australia. The commemoration of these days is invariably shared with fellow Australians. I was very pleased when I was in Vietnam, with Mr Hieu Van Le and the Attorney-General, two years ago, that I was able to visit Long Tan and to help present a wreath at the memorial there for the soldiers who died in that terrible Long Tan battle, those soldiers having been very well supported by the South Vietnamese Army at that time.

The most historic day of commemoration is, of course, Tran Hung Dao Day, which is commemorated on 16 September each year. Marshal Tran Hung Dao was the Vietnamese Military Grand Commander of Than Long during the Tran dynasty in the late 13th century. He commanded the Dai Viet armies that repelled three Mongol invasions. These were the first defeats suffered by Kublai Khan and are regarded as among the greatest military feats in world history.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Ms SIMMONS: Just shut up and you might learn something. The Mongols invaded from the sea and a tactic employed by Marshal Tran Hung Dao, in the famous Battle of the Bach Dang River, was to position steel-tipped, fire-hardened stakes below the water line. The Mongols were then lured into the river and, when the tide receded, their fleet was holed. More than 400 Mongol vessels were burned and their fleet destroyed.

During my parliamentary tour of Vietnam in 2006, I visited a museum where several of these stakes are preserved some seven centuries later. I was able to touch them, and I wondered at the military genius of this man. In recognition of his generalship, Marshal Tran Hung Dao was adopted as Patron of the Navy of the former Republic of Vietnam. He is remembered every year.

While Tran Hung Dao Day remains a date of great significance, other days are also celebrated. The former Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces Day remembers the day the armed forces of the former republic were forced to take control of their country. Historians among us will recall the coup d'état that deposed the Ngo Dinh Diem regime on 1 November 1963. That regime was followed by short-lived civilian governments. This created political instability. Seeking to capitalise on the situation, the North Vietnamese communists dramatically increased the size of their force in the south. To counter this threat, the armed forces of the former Republic of Vietnam took control of the government on 19 June 1965.

The men and women of the armed forces of the former Republic of Vietnam fought to prevent the invasion from the north. They fought a courageous fight. In the process, they lost over 230,000 people who were killed in action and 300,000 were wounded. These heavy losses were indicative of the tenacity they showed in the defence of their homeland. The armed forces of the former Republic of Vietnam were well-organised with a true sense of honour and integrity.

The third principal day of commemoration observed by our Vietnamese veterans is 30 April. It was a tragic day for Australia—nay, it was a day of tragedy for all peoples who value the rule of law and pluralism. To those born in this country it signifies the end of the Vietnam war, a conflict to which Australia committed 11 years and the lives of more than 500 young Australians. That is a tragedy. To our Vietnamese brothers and sisters it meant so much more. It was the day they lost their country. Take a moment to think about that—losing your country. How does one ever get over that?

At 2.45pm on 30 April 1975 the flag of the former Republic of Vietnam was torn from the flagpole at the presidential palace in Saigon. Sadly, Australia and the former Republic of Vietnam had lost a war. That is something we will never forget, and we thank our Vietnamese veterans for ensuring that the day is burnt into our consciousness. I know that every year on 30 April, a mere five days after our special ANZAC Day, Vietnamese and Australians stand proudly side-by-side at the Vietnam War Memorial and remember this sad event.

I am referring to the splendid war memorial on the Torrens Parade Ground, mostly funded by the Rann Labor government and recognised worldwide as one of the best of its type. It is also the same memorial that the previous federal Liberal government, courtesy of the Hon. Alexander Downer (of repute), initially refused to fund. Can you believe it? At the very time they were sending young Australians into a new conflict in Iraq, the former federal Liberal government was flushing down the memory hole the service and sacrifice of those who fought in our longest war. With this gesture, the Liberal Party suggested that the worth of the work of 50,000 Australians who served in Vietnam had vanished into the mists of time.

This from a Liberal government that was a direct descendant of the government that sent those young men to war. Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, a Liberal government was happy to honour the flag of the Republic of South Vietnam then—in fact, they ordered young Australians to defend with their lives the cause it represented—but when it suits them they simply turn their backs. Had it been left to the Liberal government, our magnificent Vietnam War Memorial may not have been funded, the flags of Australia and its allies would not have been seen flying side-by-side, and Vietnam veterans would not have this special place to call their own.

I acknowledge that, eventually, kicking and screaming, the Liberal government contributed, but only after it had been shamed into it by the Vietnam veterans, the Adelaide City Council and this government. We would not allow that project to fail and we made a promise to every Vietnam veteran that we would do whatever it took to ensure that their memorial was built. Of course, the Liberal government, per Alexander Downer, was not finished, and mere months before it was constructed he openly stated that, if the memorial went ahead, no member of the federal executive

of the government (of which he was a part) would ever visit it while the flags were flying, no matter what the occasion.

Fifty-eight South Australians gave their lives in a cause determined by a Liberal government, and Mr Downer, on behalf of his colleagues, says he will never attend this memorial in their honour if an Australian flag and that of the country we were sent to defend were flown together. This, so the Liberal Party could cosy up to a one-party state, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the party that is that state: the Communist Party of Vietnam.

We on this side wear the friendship badge on our coat lapel: the Australian flag crossed with the flag of the Republic of Vietnam, which is yellow with three horizontal red bars. I saw the former chief of staff to the Liberal foreign minister wearing a different friendship badge: the Australian flag crossed with the communist flag. How far the Liberal Party has drifted from the noble policy of its former Liberal prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, who, having prosecuted the war in Vietnam, accepted the mass of humanity seeking refuge across the South China Sea from the consequences of defeat. Malcolm Fraser defied the racist sneers against these people—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms SIMMONS: —from some of the then political left and brought them to Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Morialta, your time has expired.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart) (11:51): We have listened to the member for Morialta, who obviously has a very short memory span. We can recall Jim Cairns standing in the street, putting his arms around the Vietcong. We can remember the moratorium marchers protesting when the government of Australia was in Vietnam defending people whom they now claim to be their friends. We know how the Whitlam government turned its back on those people who worked for the Australian government at the embassy and left them in the hands of the Communists who took over. The government would not allow them or their chauffers to come to Australia when they wanted to.

So do not get up here and shed crocodile tears for the people—examine the facts. The Australian government under Malcolm Fraser—and, prior to that, Harold Holt—went in to protect the people of Vietnam against the aggression of the north, which was organised and promoted from Moscow.

Mr Koutsantonis: And China.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: And China. Look at some of the recent television programs about how they infiltrated down through the Ho Chi Minh Trail, through Cambodia and Laos, and into Vietnam, and how they turned their back on the agreements they made to end the war. The moment the allied forces left, they tore up every agreement.

We support the welfare of the Vietnam veterans, particularly those from South Vietnam who had to flee for their lives because of their political views. It was not members on this side who marched to support the aggression from the North and to try to get our troops withdrawn. We were there supporting them. What happened? Not only did South Vietnam fall but Laos also went. Look at what happened in Cambodia: the domino effect. It was only good luck that it did not go further.

To move this amendment and make out that members opposite are supporters and friends of the Republic of South Vietnam is gilding the lily. I remember people coming into this place wearing red badges. I remember the moratorium demonstration and confrontation with police that took place on North Terrace and King William Street, and I remember who was there. I think the deputy premier's press secretary, Bruce Muirden was one of the first people arrested. I remember all these characters who were apologists. Now, because they think there is some political advantage in it, they have become best friends.

I do not know who wrote the speech for the member for Morialta, but I think she should get a new speechwriter. She should stick to the facts of the matter. Some of us lost friends, and one of my neighbours was killed in South Vietnam. I say to the honourable member: if you are going to get up and tell a story, tell the whole story and not half the story because then you will have some credibility and prove that you are genuine and not here trying to make a short-term political gain by telling half a story.

I think the people who fled South Vietnam have made a good contribution to this community. They are hard workers and understand what it is like to live under the socialist yoke. They have suffered dearly, and a lot of them have lost generations of assets. They risked their lives

to come here. We appreciate their contribution, but clearly understand why they came here (the honourable member has not gone into why they came here): they were let down.

Some of those in government were less than honourable and were corrupt. The marines fought brilliantly until they ran out of ammunition and were not resupplied. They were flying helicopters onto aircraft carriers that were getting pushed over into the sea. For a considerable amount of my time I represented Woomera, as the member for Giles does now, and I got to know a number of Americans at Nurrungar. I spoke to some of the senior people who had been in Vietnam, and one brigadier told me that this collapse would have taken place earlier.

He said that only 5,500 of them were left, but they were determined to fight it out to the finish. They started to fight, and Nixon gave the order to send in the Air Force. Within a few hours, it had destroyed the Vietcong coming down the road. If Kissinger had let them do it again, they would have stopped them again. They could have stopped them again but, because the apologists in the state department got control—

Mr Koutsantonis: If Hubert Humphrey had won the 1968 election, Vietnam would not have fallen. Conservatives cannot win wars.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: That is not right.

Mr Koutsantonis: FDR, Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson.

The Hon. G.M. GUNN: He is getting enthusiastic. I will give a little more history. If it had not been for a Republican administration, the British would not have been a success in the Falklands without the support given, so just remember that. I can tell you that that has come from the very highest level of the British government.

In conclusion, I repeat that it is a great pity that we have heard a one-sided story and that the real facts have not been given. It is a political exercise. Those of us on this side have always supported the government of South Vietnam, and that is why there was involvement by the Liberal government to defend these people's right to democracy and freedom. I think that it is a pity that we heard a one-sided story.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (11:58): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr Goldsworthy: We're going to get a lesson.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: Here begineth the lesson. First, no-one in this house has said that the actions of the Whitlam government in not allowing refugees (including the chauffeurs who were famously left behind when Australia pulled out and the South fell) refugee status was not an appalling crime. No-one disputes that, and no-one disputes that the Labor Party actively opposed Australia's involvement in Vietnam, and it was punished at many elections because of its opposition to the war.

No-one disputes that Vietnam veterans were not honoured appropriately on their return from their tour of duty; hopefully, that wrong has been righted. No-one disputes that Australians fought valiantly alongside South Vietnamese patriots defending their country against the communist scourge. No-one disputes that. No-one disputes that, 30 years on, the Australian government is attempting to normalise relations with the communist regime in Vietnam. Fine. That does not mean we should forget our history, and it does not mean that we should normalise those relationships at the expense of those who fought and died. I know that members opposite were embarrassed by the Hon. Alexander Downer's treatment of those South Vietnamese.

Mr Goldsworthy: Rubbish.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The member for Kavel says 'rubbish'. The truth is this: the federal government did not want the South Vietnamese flag flown at that memorial. Why? Because it is trying to normalise relationships with the Vietnamese Communist regime in much the same way as it will not let the Republic of China fly its flag at memorials. Those members who understand the difference between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China will know what I am talking about.

The member for Morialta is absolutely right. She is in no way rewriting history about the Liberal Party's support for the war in Vietnam and our opposition to that war. We are simply talking about the recognition of those who fought and died in that war defending democracy.

If the member for Stuart honestly believes that Alexander Downer was right to say that no member of the Howard government would attend that memorial, I do not believe him, because I

know in my heart of hearts that he thinks they should have turned up. I know in my heart of hearts that almost every member opposite was embarrassed by Alexander Downer and his foreign policy on the People's Republic of Vietnam. I think that the Labor Party did the right thing, and the Premier showed leadership and courage in pushing ahead. We have to remember the battles that have been fought and won and the battles that have been fought and lost.

Imagine an Australian prime minister saying, 'We can't commemorate the loss at Gallipoli, because it might offend our relationship with Turkey.' Imagine the Prime Minister saying that. There would be outrage and rioting in the streets, probably led by the Hon. Graham Gunn who probably served and fought as a young man at Gallipoli.

The idea that we cannot fly the South Vietnamese flag at a memorial near North Terrace because it might offend some Communist diplomat is rubbish. I cannot believe that the member for Stuart is defending some Mandarin—some public servant from a Communist regime—for being offended by the flying of the flag. He should know better. I will never doubt the member for Stuart's patriotism to this country. I would never doubt his patriotism and his love and affection for those veterans who have served and defended this country, and our allies—never, but do not question ours. The Labor Party is just as patriotic and supportive. You do not see us getting up in this place and condemning Robert Menzies for selling pig iron to the Japs while they were bombing Darwin.

If you want to bring up history, we can talk about all sorts of things that went on from both sides. But we are talking about 30 years on, honouring those who served side-by-side with Australian troops. Yes, they were on the losing side. Yes, there was a new government in place in that country. Yes, they have a new flag and, yes, they have a new system of government, but that does not mean we cannot fly their flag. I proudly fly the Republic of China flag in my office. I proudly support Taiwan.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: I've been there.

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: So have I. I proudly support them, because I believe in supporting democracies against Communist oppression—I always have and I always will. But I cannot believe that a lion, a patriot, the great Conservative—the Hon. Graham Gunn—defended cowards like Alexander Downer who, the moment he got a telex from some junior representative of the Vietnamese government saying, 'Don't fly this flag,' actually tells every member of the Howard executive not to turn up. And the member for Stuart defends it! I cannot believe it.

One of the great aspects of the Liberal Party—it claims—is its independence, despite what the party room says. 'We can vote whatever we like; we're proud Liberals. We can have dissenting voices'—unless you are Peter Lewis. 'We can have dissenting views'—unless you are Alexander Downer, then you have to toe the line. The Liberal Party realised the backlash in rural communities, where these proud refugees have made themselves great citizens of this proud nation by working hard to assimilate and bring their traditions to our country to enrich our nation, and how offended they were at the Liberal Party's stance at that memorial.

Just next door to my office is a service station. That service station is run by a local Vietnamese family who served in the South Vietnamese Army. He was at that memorial. Every day he proudly wears a pin on his lapel with the Vietnamese flag—the yellow flag with the three red bars. But Alexander Downer, John Howard, Peter Costello and Brendan Nelson all thought that flag should never be flown again. What a disgrace!

I do not doubt what the member for Stuart said in his speech, but do not try to tell me that Alexander Downer did not try to boycott every Liberal from turning up to that memorial.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn: Jim Cairns—

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: I do not care about Jim Cairns. We are talking about the former federal government that, up to November last year, did not want that flag flown. What a disgrace! Apologists. Every Vietnam veteran who turned up to that memorial said that the Premier spoke with such eloquence that it brought tears to their eyes.

Members of the Vietnamese community have welcomed the appointment of one of the most famous refugees from that imprisoned country as our Lieutenant-Governor. So, do not sit here and lecture us about patriotism, about abandonment and about not looking after refugees. We are ready to get up and say sorry for our past actions. All this motion is doing is asking that members opposite do the same thing, because the offence they caused those veterans and members of the Vietnamese community still runs deep. If you do not believe me, talk to their community leaders, if you ever have time to go out and meet any of them. See what they think of

the Liberal Party now. In one fell swoop that genius Alexander Downer offended one of the largest migrant groups in Australia, and he stands condemned for it.

The member for Morialta is right to move this motion. She is right to talk about historical truths. She is right to talk about the offence caused to those communities, and members opposite should be ashamed of themselves for trying to howl her down for defending Vietnamese veterans from flying the flag they fought under. The arguments the member for Stuart made for not changing that flag with the Union Jack in the corner was that Australian troops fought under that flag, yet he then turns around and says that you cannot fly the South Vietnamese under which those same veterans fought.

I cannot believe it. I am outraged, shocked, horrified at this. Anyway, I support the amendment and hope members opposite come to their senses and do so as well.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

PALESTINE

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (12:08): I move:

That this house—

- (a) recognises the event known to the Palestinian people as 'Al-Nakba' meaning 'The Catastrophe';
- (b) affirms the special connection of Australia to the land of Palestine and Palestinian people;
- (b) regrets the failure of both sides to reach an agreement over the past 60 years which guarantees justice and lasting peace for both Israelis and Palestinians; and
- (d) calls for the immediate establishment of the state of Palestine within the 1967 borders in accordance with United Nations Resolution 242.

Members may wonder initially why an issue of international significance might be addressed in this parliament. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all, at the corner of East Terrace and North Terrace we have a War Memorial, and that War Memorial commemorates the Australians of the Light Horse who fought in Palestine. There is a very deep, long lasting connection to the land of Palestine for the descendants of those Australians who fought and gave their lives in Palestine.

We were there in World War II, as well. The Australians were part of allied forces moving north from Palestine into Syria. In those times, there were Jewish battalions fighting with the allies and the Arab Legion was fighting with the allies, as well. Jews and Arabs alike were there working with the British and the Australians. The military connection is indisputable. But then there is another reason; that is, in Adelaide we have many, perhaps hundreds, of Palestinians—Palestinians by heritage, some of them Palestinians by birth, some of them, indeed, are from houses and villages which were destroyed in the war of 1947 and 1948. That war was called by the Israelis, the War of Independence and, indeed, it led to the creation of the state of Israel. However, there are two sides to that coin, and the other side is Al-Nakba.

I might just stress that there is precedence in this place for dealing with such significant international issues. I was one of those who supported Premier Mike Rann when, on 14 April 2005, he moved successfully a motion reminding us all of the genocide of the holocaust and the horrors of World War II, and condemning anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism. These weighty issues do need to be dealt with not only because of their significance but because we have people in Adelaide who have their heart and soul touched by such issues.

Before I go on, perhaps a little history, but not in my words. I begin by referring to a great Israeli academic whom I had the privilege of hearing in Adelaide a short time ago, the late Tanya Reinhart. In one of her lectures she said:

The state of Israel was founded in 1948, following a war that the Israelis call the War of Independence, and the Palestinians—Nakba (catastrophe). A haunted, persecuted people sought to find a shelter and state for itself, and did so at a horrible price to another people. During the war of 1948, more than half of the Palestinian population of 1,380,000 at the time, were driven off their homeland by the Israeli army. Though Israel officially claimed that the majority of these refugees escaped and were not expelled, it still refused to allow them to return, as a UN resolution demanded shortly after the 1948 war. Thus, the Israeli land was obtained through ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian inhabitants.

Is it going too far to call it ethnic cleansing? I note also that the Israeli historian Benny Morris has referred to this. He is indisputably a Zionist and his commitment to the ongoing success of Israel is unquestionable. He said:

There are circumstances in history that justify ethnic cleansing. A Jewish state would not have come into being without the uprooting of 700,000 Palestinians. Therefore it was necessary to uproot them. There was no choice but to expel that population. It was necessary to cleanse the hinterland and cleanse the border areas and cleanse the main roads. It was necessary to cleanse the villages from which our convoys and our settlements were fired on.

An Israeli hero, David Ben-Gurion, one of the prominent military and political leaders of the 1940s said:

If I was an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country. Sure, God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them? Our God is not theirs. We come from Israel, it's true. But two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They see only one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?

It is interesting to consider the notion of ethnic cleansing and the notion of expelling people from their land in this country Australia, because there is an extraordinary resonance in terms of the way in which the European settlers treated the indigenous inhabitants of this country. They had their own catastrophe. Their population was reduced drastically and they had to retreat into the hinterland. We know that up to this day they have not yet achieved the standard of life and the happiness they had before European settlement of this country.

Of course, in order to approach the problem of our indigenous Australians, first we had to recognise that in fact there were Aboriginal people here before European settlers. That has occurred only in the past 20 years. In our 200 years of white settlement of this country it is only in the past 20 years that we have had the maturity through our legal system to recognise that Aboriginal people were here first and, perhaps, in a very real sense, that it was their land. The apology given by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd earlier this year would not have been possible had this reality not been recognised.

It is so difficult to move onto peace in the Arab/Israeli conflict because of this lack of recognition of the reality of what happened in 1948. The details of the occupation are horrific. The Israeli academic and writer Dr Ilan Pappé has written a book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. In that book he details many instances of horrific ethnic cleansing. Those who are familiar with the issues have probably heard of the massacre of Deir Yassin. In fact, there were probably atrocities committed on both sides, but the evidence has come out now that as far as the Israeli military forces were concerned there was a deliberate plan to expel Palestinians from their homes and villages.

I myself have seen in Israel the sites of villages which have been razed to the ground, sometimes with the exception of a few ruins, perhaps a crumbling church or a disused synagogue. I remember one village I visited was made into a national park after 1948. All the inhabitants were cleared out and the buildings were razed except for a synagogue and a church. They stand there as ruins to curious visitors enjoying their leisure time on weekends. There is a plaque which recognises that there was a synagogue there and Jewish people had lived there for centuries. There is no reference whatsoever in that record of the Arab population. It is not just an ethnic cleansing of the population and a destruction of villages, but a complete rewriting of history. I find that reluctance to accept reality is one of the main obstacles to everyone concerned moving on.

I went to another village near Haifa where the inhabitants were expelled. They moved up the mountain near their original village and lived there without electricity or sewerage for decades. Finally, they have had some of those basic services provided by the local authorities. Meanwhile, what had been their village prior to 1948 has become an Israeli artists' settlement, whereby they can enjoy peace and quiet and paint in their studios.

I have a little time left. I have touched on the main theme of my motion. I should say something more about the call for the immediate establishment of a state of Palestine within 1967 borders, in accordance with UN Resolution 242. That resolution calls for the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces from territories. When we talk about the territories we are talking about Gaza and the West Bank today. In other words, the UN resolution is predicated on what we might call today a two-state solution, giving Israel and a newly created state of Palestine equal status.

I must say that there is an increasing number of people enmeshed in the conflict, particularly on the Palestinian side, who are moving on from the two-state solution to an insistence that there be one democratic state in the region. The way forward is difficult. I should not give people the impression that the Australian government has supported UN Resolution 242; on the contrary, Australia votes with the US and Israel in the UN on matters concerning Israel's interests.

That is not to say, however, that people in this parliament cannot make a commitment to justice and say that there should be a place in the sun for both Israelis and Palestinians. I would like to quote, before I finish, Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, a writer and political activist, who said:

As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.

I think that is a very pertinent comment about civilisation and about the way that people need to live together. Finally, I will draw on the words of Uri Avnery, a man I met in Israel. He fought on the Israeli side in that 1948 war. He has told stories of coming across abandoned villages with food still on the table as people fled before the advancing Israeli forces. He was also a prominent politician and, indeed, at one time, a minister in the Israeli government. Admittedly, and by his own confession, he is on one particular side of the debate that goes on within Israel. I might add that it is a debate which has a lot more free speech and tolerance than we have in this country when the subject of Israel is debated. Uri Avnery wrote recently:

I am not worried about the existence of the state of Israel. It will exist as long as states exist. The question is: what kind of state will it be? A state of permanent war, the terror of its neighbours, where violence pervades all spheres of life, where the rich flourish and the poor live in misery; a state that will be deserted by the best of its children? Or a state that lives in peace with its neighbours, to their mutual benefit; a modern society with equal rights for all citizens and without poverty; a state that invests its resources in science and culture, industry and the environment; where future generations will want to live; a source of pride for all its citizens?

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

The Hon. S.W. KEY: I move:

That the honourable member's time be extended by five minutes.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no provision for that.

The Hon. S.W. KEY: It has happened to me before.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will just see. The second reading of a bill is the only occasion.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (12:25): I move:

That this house condemns the Rann government for implementing the Country Health Care Plan and not committing to a regional impact statement to assess the effects on communities where hospitals are to be downgraded.

Nowhere is this government's shallowness more clearly exposed than in this state's Country Health Care Plan. Had the government and its health minister followed its own published rules of what it claims it will do, a regional impact statement would have identified the injustices, inequities and outright stupidity of this plan before it had done so much damage to the community's morale. I have even had a threat of suicide as a result of it. One would hope that, after doing a regional impact plan, the minister would have had the commonsense to ditch the plan immediately, but there is no indication to date that there is that much commonsense among the government and its ministers, and the plan is still there with the ultimate goal of very much downgrading hospitals within the next 10 years.

'Sophistry' is described as a subtle, tricky, clever but false method of reasoning. It is what this government is good at. The setting up of a task force to go around the state now at taxpayers' expense ostensibly to listen to the people is a case in point. Nowhere has the minister, or anyone in the government, said that this will change anything. Some aspects of the original plan may be delayed, according to statements by the minister, but the outcome is still the same. It gives a false premise on which to base discussion and dialogue as any consultation really becomes irrelevant: it is only for show.

This is backed up by the CEO of Country Health SA, George Beltchev, who, on talkback radio on 7 July 2008 said:

[The task force] will work with local communities side by side and go through a very detailed and objective process looking at defining what services should be provided at each of what are called GP Plus emergency hospitals.

Nothing there about changing the original plan! The Minister for Health is very sensitive about people looking beyond the hype to the facts. Our Liberal leader said that the Nationals have deserted country people by signing off on the Country Health Care Plan. He said that regional South Australia is the state's engine room and that it is disappointing that the government and the Nationals cannot see that. Our leader further said:

When you look at where the wealth of this economy comes from, it's increasingly coming from aquaculture, from the wine industry, and now of course Mr Rann is out there talking up mining. All of it's in the country and yet the response is to take the benefits of that economic growth but they are not reinvested back into country communities. Now we think that's wrong.

A fired-up health minister reacted angrily, claiming that, 'We are going to build up services in the country so people have access to more health care services not less.' Remember the definition of 'sophistry': a subtle, tricky, clever but false method of reasoning. Unfortunately for the minister and his colleagues, country people are not so easily hoodwinked. Passive recruitment of doctors by this government on the excuse that they are in private practice is just not good enough. Country people want active recruitment of the doctors for our regional hospitals, and also for all the health workers who support them and the wonderful service they give. Passive recruitment is not good enough, minister.

The Nationals are going around pretending that they are representing country interests and that they are concerned about the country. Let us look at the facts. The National Party member in this house is the Minister for Regional Development (a Labor minister in the Labor government) who has wholeheartedly embraced the Country Health Care Plan. Another National, in the form of Mr Blacker, is announced as the head of the task force. He is also head of the Regional Community Council which meets regularly, we are told, with the Premier. They should have already had a say about this plan, but where were they when our hospitals were being put at risk?

It is no surprise that Mr Blacker supports his fellow National member, after all the Nationals are hanging on to their political power by their fingernails, and having him as head of the task force gives the member for Chaffey some political underpinning. It is an indication that the honourable member for Chaffey is feeling vulnerable and lonely. Next, the SA National Party leader jumped on the bandwagon to tell us what a wonderful thing the downgrading of country hospitals is for us—no surprise there. It seems that the Nationals are as good as Labor in using sophistry to cloak their actions that are so detrimental and negative for rural and regional South Australia.

The Nationals' leader is a relative newcomer to this state and has no understanding of the sacrifices that districts have made to establish their local hospitals that are now threatened by this party's collusion with Labor. He has little knowledge of the premature deaths due to having no accessible medical services that strengthen the resolve and activity of country people to provide themselves with a cloak of safety in a resident GP and a hospital. Daphne Freeman, in a letter, wrote:

Labor was closing country hospitals when it was last in office. This was a policy the Liberals inherited when elected in 1993 which was quickly rejected. Now Labor, with the support of the Nationals, is at it again. Berri is one of the proposed regional hospitals and suddenly Health Minister John Hill has found a Berri resident who recalls a supposedly Liberal secret plan to support his proposals. Good try, Mr Hill, but actions speak louder than words.

There is not, and never has been, a Liberal plan to close country hospitals.

Let's look at what a regional impact statement would have found if one had been done. The minister stated that most people will be no more than an hour from a regional hospital. That may be the case in the city, although one wonders if those living at Victor Harbor and the south coast centres will consider a drive to the city when needing medical attention as an improvement on what they have now. Mr Chambers of Cummins said:

The recent emphasis on the necessity of heart attack victims having treatment within the first hour and a half is about the amount of time to get an ambulance manned and driven 70 kms, then you promise treatment in a further 90 minutes at a regional super hospital. Not too bad, everything went according to plan but unfortunately the patient died in the meantime. Just another poor bugger dying because he was silly enough to live in a rural area. It is an indisputable fact that people living in rural areas have more premature deaths than city folk due to the distances and time spent in travelling.

South Australians are dismissive of Victoria—just look at the advertisement inviting people to come to South Australia—yet Victoria has a totally different approach to the delivery of primary health care in rural and regional parts of the state compared with South Australia's Labor/National government. Leon Byner on ABC Radio on 9 July 2008 said:

...you might be aware of a place on the border of South Australia and Victoria...Nhill is a town of about 2,000 people...The Victorian Government a little time back actually put in several million dollars to upgrade facilities...at the hospital...didn't go to the people of the Victorian region and say Nhill is not being used very much...let's put more resources at say, Horsham. Now across the border at a place in the Riverland called Loxton where you've got four times the population we've got a State Government that says, 'well, look, we need to have the hospitals in the major centres so we really don't want to spend money on most hospitals...'...a really interesting difference between the way we do business in South Australia in regional health and the way the Victorians are...you've got to ask the question, why?

The health minister claims that Labor's plan will improve health services. A regional impact statement would have determined the falsity of that belief. Mrs Doris Wedd, in a letter dated 7 July 2008 while sitting at the bedside of her son Peter, aged 42, who was on life support, wrote:

Peter played table tennis as usual on Thursday night May 22...by Friday evening after collapsing at home, family members were called urgently to assist in getting Peter to hospital...The doctor and staff on call at the Cummins Hospital did everything possible to assist Peter...with his deteriorating condition soon realised the need to get him to specialised help in Adelaide...via the Royal Flying Doctor Service...Peter arrived in the Intensive Care Unit of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the early hours of Saturday 24 May.

Doctors prepared the family for the worst on several occasions however after 6 weeks he is still with us all be it in an extremely fragile position...if on the night of May 23 we had had to wait for an ambulance to convey Peter to Port Lincoln, we have been told he would not have made it. There are many other towns further away from Port Lincoln and Cummins...and it is my belief that people will die in the event of emergencies such as ours.

A regional impact statement would have determined the disincentives that the Country Health Plan throws up for people to live and work in rural regional South Australia. As one small business operator wrote:

When interviewing prospective employees, the main things young family chaps ask about is what our school is like and is there a hospital and health services for my family? Without these services, it is very difficult to attract employees to the country towns and the loss of these services has a domino effect right through the community...causing the town to decline significantly.

It is readily acknowledged that men are generally reluctant to seek medical advice. Greater distances coupled with unfamiliar personnel and strange surroundings will inevitably mean men would be waiting until an illness was well advanced before seeking medical attention. This is another point that a regional impact statement would have picked up.

The difficulty that volunteer ambulance services have in attracting recruits would have been well documented by a regional impact statement. Volunteers now are dropping out because they cannot afford the time off work just to transport patients from one hospital to another. The state's health plan depends on volunteer ambulance services, however those who voted for the plan have no concept of how those volunteers operate, the problems that they face and the sacrifices that they make, whether self-employed or employees.

The nuts and bolts of primary health care have been totally ignored in the presentation of the plan. Prescriptions for medicines are easily obtained by those who live in urban areas. Consider for a moment the cost and struggle in travelling 240 kilometres or more just to get a prescription; an additional point that a regional impact statement would have added to its long list of disadvantages that the Labor/National health care plan places upon country people. I wonder if it will be possible to find out how much the government has spent on its advertising campaign trying to tell us that the Country Health Plan is a great piece of legislation? Vivonne Rusden of Ungarra, stated in a letter:

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. This fact sheet is full of motherhood statements, assertions and future promises. It is very short on substance. How do you debate a mirage?...city-based policy makers ignore the impact of...

isolation, distance, low population base, poor or non-existent infrastructure and the extra human and financial cost of implementing rules and regulations that have little relevance to rural communities. She states further:

Instead, your plan may be one more nail in our healthy rural lifestyle coffin. What will you city folk do when there is no flour for your bread?

Murray and Gail Wiseman of Lock put it more succinctly:

No amount of government rhetoric, advertising in TV and press, or many-paged (statistically inaccurate at times) Health Care Plans will alter the fact that rural medical services will be wound down to the detriment and despair of rural communities.

John Dickinson of Port Lincoln picked up on social justice among many other points when he said that, 'It is not merely a health matter it is also a social issue.'

The current lack of funding and shortage of staff in the current health system do not augur well for the future of health in this state, even before the Labor/National emasculation of country health. Alison Barnett of Port Lincoln brought that out clearly when she was prompted to write to the health minister regarding her nephew, aged 34, who is currently undergoing renal dialysis at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Mrs Barnett said:

He was being dialysed in Port Lincoln prior to undergoing a kidney transplant, his third, in November 2006. Unfortunately this transplant, like the previous ones, was unsuccessful. Because of his treatment being carried out in Adelaide, his place on the Port Lincoln dialysis roster was lost. Over 18 months have now passed and Andrew remains in purgatory, receiving dialysis three days a week and living in temporary accommodation in the old nurses quarters at the Royal Adelaide Hospital. His accommodation consists merely of a single room, with a hospital bed and a chair. No creature comforts at all.

An example of social injustice.

The dialysis unit at the Port Lincoln Hospital was established through the fundraising efforts of the Port Lincoln people, who wanted this facility in Port Lincoln instead of having to relocate permanently to Adelaide, away from family and friends and the support that these give. A matter of great social justice. One of the prime movers was the late Natalie Bruza, an Aboriginal dialysis patient, whose courage, tenacity and care for others, despite her own health problems, was inspiring and an inspiration that will live for ever in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know her, which I did.

A regional impact statement would have picked up on these needs in the current delivery of health in this state and the many ways in which deficiencies will not be overcome by the state Country Health Care Plan. I ask the minister to drop his policy, and develop one that supports the country people of South Australia and its regions.

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (12:40): I have pleasure in supporting the motion of the member for Flinders. It is perhaps no better explained than in the letter of the week in this week's *Stock Journal*, the headline of which is: 'Please explain 'death of our community', Mr Hill'. It states:

...Given that Health Minister John Hills seems hell-bent on downgrading the Kimba Hospital, it is only appropriate that he explains to our community why he is happy to orchestrate the death of our district.

Our community is incredibly resilient and has survived drought, other natural disasters and personal tragedies.

One of the shining attractions of people choosing to work and retire in Kimba has been the quality of our health care.

It is not appropriate for our residents to have to travel to Cleve...or anywhere else for more than an overnight stay when they have been and could still be treated at Kimba, not now nor anytime in the future.

Further, why are you trying to spin the fact [Mr Hill] that most country people will be no more than 90 minutes from a country general hospital as a good thing? How many city residents have to travel for that length of time?

It is totally unacceptable for anyone to have travel times of that magnitude.

I can think of no good reason for the Kimba Hospital to be downgraded and would hope that you have the courage to come to Kimba to defend the indefensible.

John Schaefer,

Mayor, Kimba District Council

I think that sums up in pretty good words how country people feel about getting duded by this Country Health Care Plan.

I speak from experience on this issue. I was chairman of the Hills Mallee Southern Regional Health Board for eight years, and prior to that I was chairman of the local hospital board on Kangaroo Island. Therefore, I am not speaking from the top of my head about this; I am speaking with a bit of knowledge and understanding, which is something that, clearly, the Rann Labor/National Party government and minister John Hill do not have. They do not even want to think about it. They do not want to listen to what people have to say. Sure, the Minister for Health has been running around the countryside listening now, but it is all a bit too late for a lot of it.

Country people have been totally duded over this issue and stand to lose an incredible amount of health care that they have had for generations if these changes come about. You only

have to listen to people such as Dr Peter Rischbieth, Dr Clive Fowler or Dr Peter Joyner—and the list goes on of doctors around rural South Australia—who know what they are talking about; they are the professionals. They are absolutely pooh-poohing this thing. They are standing up for their communities. In many cases, they are doctors who have lived and worked in those communities for decades, and they are treated as gods in their communities, because they basically are gods. They keep people alive, they keep them well, they look after their health, and, for the life of them, they cannot understand why this callous Rann Labor/National Party government is absolutely dudding country health.

Here we have the members for Chaffey and Mount Gambier sitting in cabinet signing the death warrant for country health. The absolute irony of it is that the good people of Loxton presented a petition through their local member in this house a day or so ago, and you could clearly see from the expression on the member for Chaffey's face that she was intensely embarrassed about it. She has not had a good week; she has been embarrassed by a few other things as well. That will probably keep going.

When people in rural South Australia start dying because of the intransigent attitude of this Rann Labor government, the government will be held to account. It might not happen this year or next year, but it will happen. For those opposite, who are sitting there smiling, grinning and feeling complacent about it, it will be on their head. It is tantamount to a national disgrace perpetrated against South Australia by this government. It is a lack of a duty of care. They think, 'Oh, that's fine; we can reduce all these services; we can cut them back. We can save money here; we can save money there.' Let me tell you, Mr Speaker, where a lot of these hospitals have come from—they have come from the communities that have built them over decades. In many cases, they are soldiers' memorial hospitals built in remembrance of servicemen from rural and metropolitan South Australia who fought for this nation. They were built by local communities to care for local communities and, along with schools and places like that, they are the centre and the absolute pillar of those communities.

The communities have raised enormous amounts of money over many years to keep these facilities going, to upgrade them and to provide equipment for these hospitals. What have we here? We have this absolutely ludicrous Country Health Care Plan brought in by this government that seems to have hit an iceberg. I reckon the 'Good Ship Rann Titanic' has hit two icebergs and is going down, and it will take them all with it.

You only have to wait around and see the anger in country people. They are slow to get upset and angry, but at the moment they are almost ready to cause a revolution about a couple of things: the River Murray and country health. Don't be surprised at what happens. Don't be surprised if they decide to come to town, like they have in the past (I remember the live sheep dispute) and, if they decide to come to town and take it into their own hands, well, look out.

If it thinks it can duck and weave on this one, the government of South Australia has another think coming. It will be held to account, and it will not go away. This Minister for Health is perhaps the weakest and most ineffective South Australia has ever had. He is totally run over by the bureaucrats. In defence of the former minister for health, Lea Stevens knew what these people wanted to do but had the guts and courage to stand up to them and stand up for communities. She understood what rural health was about. She was not going to turn the world upside down. But, oh no, not minister Hill.

Mr Sherbon and his mates have been trying to get their hands on it and take permanent control, removing the boards and putting in their place these hacks with no power whatsoever. They have been trying to do that for years. It is a pity that some board members have seen fit to go on them; I would not have a bar of them. They are a joke and a payoff—without pay, I might add.

I look back at some of the bureaucrats I have dealt with over the years. Len Payne, who used to be a country health director, was a terrific bloke. He and Ian Dunn did a marvellous job with country health, as did the people in the government offices, some of whom are no longer there, such as Kevin Eglinton, Rick Brand, Jacqui Sutherland and Jill Cooper. They had a close attachment to country health.

Some of these officers are still working in the system, but they cannot say anything for fear of retribution from these mandarins in the glass tower in Hindmarsh Square. They will be slotted really quickly if any of them speak up. They are disgusted and absolutely appalled. They are outraged because everything they have worked for over so many years has been torn out from under them.

Mark my words: in due course, what will happen is that, under this mob, these hospitals will be closed. This absolutely despicable Rann Labor and National Party government deserves condemning in the strongest possible terms. Through our shadow health minister, we will have a lot more to say on where we will go with health when we regain government—and I tell you that that is coming.

The member for West Torrens is not in the chamber. I will buy him a bottle of acetone so that he can unglue his backside from the back bench. I reckon his next chance will be to become a shadow minister in the Labor Party opposition on 21 March 2010, and I look forward to that.

This is a disgrace. The member for Flinders is bringing forward concerns that are felt all round rural Australia. There is no semblance of an investigation into what is going to happen and into the economies of these towns. No regional impact statements have been done. It was just rolled out at about 7 o'clock at night on budget day by the cowardly mob on the other side. We are left with a disaster that is going to be perpetrated on rural South Australia. Let me once again remind members opposite that, when people start dying in rural South Australia because they cannot get to a hospital in time—

Ms Breuer interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: The member for Giles is okay. That's all right. When they start dying, we will hold you to account.

Ms BREUER (Giles) (12:50): Members opposite should be absolutely ashamed of themselves. That is absolute lies and bullshit! You should not be talking like that. You have been out there for the last six weeks—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr PENGILLY: I have a point of order.

Ms BREUER: —and peddled misinformation to people—

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Giles will take her seat.

Mr PENGILLY: On a point of order, sir, I believe that is unparliamentary language, and I ask the member to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: The member for Giles does have to withdraw the word 'lies'. As to the other word she used, I suggest that she perhaps tone down her language.

Ms BREUER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word 'lies'. What has been happening out there in our communities for the past few weeks is an absolute disgrace. As members of a party, you should be ashamed of yourselves for the misinformation that you have spread and for the mischievous way that you have approached the matter.

I have been to some of these country health meetings, and I have heard the rubbish that has been pushed around. At two meetings that I attended, people got up and slagged the Minister for Health. They called him a 'bloody liar' and said that he could not be trusted. I have heard that it has happened at all the other country meetings as well. The misinformation that you are putting around is absolutely appalling. No country hospital will close, but you have people out there terrified about what is going to happen in their community.

The other day, an old lady from Cowell rang my office. She said that she was a member of the hospital auxiliary at Cowell and that they did not want to raise money for their hospital anymore, because it all had to go to the Whyalla Hospital. What absolute nonsense that is. That is the sort of fear that is out there. People are terrified about what is happening in their hospitals, because of what you have said about country hospitals. I go to these meetings. You people send your members of parliament along. You put plants in the audience to put this information around, and it is absolute nonsense, and you know it.

You know that we have a serious crisis in our country hospitals because we cannot get the staff to go out there and work. How many communities still have the old GP who could do everything? They could fix your sore toe, your sore bum, they could deliver your baby, they could do whatever. How many country hospitals still have those GPs, and what is the likelihood that we can get them in the future? Of course we will not get them in the future. I would love to see GPs out there to do what they have done forever. But that is not happening any more. We cannot even get them out of the leafy suburbs in Adelaide. We cannot get them down to Port Noarlunga and we

cannot get them down to Marion, so how can we expect them to go to Coober Pedy, Ceduna and places like that? We are in a crisis. Something has to happen.

Finally, this government has come up with a plan that will look after these hospitals and get something done out there so that, when this happens, the communities will be looked after. Nobody expects people to drive for an hour and a half to go to a hospital. It will not happen, and you know it will not happen. The way you have handled this is disgraceful.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms BREUER: The things that you have done out in those communities is disgraceful. You have frightened the life out of country people. You have frightened them into thinking that they will not have their hospital. Of course they will have their hospital, and of course they will have staff out there. They will not be expected to drive for an hour and a half when they have had a heart attack or if their baby is convulsing. It will not happen. It will not happen at all. We have to get staff to work out there. We have to provide services in these communities, and we will. We have done a very good job of planning this, but you have absolutely sunk the ship. You have gone out there and frightened the life out of people, and you should be ashamed of yourselves.

The other day, Bevan and Abraham went to Yorketown and sat there all morning. We had mischievous people ringing up, once again reinforcing the lies about what was going to happen down there. We know that the Yorketown Hospital is not going to close. I heard Bevan and Abraham say to someone a few days later, 'At the end of the morning, we thought: what was the problem? Nothing was really going to change.' But out there, people still have the perception that their hospital is going to close. You have handled this in a disgraceful manner. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

We will look after people in the community, as we have always looked after them. But where are the GPs and nursing staff who can go out there? We have to do something drastic. We will do what we can to keep staff in those areas, but, if we cannot get them out there, what will happen to the people? You have put in red herrings about emergency services and other things, and it is not true. You know it is not true, and you should be absolutely ashamed of yourself, Graham Gunn! You are sitting there looking at me and frowning. You know that it is rubbish, and you know that, if you were in government, you would have to do something as well. So, do not try to tell me this. I have been out there trying to fight for my communities and trying to get this message across, but they are not listening. We have a serious problem of communication and it is because of you—you have caused it.

The Hon. G.M. Gunn interjecting:

Ms BREUER: You should be ashamed of yourself if you have frightened old people out there. You should be ashamed of yourself: it is an absolute disgrace.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (12:55): I will not talk untruths, but let me say that an article was published in the local *South Eastern Times* in Millicent a week ago. The article quoted me as saying in the house that the figures pertaining to the Millicent hospital were wrong because the Country Health Care Plan suggests that the Millicent hospital has 35 beds. I told the house that there may well be 35 physical beds at the hospital, but the hospital is funded to 28 beds, and if a 29th patient arrives at the door of the hospital, they are not admitted, they are moved on—generally to Mount Gambier.

On reading my contribution to the house, the local paper rang the minister's office. After two days of deliberation, the minister's office said that I had got it wrong and that I had ignored the two dialysis chairs that were in the hospital. So, they are counting them as beds. I have news for the minister: his office, after two days, could not understand that the dialysis chairs had been closed since December last year. Don't tell me and my colleagues that we have got it wrong.

I would suggest to the member for Giles that she go back and look at the budget, because the budget shows an increase in funds for the country health budget of 3 per cent. The Treasurer stood in this house and told us that the health inflator is at 9 per cent. In the current financial year (which we have just begun), we have a real decrease to country health of 6 per cent. We had the exact same last year. We have had the exact same happening year after year whilst you have been in government, yet you have the temerity to stand up in this place and say that we cannot get health professionals into country areas. Well, hello, I can tell you why we are struggling to get

health professionals into country areas: we are not funding country health; we are cutting it all the time.

The Hon. R.J. McEwen interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: The member for Mount Gambier is suggesting that we closed hospitals. We have never closed a country hospital—

The Hon. R.J. McEwen interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: I thought you were delighted with the service that you were getting at Mount Gambier. I will tell the house that Mount Gambier is one of the most pampered hospitals in the state. The regional country health board in the South-East took millions of dollars out of the hospitals in my electorate and transferred them to Mount Gambier. I think it is outrageous. One of the things which is really concerning me is that, over a great number of years now, the community of Millicent (my home town) has collocated and built an aged-care facility on the same campus as the hospital. I was told last week by a former board member that Country Health is taking over that facility. The asset value is probably \$10 million. Currently, it has a debt of \$4 million, and is well on the way to paying off that debt. Along with taking over the country hospital, it is getting rid of the board which also ran that aged-care facility. This is happening in every country town across the state.

Country Health is taking over all those aged-care facilities, which, by and large, are on the same campus as our country hospitals. The Department of Health, through Country Health, is taking over all those aged-care facilities and it will transfer the funds which come from the commonwealth government into propping up the running of country hospitals. That is about, first, cutting the budget to country health; and, secondly, grabbing the assets and the funds that come to country communities for aged care and using that to supplement the meagre amount of money that this state Labor government provides, with the support of the members for Mount Gambier and Chaffey, to undermine our country hospitals and grab any money they can along the way through.

I think that is an absolute disgrace and it works against something for which country people have fought and worked hard for many years. The other thing I tell members of the government is that, in country hospitals, by and large, they go to great lengths to get patients to come in as private patients and bring funds into our public hospitals from the private sector. In Bordertown—which is in my electorate and where 1,500 people attended a meeting a couple of weeks ago—almost \$1 million a year comes from the private health sector to help fund the Bordertown public hospital, that is, 32 per cent of that hospital's budget.

We have the same thing happening across all the hospitals in my electorate, and I would suggest that it is common across the state. That will not happen under your Country Health Care Plan. Your government, your budget, will have to find all that money. That is one of the things that is wrong with the Mount Gambier hospital. Mount Gambier hospital has been run differently from the smaller country hospitals and its effort to get funds out of the private sector has been relatively abysmal, to be quite honest.

Debate adjourned.

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

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (APPLICATION OF TRUTH IN SENTENCING) AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor assented to the bill.

COUNTRY TRANSPORT SERVICES

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond): Presented a petition signed by 1,784 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to provide adequate funding to support necessary public transport services in the Coorong, Karoonda East Murray and Southern Mallee region.

ARKAROOA WILDERNESS SANCTUARY

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport): Presented a petition signed by 2,330 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to save the Arkaroola Wilderness Sanctuary by preventing exploration and mining in the sanctuary.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Presented a petition signed by 583 residents of Peterborough and greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to reverse the Country Health Care Plan as it relates to the Peterborough Hospital.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition): Presented a petition signed by 30,506 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to withdraw the Country Health Care Plan and to continue funding of Country Health SA services at existing hospitals and health facilities in rural South Australia.

BHP BILLITON

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart): Presented a petition signed by 429 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to oppose the proposal from BHP Billiton to develop an unloading/loading facility and a transport corridor adjacent to the Upper Spencer Gulf due to the potential impact on the marine environment and the amenity of the region.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The SPEAKER: I lay on the table the minutes of the Assembly of Members of the two houses held today for the election of a member of the Legislative Council to hold the place rendered vacant by the resignation of the Hon. Andrew Evans at which Robert Lawrence Brokenshire was elected.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Premier (Hon. M.D. Rann)—

Determinations and Reports of the Remuneration Tribunal

No. 4 of 2008—Communication Allowance for Judges, Court Officers and Statutory Officer Holders

No. 5 of 2008—Conveyance Allowance for Judges, Court Officers and Statutory Officers

APY LANDS INQUIRY

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (14:05): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: On 1 May 2008, the government received the Children on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands Commission of Inquiry Report into Sexual Abuse. In accordance with legislation, I am today tabling the preliminary response to that report. The response I am tabling today shows that the government will support almost two-thirds of the recommendations. A further six are supported in principle, but some further consideration is required regarding their implementation. Ten recommendations are noted: three are primarily directed at bodies other than the state government and the remaining seven require further consideration before committing to them.

One recommendation is not accepted in significant part. The government will not establish a short-term remand facility in the APY lands. We believe resources are better directed to enhancing community safety and child protection. Instead, the government is establishing 12 additional beds for traditional Aboriginal men at the Port Augusta corrections facility. This government established the commission because of the difficulties in obtaining hard evidence about suspected sexual abuse on the lands. It was hoped the model would provide a safe option for those who had experienced or had information about child sexual abuse.

Commissioner Mullighan's report makes harrowing reading and vindicates the decision to examine the issue more closely. He was, however, unable to elicit any direct reports of child sexual abuse. In his report, Commissioner Mullighan details the culture of silence that prevents people speaking out. It is in this context that he makes many of his recommendations. Accordingly, the

government believes that fundamental to every strategy is establishing confidence about community safety, to ensure people can come forward and confidence that, on coming forward, something will be done. The government's immediate response, made within days of receiving the report, announced eight more police officers (bringing the total to 19) and five more child protection workers.

The commonwealth assisted with money to build a third new police station and staff housing. Today's report outlines the further action that we will take to improve community safety and the child protection system. I can report that the police are on track to have all three police stations built by the second half of 2009, but the government will not wait to place more police on the lands. Temporary accommodation has been secured, and from August SAPOL will fly in additional police to live temporarily in accommodation at Umuwa, Murputja and Amata. This will bring to 12 the number of sworn police on the lands in addition to the six servicing the lands from Marla and the community constables and police Aboriginal liaison officers.

Temporary accommodation has also been sourced for the additional social workers and child protection officers. Recruitment is underway, and they too will soon be on the lands. Today I can also announce that we will build a safe house at Umuwa to ensure that abused children and their carers are protected while other interventions are put in place. Critical to community safety is proper governance. It is appropriate that the commissioner made governance the topic of his first recommendation. Without proper governance structures, people on the APY lands can have no confidence that the communities will be able to keep them safe and no confidence that they will be protected if they speak out about abuse.

The government will shortly release a discussion paper outlining its preferred model for governance on the lands. We will consult with the relevant stakeholders before deciding the final model. Also critical to safety is sufficient housing. The state and commonwealth governments have been working hard at delivering the commonwealth's \$25 million housing offer. The granting of leases by the APY Executive Board in relation to the first tranche of that housing is expected in late August. Construction, involving the training of Anangu as part of the construction program, can then commence.

As I have mentioned, some of Commissioner Mullighan's recommendations require further consideration before a detailed response is given. We are placing significant additional resources on the lands to tackle child sexual abuse and changing the way in which agencies respond. The increased resources and changed practices will themselves affect the nature of the other services which are required and the level of need for those services. Decisions about how existing services are able to accommodate these needs and appropriate new ways of addressing them will require careful analysis. The government will provide a further response to those recommendations in its six-month response.

Tackling sexual abuse is everyone's business. Commissioner Mullighan's recommendations are directed at the state government, the commonwealth government, non-government organisations and the Aboriginal community. He urges us to work in partnership. Our response today sets out how we will do that. I table the government's preliminary response pursuant to section 11A of the Commission of Inquiry (Children in State Care) Act 2004.

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (14:10): I bring up the report of the committee for the second session.

Report received.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw to honourable members' attention the presence in the chamber today of students from Minlaton District School, who are guests of the member for Goyder, students from Norwood Morialta High School, who are guests of the member for Hartley, and students from Littlehampton Primary School, who are guests of the member for Kavel.

QUESTION TIME

WATER BILLING

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): Will the Premier demand cuts to personal ministerial staff to offset the costs of providing refunds to incorrectly billed

SA Water customers so that this expense is not passed on to the people of South Australia? The Rann government employs, at a cost of many millions of dollars, an unprecedented number of advisers and media staff—presently around 300. A reduction in this expense would free up funding to offset the costs of the SA Water bills bungle, but today on radio the water minister indicated her intention to make taxpayers bear the cost burden for reprocessing the refunds.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (14:12): I know it is Thursday and I know it is the last day of parliament, but you kind of expect a bit more from the Leader of the Opposition. The fact of the matter is that, as much as he tries to string things out—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —the government has said that it has made a mistake. The government has corrected that mistake. The government is going to refund the people affected and do it as expeditiously as possible. So, I guess you can try to hope that people will run it for another day. Okay, a mistake was made, refunds will be made and we want your support at the appropriate time to change the Waterworks Act 1932. Also, of course, there has already been the announcement of quarterly billing. So, those things have been announced. They were announced earlier in the week, and reannounced over again.

DENTAL HEALTH

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens) (14:13): My question is to the Minister for Health. How many additional public dental visits will be made possible by the implementation of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program and what effect will this have on the state's dental waiting list?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:13): I thank the member for Torrens for this excellent question. Today I can announce that the reintroduction of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program—a program that had been scrapped by the former government—will provide an additional \$24.7 million over three years for public dental services in the state of South Australia.

This will have a major impact on public dental waiting lists in South Australia. Members might like to know that, when the former government was in office back in early 2002, the restorative dental care waiting time reached a peak of 49 months. Since that time, this state government has provided an additional \$56 million to public dental services, resulting in the waiting time reducing from 49 months to 19 months, which it is currently. The number of people on the restorative dental waiting list has been reduced from 82,000 in 2002 to 32,429 in June this year. This is a 60 per cent reduction, and it represents the lowest number of people waiting for dental care since the loss of the former commonwealth dental care program in 1996.

The funding provided by the commonwealth dental program will provide an additional 85,000 dental visits over three years. This will have a major impact on public dental care waiting lists, which will rapidly reduce from the 19 months in June this year to 11 months by June next year and they are expected to fall even further over subsequent years. As we all know, we should each have a dental check-up once a year, so this will mean that people on the list will have access to that goal.

I make this clear: under the former state Liberal government, the waiting list was around 49 months; under this government, by next year, it will be down to 11 months, which is a dramatic turnaround demonstrating the good cooperation and the big commitment by the state and the federal Labor governments. The other side in government, at both a federal level and a state level, neglected this important part of health care. As the program is further expanded, adult concession card holders will be able to enrol for regular check-ups and preventative dental care. This is where we want to get to because, if we can manage the dental care in this preventative way, we can ensure that all of the people on the list are looked after properly.

In addition, the Commonwealth Dental Health Program will enable adult concession card holders with oral health conditions that affect their medical conditions, or whose oral health is affected by poor general health, to receive enhanced access to public dental services. In its first year the program will include 3,000 visits for people with chronic disease, 1,900 for indigenous people and 3,100 for preschool children.

I also advise the house that the \$3.9 million redevelopment of the Gilles Plains TAFE Centre for Dental Studies was opened on Monday by my colleague the minister for further education and that will help to provide the extra capacity to undertake these additional dental visits—so capital investment as well as recurrent investment. The redevelopment will also double the size of the centre's dental clinic, increasing the number of dental hygiene services offered to the public from 3,000 to 6,000 and it will significantly boost the capacity of the centre for training dental assistants, hygienists and technicians. This is very good news. Only the opposition would criticise it. Only the opposition would knock it. They have no morality at all because they produced the circumstances where people were waiting for 49 months.

WATER BILLING

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:17): My question is to the Premier. Has the Minister for Water Security breached section 2.5 of his Ministerial Code of Conduct, and what action does he intend to take? Section 2.5 of the Ministerial Code of Conduct, under the heading 'Fairness and Diligence in Decision Making', states the following:

Ministers should not make an official decision without first giving due consideration to the merits of the matter at hand and the impact the decision is likely to have on the rights and interests of the people involved and the citizens of South Australia. A minister must use all reasonable endeavours to obtain all relevant information and facts before making a decision on a particular issue and should consult, as appropriate, in relation to the matter at issue.

The Minister for Water Security has this week admitted to parliament and to the public that she failed to give due consideration to the new water billing arrangements, that this failure has impacted adversely on the public, who have been given incorrect SA Water bills, and that she did not obtain all the relevant information and facts before making key decisions on the matter.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (14:18): No, that is not the case. In fact, it is very interesting that you should raise this because the minister has acknowledged and apologised for a mistake and says she will fix it—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Do you want to speak? I will let you speak.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for MacKillop is warned. Premier.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: There were some very interesting revelations yesterday that did not quite make the breaking news, because yesterday it had been revealed that your government, while you sat around that table, made a decision, and yesterday we saw Lucas coming out and making the same mistake. We saw Brindal, your former water minister, ringing in to a radio station and saying he did not know about it, but it was revealed—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It was revealed yesterday, by the Leader of the Opposition, that he knew that, in fact, there was a falsehood, that he knew the true billing system. If that is the case, why is it that he did not apologise to the people of this state? Why is it that he allowed subterfuge to take place, deliberate subterfuge, as opposed to—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will take his seat. Point of order, Leader of the Opposition.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: On a point of order, what I actually said yesterday is that I read my water bill.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Leader of the Opposition should not make frivolous points of order.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Because what happened yesterday—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is very hard to hear above this cacophony of noise from the other side. What happened yesterday is that, when it was revealed that the former government had made the same mistake, but did not come out and correct it, did not issue a refund—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —we made the presumption, because we are fair-minded, that Mr Lucas and Mr Brindal had made the same mistake. But, no, one of the cabinet ministers present said he knew all along. So, where is his apology to the people of this state, and why didn't he tell his colleagues that they should apologise, change the system and issue a refund?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Because of his over-weening vanity yesterday he said he knew around that table—and he was there for a good two months, an historic period in the history of the state; he was part of a rabbit punch on the way down. He knew that there was subterfuge, but he refused to apologise, refused to correct, refused to refund, and that is the difference between him and this minister, who had the courage to admit a mistake. The people of South Australia for years have said, "Wouldn't it be good to hear a politician say, "I'm sorry." Wouldn't it be good to hear a politician say, "Yes, I made a mistake." Honesty versus spin, spin, spin from Media Marty, who is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: For the Leader of the Opposition, honesty, like the mining boom, like the BHP development of Roxby Downs, is some kind of mirage in the desert. Here we have a minister who admitted a mistake, a minister who is fixing the mistake, a minister who is giving a refund. There is the Leader of the Opposition, who did not reveal that he knew that there had been a mistake made, but claimed to this house yesterday that he knew all along. Who is the honest one? Who is fit to be a minister? This minister is!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (14:23): My question is to the Minister for Education.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: How is the government assisting secondary schools to prepare for the new South Australian Certificate of Education?

The Hon. J.D. LOMAX-SMITH (Adelaide—Minister for Education, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Tourism, Minister for the City of Adelaide) (14:23): I thank the member for West Torrens for his question. I know he is both supportive and interested in senior secondary education and, in fact, is a great supporter of Adelaide High School and its current and former students, and its future ones.

The new South Australian Certificate of Education, which begins in 2009 as part of the \$84 million school to work strategy to develop the skills and values of young people and ensure that they are connected to school, work or training, is part of a very broad reform agenda in the senior secondary years. It includes an investment of \$54.5 million in supporting Catholic, independent and government schools to implement the new SACE system.

There has been extensive community consultation on the development of the new SACE. Indeed, today I have responded positively to the recommendations contained in a parliamentary report, which was a result of a further inquiry into the SACE, which has been tabled in another place. This inquiry was carried out by the Social Development Committee, and resulted in its 27th report. I take this opportunity to particularly thank those members of the committee and those many members of the community who took the time to contribute in their deliberations.

This year, our state budget delivered \$16.8 million to support the introduction of the new SACE. Within that, funds of \$4.8 million will assist professional development and the piloting of specific programs as part of the government's support of teachers. Indeed, from next week, more than 500 school leaders, including deputy principals and curriculum coordinators from the Catholic, government and independent sectors, will be involved in forums across South Australia in preparation for the new SACE. In addition, some 500 teachers are expected to attend 12 workshops in August and September as part of a series of training workshops to discuss the personal learning plan. This is the first subject that next year's year 10 students will undertake as part of the new SACE.

We are also investing in ways to strengthen the links between school, work and training while students undertake their senior secondary certificate. For example, 60 grants, totalling \$1.9 million, are currently enabling 48 secondary schools to work with industry, universities and local communities to create school to work innovative programs. The school to work grants will total \$5.7 million over three years and include further grants in 2009 and 2010.

Professional development and consultation will continue to be provided to schools throughout the implementation of the new SACE because we know that teachers and school leaders are integral to young people achieving a relevant and rigorous secondary school qualification for the future. I commend both the report and the response to the house.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:26): Will the Minister for Water Security now withdraw her support for the Rann government's Country Health Care Plan? Does she still have confidence in her Labor government and the health minister?

The minister participated in the Labor cabinet decision to implement cuts to country health in the Country Health Care Plan. When the opposition moved a no-confidence motion in the Minister for Health regarding the Country Health Care Plan, the member for Chaffey voted with the government in support of the plan, yet on Wednesday 16 July 2008 the member for Chaffey is pictured in *The Loxton News* in her electorate accepting a petition from her constituents. In the article, she is quoted as saying, 'I know your message, and I support it 100 per cent.'

Earlier this week, the member for Chaffey tabled the petition, containing 2,822 names, requesting the house to urge the government to withdraw the Country Health Care Plan. Where does she stand?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kairua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:27): It is probably unparliamentary for the Leader of the Opposition to reflect on the motivation of the Leader of the National Party, a member of cabinet, in tabling a petition put to her by her constituents. She has a duty—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: —both to the house and to her constituents, to do this. She does not have to agree with the contents of that petition.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for MacKillop!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I find it strange that the Leader of the Opposition—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: —asks this question when his colleague one row behind him presented a petition today calling for some environmental action to happen in his electorate in relation to a development proposal. I might be wrong, but I am certain that he did not agree with the contents of that petition, either, but he did his duty by his constituents in tabling that petition in this house.

Can I say about the Country Health Care Plan, which the government has put out for consultation, that we have received quite a few submissions. I am very pleased that we have received those, and we are reading them carefully. We are taking into account the views that are expressed by people in country South Australia, and I would be the first to acknowledge that the plan has caused concern amongst people in country South Australia. I think that is a fair thing to say. However, that concern has been exploited by those opposite for political advantage.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Don't pretend. You have exploited it for political advantage and you have made statements about it which are untrue. You have scared people in country South Australia by telling untruths about what the plan says. I am pleased that not everybody in country South Australia opposes the plan. I was absolutely delighted to read in the media on the weekend that the Mount Gambier council voted to support the South Australian Country Health Care Plan.

I think the Mayor of the Mount Gambier council is the endorsed Liberal candidate for the other side for that seat. So, the local Liberals in Mount Gambier endorsed this plan. In fact, only one person in the Mount Gambier council opposed the plan. His name was Councillor Tony Pason. The article starts by saying that the council supports it, then about half—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, I have. I am pleased that the member mentioned the Riverland, because I have before me a letter not in *The Loxton News*, but in the *Murray Pioneer* from—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Oh, so one newspaper in the Riverland is to be preferred over another. The letter in the *Murray Pioneer* is from the general surgeon who practises at Berri, Arnold Seglenieks, whom I hope to meet tomorrow when I visit the Riverland. His letter is in support of the Country Health Care Plan as well as the Riverland, so there is quite a bit of support around. I recognise that there is concern—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I recognise that there is some concern about it, and I recognise that that concern has been manipulated for political purposes by the opposition. I am going out and talking to people in country South Australia. I will spend all day tomorrow talking to people in the Riverland. I know from my experience in talking to people in Yorke Peninsula and Eyre Peninsula that, when I get a chance to talk to them and tell them what we are actually planning, many of their concerns disappear.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:32): In light of the minister's answer on behalf of the Minister for Water Security about what she thinks, does the 'quite a bit of support around' that he mentioned include her support for him and his Country Health Care Plan? Has she said to you that she supports it, or not?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:33): The member for Chaffey—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The member for Chaffey, as a member of cabinet, of course supports the Country Health Care Plan that was put out for consultation. She supported it going out for consultation. I know she is particularly supportive of the \$41 million that we are spending at the Berri Hospital and, regardless of the outcome of the consultation process, we will spend \$41 million at Berri Hospital to expand the services—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Ask me a question, Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I would be delighted to answer any question you would like to put to me. I am currently answering a question that was put to me by your leader. I know that you would like to sit in his seat, and maybe one day you will—and there is probably an opportunity there for you in the future. But at the moment I am

answering a question by the Leader of the Opposition, and I am saying that the cabinet supported this document going out for consultation—which is what we are doing. I expect that we will make changes to it as a result of that consultation process.

I know that one thing that the member for Chaffey supports is the \$41 million development of the Berri Hospital, which expands services, creates more beds and provides more opportunities for procedures and surgery to happen in the Riverland so that fewer people will have to go to Adelaide to get that service.

ADELAIDE CABARET FESTIVAL

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (14:34): My question is directed to the Premier. I am quite keen to know whether he can inform the chamber about the recent changes to be announced for the 2009 Adelaide Cabaret Festival.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (14:35): Thank you very much, and I am aware of the very controversial nature of this question. The Adelaide Festival Centre's CEO and Artistic Director, Douglas Gautier, and Adelaide Cabaret Festival Chairman, Frank Ford, recently announced a change to the Adelaide Cabaret Festival's artistic director, marking the end of one era and the beginning of another. Julia Holt has announced her decision to resign after eight years as Director of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival, which, as I understand it, is a year earlier than anticipated.

I want to pay tribute to Julia. The artistic leadership of Julia Holt has created an international cabaret arts festival that has no equal in the world. People think of New York, Berlin, France or Auckland when it comes to cabaret, but I think that all the artists whom I have met, including some of the critics whom I have met, say that this is just an outstanding cabaret festival and it is the best in the world.

I am told that many artists locally, nationally and internationally have expressed their appreciation for the opportunity and encouragement that Julia and her team have provided. She has been particularly acknowledged for her adventurous approach to programming. Julia and the Festival Centre built the Adelaide Cabaret Festival from its early beginnings to the world-renowned festival it is today. I pay tribute to the former minister for the arts, Diana Laidlaw, for initiating this.

At the end of the 2008 festival, total attendances reached 36,000, with 26,855 tickets sold, and the net box office income of \$803,000; 75 per cent of available tickets were sold, which is the best ever result for this festival; and 43 performances were sold out. The Adelaide Cabaret Festival has become a much loved part of our annual calendar of cultural events and attracts interstate and overseas visitors. In recognising the importance of the festival, the state government, in our recent budget, increased the funding by 40 per cent to \$700,000 for each festival.

I acknowledge the leadership and vision that Julia Holt has brought to the event. I also welcome the next Adelaide Cabaret Festival's Artistic Director, Adelaide-born David Campbell. David is internationally recognised as an outstanding exponent of the art of cabaret. His expertise, skills and artistic leadership will provide an exciting impetus for the further growth of the festival and for the artists involved. His international reputation will further build the recognition and the promotion, nationally and internationally, of the Adelaide Cabaret Festival.

David Campbell has continually been described as 'a world-class performer' since he first burst onto the New York cabaret scene over a decade ago. Since then, he has continued to go from strength to strength internationally. In the past year alone, he has had two platinum selling albums (*The Swing Sessions* and *The Swing Sessions 2*), performed a season with Opera Australia and won acclaim from Stephen Sondheim for his performance of Bobby in a Sydney production of *Company*. I welcome David Campbell back to Adelaide. I am excited to see the direction he takes the festival in over the next three years.

COUNTRY HOSPITAL DONATIONS

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:38): Will the Minister for Health now ensure that all donations for country hospital projects that are not proceeding will be refunded to the donors? The Mount Gambier Hospital has raised \$293,000 of which \$145,000 was from identifiable donors to construct a hydrotherapy pool, which is now not going ahead. The hospital board has been abolished and the funds are now held by the state's Commissioner of Charitable Funds. The Attorney-General has already written a letter confirming that, if donors can be identified, they are entitled to a refund.

However, the Minister for Health in his letter and statement last week is quoted as saying that the act does not allow the CCF to spend the amount donated—only earnings on those donations—and prevents the funds from being returned to donors.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Mount Gambier—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development) (14:39): Mr Speaker, I know that you and the house would appreciate an answer to this question, even if those opposite show no interest in the answer. The fact remains that the legal advice we have is that the act needs to be amended, and we are in the process of drafting those amendments to bring them to this house.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

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

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: The advice I have from the Attorney-General is that, after having looked at the act twice we now—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: It is not my act. It is not a matter of anyone changing their mind.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is warned a second time.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: As we saw on Friday, from time to time people make mistakes. The other thing we saw—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: The fundamental thing we saw on Friday is that the law is the law until the law is changed. In this case the law is the law—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is on very thin ice.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: What I am trying to explain to the house is that, as a result of the advice we have, the parliament needs to amend the charitable trusts act—I think that is the correct name of the act—before those moneys can be dispersed to the donors. We are in the process of drafting that legislation. The legislation will come to the house and once that is done—

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Finniss is warned.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: I do not think it matters who answered. The important thing is that—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: I will persist because it is important that the facts are in the house.

Ms Chapman: Bring in the bill!

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: I am looking forward to having the Attorney-General bring the bill to the house in the spring session. I am looking forward—

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

BRAGG, MEMBER FOR

The SPEAKER: Order! I name the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The Speaker is on his feet and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition knows full well that she is not to call out while the Speaker is on his feet. Does the deputy leader wish to be heard in apology or explanation?

Ms CHAPMAN: I do, sir. First, I had not observed you were standing in relation to this last matter you have raised.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms CHAPMAN: I am happy to accept that you were and I did not observe it and I apologise for so doing.

The SPEAKER: I take the deputy leader on her word that she did not see me on my feet. However, I have given her two warnings so far. I asked her to desist from interjecting. There has been a deliberate attempt to shout down ministers on their feet. I try to be fair—I think I am fair—in taking into context what the minister might be saying, in terms of tolerance for interjections.

The answers given by ministers today have been straightforward answers to questions and ministers have been met with a barrage of noise from members of the opposition—admittedly, not just the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. While I do take the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on her word that she did not see me on my feet, I also have to take into account that the deputy leader has been consistently interjecting while ministers have been giving straightforward answers or attempting to answer in a straightforward way without debate answers to questions. On those grounds I cannot accept the apology of the deputy leader.

Ms CHAPMAN: I accept the ruling, and I will be leaving. You give the money back!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! This is not an opportunity for members on either side to engage in disruptive behaviour. We still need to go through the process. There still needs to be a motion.

The honourable member for Bragg having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I move:

That the deputy leader be suspended for the remainder of the sittings of the house.

Motion carried.

QUESTION TIME

COUNTRY HOSPITAL DONATIONS

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Agriculture was in the course of answering the question.

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Mount Gambier—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development) (14:46): What I was attempting to do in a measured way was to point to the fact that a set of circumstances has prevailed which has demonstrated that a longstanding act of this parliament is deficient whereby people have given money for a particular purpose. The purpose failed and, by law, we need to apply the money to another purpose or give the money back. It has nothing to do with me personally: it is simply the fact that we have identified a deficiency in the law. We must now amend the law. I know that no member in this place would be calling on any of us to break the law, whether it is a hospital board, or whatever.

It is a silly nonsense to suggest that I should do something about it personally. What we must all do now is wait until, in the spring session, the Attorney-General brings in an amendment to the act.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: The member for Heysen knows better than most others that the law is the law, irrespective of—

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

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

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: The Attorney says that although we wish to pay it back, legally we cannot pay it back until we in this place amend the act. That will be—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: Those opposite now appeal to me to get on with it because they never wanted an answer to the question in the first place.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for MacKillop!

The Hon. R.J. McEWEN: In the spring session the Attorney will bring in for the house to consider an amendment to the bill together with a second reading explanation. I trust that, at that time, we will find that in a timely manner we will address the anomaly and we will amend the act. As soon as that is done, by law, we will then address the set of circumstances that prevail around this particular fund.

NEILSON, MR T.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the health department ever received a report from Mr Tom Neilson in response to an allegation that he requisitioned a cheque for \$126,701 dated 7 April 2003 to pay medical specialists at the Mount Gambier Hospital without authority to do so; and, if so, what action has been taken?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:48): I am not sure why in 2008, after five years, the leader would suddenly decide that this matter requires a question in question time. I was not the minister responsible in 2003, but I am happy to find out for the leader the details of his allegations. I am aware that there were issues at the Mount Gambier Hospital going back a number of years which were created by a former minister for health (Hon. Dean Brown) and which were sorted out by my colleague the member for Little Para when she was the health minister.

The hospital now has a stable workforce, and relations between the hospital and the local doctors, I think, are now better than they have been for years. We now have a very good manager in the hospital in David Walshaw, and it is going from strength to strength. Certainly, under our health care plan, it will be one of the general hospitals which will see an increase in services, and I guess that is why the Mount Gambier council supports our plan. But in relation to the allegations, it is a typical ploy by the opposition to name and slur public servants and, by innuendo, suggest that something has been done that is wrong. I will get a full report.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Frome) (14:50): Will the Minister for Health advise the total cost of advertising to date for the South Australian Country Health Care Plan and whether the ad campaign has been funded from the Country Health SA budget? Since the Country Health Care Plan was released on 5 June, full-page advertisements have frequently appeared in *The Advertiser*, the *Sunday Mail* and regional newspapers. Advertising has also run on country television. A full-page advertisement on page 10 of the *Sunday Mail*, such as was published last Sunday, costs in excess of \$18,000.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:51): I thank the member for Frome—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for Frome for his question. Of course, before she was ejected from this place, in one of her many interjections the deputy leader said, 'Why did you release it when you did without people knowing about it?' One of the things that I wanted to do is to make sure that people in country South Australia were aware of our plan and had access to it. So, we advertised extensively. I was criticised for trying to sneak it out—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I will get to that.

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Finnis!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I was criticised for sneaking it out and now I am criticised for publicising it. It is not quite clear to me what I am supposed to do in relation to telling people about

major changes that are proposed to country services—major changes that will improve country services, I hasten to add.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: The deputy leader—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister will take his seat. The member for Finnis has been warned once. He is now warned a second time. If he has another question—and there is still 20 minutes to go—if he wants clarification of something the minister is saying to follow up, he has the ability to do that in an orderly way. It is not necessary for him to yell out while the minister is attempting to answer the question. The member for Finnis is warned a second time. The Minister for Health.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: In relation to the matter of cost, as I recollect, the deputy leader asked me the same question during estimates and I gave an answer which should be on the record. I will have it checked to see whether there is a change to that figure.

EASLING, MR T.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (14:53): Is the Premier concerned that media were tipped off about the arrest of Tom Easling prior to his arrest? Tom Easling was arrested at dawn on 31 July 2004 by the police with media in attendance filming the event. It was played on TV stations that night. *The Advertiser's* front page of that day reported Easling's imminent arrest.

The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay—Premier, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Social Inclusion, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change) (14:53): I know that the honourable member delivered a letter to my office just before question time, raising a number of matters in relation to the Easling case, and also in relation to the activities of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Obviously, I am not doubting for one moment the sincerity of the honourable member opposite in pursuing this case on behalf of a constituent. I see other members do not seem to agree with me; they are shaking their heads. But I think that you have shown that you have a degree of interest in this issue. I will make sure that I get a report from the Attorney-General in relation to this. I must say I cannot recall seeing the television report that you refer to, but I will get a report from the Attorney-General.

However, I should also say that I think it would be wrong to try to imply in any way or to try to suggest that the Director of Public Prosecutions is acting improperly on this matter. I would find that very hard to believe. The Director of Public Prosecutions and I have crossed swords on a number of occasions, particularly in relation to my interventions in some issues, and I think that is good for a robust democracy. I do not believe that the DPP in any way has compromised his integrity or that of his office, but I will obtain a report from the Attorney-General when he returns from the SCAG meeting which is currently being held, I understand, across the Tasman.

REFUGEES, SPORTING ACTIVITIES

Ms FOX (Bright) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. How has the state government assisted refugees and new arrivals to South Australia to become involved in sporting activities?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Police, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:55): The government recognises that some sectors of the community face financial barriers to participation in sporting and recreational activities. Programs funded through the Office for Recreation and Sport have had great success in breaking down these barriers, especially with regard to refugees and other new arrivals to this country.

Two outstanding examples of the work being undertaken by community sporting organisations come from the Move It grants program. The Grange Lawn Tennis Club received a grant to run a tennis bridging program for refugees which proved to be very successful. The program resulted in refugees from countries including Afghanistan, Burundi, South Africa, Liberia and Croatia receiving tennis coaching and enjoying participation through a local sporting club. Young refugees aged from nine years to teenagers participated in the program which provided pathways to participation in the local tennis competition.

Another example from this year's round of Move It grants is the Scoring Goals project run by Enfield City Soccer Club. Scoring Goals aims to break down barriers that prohibit disadvantaged communities from participating in organised sport through the provision of accessible programs, pathways training and sustainable sponsorships.

The focus on improving the opportunities for new arrivals has also been taken up by the Football Federation of South Australia, which recently received funding through the Statewide Enhancement Program and also the Lutheran Church of Australia, which was awarded funding to conduct a club linking program for refugees in the City of Salisbury. The funding of these programs shows the government's commitment to encouraging and increasing participation by all members of our community.

EASLING, MR T.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Police. Is the government's position still as outlined in the letter of 9 May 2005 by the former minister for police and now Treasurer, Mr Foley, as follows:

No media release was issued by SAPOL in relation to the imminent arrest of Mr Easling, no member of the Premier's department was informed of the date and time of Mr Easling's arrest prior to the event, and no media representatives were given prior notice of the apprehension of Mr Easling.

Does the minister stand by that position?

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Police, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (14:58): I will obtain a report for the member.

NGARRINDJERI REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (14:58): My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. What is the significance of the recently signed Ngarrindjeri Regional Partnership Agreement?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (14:58): The significance of the honourable member's question is that it is an important regional partnership agreement between the state and commonwealth governments together with the Ngarrindjeri people. The other significance is that my signature appears alongside Dana Wortley's, Senator for South Australia, representing the commonwealth government.

The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is right. I attended the signing of the agreement on behalf of the state government at Camp Coorong last week. George Trevorrow signed on behalf of the Ngarrindjeri nation. The agreement provides the foundations to build a sustainable and prosperous region for the 4,500 Ngarrindjeri people who live in that region.

The Ngarrindjeri community has been at the forefront of promoting a future for their community in relation to caring for country and economic development. I think most of us here would realise that the future for Aboriginal communities must have some sustainable economic basis, and blending the notions of caring for country and environmental initiatives with Aboriginal culture, and also creating tourism and other economic opportunities which lead from those two ideas, is a wonderful, virtuous circle by which we can both acknowledge and strengthen Aboriginal culture, but at the same time provide a future for Aboriginal communities. The agreement focuses on the two themes of caring for country and economic development. It aims to provide economic sustainability and also greater independence for Ngarrindjeri people.

Funding will be provided for a business and economic development manager, a Caring for Country manager and an administrative assistant. The caring for country component is based on the Ngarrindjeri Sea and Country plan, which involves a group of Ngarrindjeri led by Tom and George Trevorrow. The Sea and Country plan is a document that was prepared in 2007 with funding from the Australian Government's National Oceans Office. It seeks to increase Ngarrindjeri involvement in the use and management of the Ngarrindjeri region's natural resources.

This regional partnership agreement will establish an indigenous protected area in the Ngarrindjeri lands. The partnership will also look at improving the protection of marine life, with the establishment of a Sea Rangers program. Two Ngarrindjeri people will complete a fisheries compliance officer course as part of the program.

The aim of the economic development component of the RPA is to develop an economic investment plan and commercial projects which will provide income and employment for Ngarrindjeri. A new investment company, Ngarrindjeri Enterprises Pty Ltd, will also be established to identify business opportunities in the lands. This will include developing a regional tourism plan to boost local tourism.

Linked to the preparation of the RPA is the establishment of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority, which is a peak body made up of representatives from community organisations across the Ngarrindjeri region. The notion of regional bodies for Aboriginal communities is very powerful, and we are looking at it closely as a potential model for other parts of the state.

The NRA is currently chaired by George Trevorrow, and meets fortnightly at Murray Bridge. The NRA will coordinate the implementation of the partnership agreement, and it will be supported by a steering group which will include stakeholder government agencies. It gives me great pleasure to see the establishment of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority. As I said, it could prove to be a model for the rest of the state.

EASLING, MR T.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (15:02): Can the Minister for Families and Communities explain why a diary note of a senior officer of the Department for Family and Communities, dated 23 July 2004, some eight days before Tom Easling's arrest, refers to a media plan regarding the arrest of Tom Easling? This officer, one of the investigators into the Easling matter, was told of Easling's imminent arrest on 28 July, three days before his arrest.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Northern Suburbs, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability) (15:03): I thank the member for his question. Clearly, the member is delivering these questions with, as the Premier said, a degree of passion and commitment for a very serious matter. No, I cannot explain it. As the member would understand, I have been the minister responsible for this area for only a few hours. Certainly, the government is taking the issues raised by the member for Davenport seriously. The Attorney-General advised this house only the other day that he is asking for another report from the Director of Public Prosecutions. This matter will be looked into, and we will report back to the member.

APY LANDS, STATE GOVERNMENT TRANSACTION SERVICES

Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (15:04): My question is to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation. What state government transaction services, such as payments for licences and permits, are available on the APY lands, and where are they available?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (15:04): I am not sure of the answer to that question. I will get a report for the member. I am aware that a rural transaction centre was recently opened, which was part of the commonwealth government's COAG initiatives. There were two COAG initiatives in South Australia: one concerns the stores policy and the other concerns rural transaction centres, which seek to provide a one stop shop in relation to a whole range of state and commonwealth services. That was a commonwealth initiative. The building is completed, and it is located at Amata. I saw it last time I was in Amata. I am not sure whether it is operating. I presume it is, and I presume that it is the sort of thing that would contain those services. However, I will get a further report for the member.

POLICE RESOURCES

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Police. What steps will the minister take to address the resourcing issue identified in this week's *Eastern Courier* by a member of the police force? In the *Eastern Courier* this week, a police officer is quoted as saying, 'Police resources are stretched so thin and response times are so slow that lives are at risk.'

The Hon. M.J. WRIGHT (Lee—Minister for Police, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:06): I thank the member for his question. I am familiar with the article he refers to. I have seen that article. I will, of course, take some advice from the Police Commissioner. From memory, I think my first meeting with the Police Commissioner is next Thursday, and I am happy to take up the matter with him.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING OPTIONS PROGRAM

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (15:06): My question is to the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education. What is the government doing to support young people at risk to remain connected to education and training?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (15:06): I thank the member for Florey for her question and, of course, acknowledge her commitment, along with that of the government and this parliament, to key social inclusion commitments.

One of the government's key social inclusion commitments is to increase school retention rates by supporting young people to remain connected to education and training. Keeping young people connected to learning during their vital school years dramatically improves their opportunities for maintaining sustainable employment throughout their adult life.

TAFE SA plays an important role in assisting young people through the Alternative Learning Options Program (ALOP). This program offers hands-on, off-campus learning experiences to young people aged between 15 and 19 years who are at risk of disengaging from learning. This approach increases their self-confidence and ability to successfully complete vocational training and re-engage with their secondary schooling.

Delivered through TAFE SA since 2004 as part of the Social Inclusion Board's School Retention Action Plan, ALOP has re-engaged nearly 2,700 young people who were experiencing difficulties in the mainstream school system. This program has demonstrated that the most effective way of achieving this is:

- through small learning groups and individually tailored learning plans;
- by providing responsive and flexible learning programs outside mainstream learning environments; and
- through intensive support that meets young people's learning and life needs.

The program's success has been recognised through an additional funding of \$3.5 million to continue this work over the next four years as part of this government's ongoing commitment to supporting young people to complete their year 12.

The program will maintain its broad coverage across the state, just as it did in 2007, within metropolitan Adelaide, Adelaide Hills, Barossa and Lower Light, Copper Coast, Murray Bridge, Riverland and Eyre Peninsula. I know that each and every one of the local members representing those areas speaks very highly of this program and the advantages it offers not only to the young people participating in those programs but also to the community. They are outstanding programs, and I know that this is a program that has bipartisan support across this parliament.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: You are interested in this. You cover the Hills area, don't you? I mentioned the Hills. It is something we should be proud of.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: That's right. Schools have advised that when their students participate in ALOP their attendance improves and they are motivated to approach their studies in a far more positive way than otherwise has been the case; in fact, many were not studying prior to entering into the ALOP program.

Many students have overcome significant learning and personal barriers and gone on to commence apprenticeships, enrol in VET courses and commence careers in skilled trades. It provides a foundation for those people to move into areas where they can certainly take opportunities to gain sustainable employment that will set them up for the rest of their life.

ALOP has delivered some outstanding results to young people, and it has developed and improved collaboration between TAFE SA and the school community. I very much appreciate, as we go forward, the relationship that is developing between the further education sector, the TAFE sector and education. I cannot speak for the Minister for Education—nor would I—but we certainly know that education is a continuum, from early childhood development right through, and we

cannot necessarily compartmentalise education in the way we might have traditionally. The fact is that we need—

Mr Griffiths interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: I am getting lots of support. The simple reality is that we are going to—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: I have not finished yet. We are going to continue to make sure that that relationship is further developed. The \$3.5 million funding commitment from the state government will make further inroads into our social inclusion objectives and lead to more positive and sustainable life outcomes for young people at risk. I thank each and every member in this chamber for the support they have shown for this program.

TRUSTPOWER

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:11): I table a copy of a ministerial statement relating to TrustPower made earlier today in another place by my colleague the Hon. P. Holloway.

MEMBER'S REMARKS

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (15:11): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: During question time, the Leader of the Opposition referenced an article in *The Loxton News* and mentioned some remarks that were attributed to me. I would like to read into *Hansard* the whole article so that the context of those comments can be understood by the house. The article, which is entitled 'Maywald to present petitions', reads as follows:

Member for Chaffey Karlene Maywald will present petitions opposing the SA Country Health Care Plan in parliament on Tuesday.

Mrs Maywald met with members of the Loxton and Districts Health Advisory Committee (HAC) last Friday to discuss the problems foreseen in the new plan.

Mrs Maywald was presented with some petitions, but others are still being collected, with today (Wednesday) being the final day of collection.

HAC member Sally Goode said about 2,500 signatures had been collected, with the final number likely to reach 3,000.

At the meeting, HAC chairman Ruth Firstbrook outlaid concerns about the proposed plan. Mrs Maywald said it was important to get Minister for Health John Hill, the SA Country Health officials and members of the HAC, doctors and hospital staff, to talk about what the plan would mean for the Loxton Hospital complex.

'I know your message and I support it 100 per cent,' Mrs Maywald said.

However, she was concerned that she was hearing differing reports than what she had been told by the minister.

'My information is that services will be retained in Loxton and Waikerie,' she said.

'If there is some subtext let's find out about it and deal with it.'

After the meeting Mrs Firstbrook said the minister would visit Loxton some time before the end of the month.

She said she was impressed with Mrs Maywald's commitment to the Loxton and Districts HAC bid to keep the hospital services.

'I felt she (Mrs Maywald) was really interested in the detail and our perception of the plan,' Mrs Firstbrook said.

Mrs Firstbrook said Mrs Maywald was thrilled that Berri was getting the \$41 million to upgrade its hospital, but she wanted to make sure the other hospitals were preserved and viable.

Mrs Firstbrook said she heard the minister's view through Mrs Maywald and agreed that some points needed clarification.

'She's been really proactive in getting the minister here,' Mrs Firstbrook said.

'She does believe that our council needs to have some answers.'

Mrs Firstbrook said it was evident at the meeting that both parties understood where each was coming from.

'It was a very productive meeting,' Mrs Firstbrook said.

'What a win for us to get the minister up here.'

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

The Hon. R.G. KERIN (Frome) (14:35): Again today the Country Health Care Plan has been a major topic for discussion within this place. While some of the Labor Party members are present, I remind them that there is a rally at Norwood on Saturday morning on the Country Health Care Plan. This provides them with the opportunity to come along and to listen to the concerns of country and city people alike about what has been put forward. I have attended quite a few meetings, including one in Renmark last night.

One of the big issues that is really upsetting people—and this is probably as much a health department issue as a government issue—is the lack of respect that has been shown to the GPs. The fact that the GPs are also making the same statements which we are making and which the government says are lies, by implication the government is calling many of these country GPs liars. These are guys who understand clinically what happens in these hospitals. They have read the plan and they know what the agenda of the department is, but when they tell their communities, they have been accused of misleading their communities and not telling the truth. On top of the fact that they were not consulted, which showed an enormous disrespect for these GPs who do a fantastic job in rural areas, I think the government's accusations of their spreading mistruths is very unfortunate and totally unfair.

The doctors know the facts. The minister has been running around making all sorts of statements over the past three or four weeks, which are totally inconsistent with what the plan says. This is a matter of minimising the fallout politically: it is not changing the agenda of the department whatsoever. The member for Little Para stood up to the department quite often. She would understand that people within the department have an agenda. The government is not in control of that agenda. The government is saying that we have to cut the cost of country health, but the agenda is being run very much by half a dozen or so senior bureaucrats in the Public Service. As a result, the Country Health Care Plan is ill-conceived, badly written, incorrect, inaccurate and lacking in detail. I would not be surprised if the government says that, in the next week or two, it will throw the plan in the bin.

Country communities and country doctors now realise that the Country Health Care Plan has exposed the agenda of senior people within the department as to where they want to take country health over the next 10 years. Those bureaucrats have rolled this minister on several occasions before and they will roll him again. Their stated agenda is that, in 10 years' time, the 43 listed hospitals will not have an acute care bed between them. The plan might go away, but the minister has made some statements about 'services will stay'. Every statement the minister has made has been a qualified statement. He talks about workforce, safety and standards.

The bureaucrats who have this agenda to get rid of acute care beds in those 43 hospitals control many of those things. When we lose a doctor, people in the department can actively discourage other doctors from taking their place. They also control the budgets and their equipment. The rural doctors tell me that, from what they have been told, there is significant money for the four regional hospitals in the forward budgets but nothing for any of the other hospitals. What you will find is that, through lack of equipment, not just the 43 but the other 11 or 12 on the second tier will really battle to meet the required standards.

All in all, I think the agenda of the department, which has been backed by the government, is now absolutely clear. We are past the stage where tearing up the plan solves the problem. We have a situation now where the agenda has been exposed and we need a pro-active plan about how the government will ensure that those country hospitals can provide services; how the department will work hard to ensure they have staff; and how country health will be operating across South Australia into the future.

The current agenda has become very clear and people are very worried. They ask: who wrote the plan? That answer has never been given. That question has been asked at virtually every meeting I have attended, yet no-one has been willing or able to answer the question about who are the authors of this ill-conceived and inaccurate plan.

Time expired.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LANGUAGES

Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (15:20): The year 2008 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Languages. I was very pleased to be able to open the South Australian Language Teachers Association Conference on 14 June this year. The message that languages matter was driven with passion and intelligence, and in this state we can be confident that the teaching of languages to our children is in safe hands.

I was interested to learn that more than 50 per cent of the approximately 7,000 languages spoken in the world are likely to die out within a few generations and that 96 per cent of these languages are spoken by a mere 4 per cent of the world's population. Only a few hundred languages have genuinely been given pride of place in education systems and the public domain, and fewer than 100 are used in the digital world. It is said that when languages fade so does the world's rich tapestry of cultural diversity. Opportunities, traditions, memory, unique models of thinking and expression, which are valuable resources for ensuring a better future, are also lost.

At school I studied French and Latin, both of which have proved invaluable in my studies throughout my life. Currently, I am studying Italian in my spare time, encouraged by the many Italian constituents in Morialta. I come from South Wales and as a child I was actively discouraged from speaking or studying Welsh. During this time the Welsh language was definitely under threat.

Uncle Lewis O'Brien, a much respected Kurna Elder, welcomed delegates to the conference. This was most appropriate as Uncle Lewis has done much to try to save the Kurna language in this state and to encourage other indigenous groups to save their language by talking to their elders and taping their conversations in order to ensure that language is written down and correct pronunciation is retained.

Research shows that the link between literacy and language is vital for the survival of a language. The United Nations has stated that 'the ability to read and write with comprehension and to think critically are key outcomes of quality education'. Education itself is a human right, a tool for learning and a vehicle for transmitting knowledge. It also helps build identity in a culturally diverse but globalised world.

I decided to come to Australia and become an Australian citizen because of the strong commitment in our country to celebrate cultural diversity and promote cultural harmony, instead of pushing immigrants to assimilate—which is the policy in many other western countries, including the United Kingdom and the US.

I am proud that the electorate of Morialta is one of the most multicultural electorates in this state. As a government we in South Australia encourage ethnic groups within our community to celebrate and promote other languages and cultural practices through funding to schools and community organisations in order to keep traditions of language, dance, food and celebration alive. We do this because we believe that sharing one another's culture is a fair more successful approach to achieving social harmony than trying to force people to become the same.

We know that literacy in a child's local language is a gateway to learning and participation, and that the appropriate use of languages in literacy provision and education has a beneficial effect on access to learning, inclusion in schools and learning outcomes. The use of mother tongues in education impacts positively on children's attendance, their attitude to their studies and the early drop-out rate experienced by low achievers.

We know this from our own experience in the lands. Good language skills are crucial for good literacy. Some 774 million adults worldwide cannot read or write—and two-thirds of these are women. In addition, more than 72.1 million children who should be in school are not. Literacy is crucial for economic, social and political participation and development, especially in today's knowledge societies. It is a key to wide-ranging benefits, including critical thinking, improved health and family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, children's education, poverty reduction and active citizenship.

The United Nations International Year of Languages is an important initiative and I congratulate Kris Paul, President of the Modern Language Teachers Association of South Australia, his committee and all our language teachers for their involvement in this conference and their ongoing devotion to the profession. As many members in this place know, it is an amazing feeling to be able to communicate with another person in their native tongue. It is something we all appreciate when we are on the receiving end.

Time expired.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart) (15:25): I want to speak briefly about the South Australian Country Health Care Plan and put clearly on the record where the opposition stands and why. On reading that report, anyone who knows anything about rural affairs and the attitude of country people would have to have something wrong with them not to come to the conclusion that this is a nasty, vindictive document. There was something wrong to let this document out and not realise the implications of it. The people I feel sorry for are those members of the Public Service who have been sent out to try to explain and defend this document when they were not the architects of it.

This document has made a vicious attack on the hospitals in my electorate, and, to the best of my ability, I will make sure that the services under attack are maintained. Let me make one or two points. I am told that on 13 June Dr Sherbon told a group of doctors which hospitals were on the hit list and what was going to happen to them, and we want a full explanation from that particular gentleman about the comments he made to those doctors, because that was publicly stated. I also want to know who the architects of this document are, because members of Country Health SA have told meetings I have attended that they knew about this plan only one hour before it was released. So, there is no point in talking to them; they were not included.

The bloke with the earrings and one or two others in the Health Commission wrote it. I say that the minister ought to take a look at this character: it would really instil him with confidence! These people have set out to rough up and viciously attack country people; and, once you do that, you have to expect there will be a bit coming back. Not only do I want to see this particular health plan withdrawn, I would like to see the services of those who wrote it withdrawn; because, surely, there must be better people in the Public Service in South Australia who have a feeling for country people and who clearly understand that they are entitled to services.

I say to the house and to the member for Giles: what will happen at Leigh Creek? What will you do to the services up there? That will be a challenge for you—a real challenge. I want the minister to tell us. I asked him a question on the day this document was released. I did not really get an answer. They skirted around it. That is a challenge for him, a real challenge. Of course, there are other issues. The Kapunda Hospital was talked about in the very week it was awarded a special commendation for its services, and the government wants to take those services away.

This document has caused great anguish throughout rural South Australia. Hundreds of people have attended meetings, and they are particularly concerned. They feel ownership of their hospitals. They have worked for them and supported them and they want to continue to do so. I really believe the time has come when we must re-establish country health boards so that local people have an adequate and effective say about their day-to-day running. The bureaucrats got rid of the health boards because they knew that country people would never support the downgrading of services. Surely, in a democracy, those people are entitled to have a fair amount of the resources spent in their local areas.

If you want to gut a small community, downgrade or take away their school or hospital and you will have successfully destroyed it. Members on this side of the house are not involved in that. The member for Giles worked herself into such a state early today. I suggest that she read the speech Dr Lloyd has made on a couple of occasions and respond to his comments, questions and challenges, and then her comments will have a little more substance and credibility. She got very angry, but I do not know why she got so angry because when people asked questions they were not getting answers. That is why they got more angry; that is why they got upset. That is why they are concerned about it.

Time expired.

LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Mr KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens) (15:30): I like to follow the member for Stuart. He is without a doubt my favourite member in this house. He is entertaining, funny, not always factual but good fun to listen to. My phone has been running hot since the Mayo preselection and I just wanted to share with the house a few of the stories of the campaign.

Members interjecting:

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: The moment I mention Mayo, they go into a panic. It's over.

Mr Pederick: Who was your man?

Mr KOUTSANTONIS: My man? My man was Iain Evans because I desperately wanted that by-election in Davenport to prove a point, and I am about to. The fascinating thing about the Liberal Party is the general decay around the edges. You are seeing a former minister and former candidate, Robert Brokenshire, re-enter the parliament in the upper house in a different party. That is one down. He was talked about as being a potential deputy leader of the Liberal Party. He has joined Family First and abandoned the Liberal Party.

The former president, Bob Randall (former member for Henley Beach, as I think it was called at the time) also joined Family First. What surprises me about the general decay in the Liberal Party is the way that they treat their former members, former leaders and their current leaders. I was fascinated to hear from people who were calling me that the Leader of the Opposition's press secretary, Kevin Naughton, who used to masquerade as a journalist for the *Sunday Mail* and the ABC, was actually putting out press releases for Mr Basham, who I think is a dairy farmer, although I could be wrong about that. I understand that Mr Basham, an excellent candidate, a very personable, 'blokey' bloke with family, was a bit worried. What I find fascinating is that the Leader of the Opposition did not back the member for Davenport to leave this place and, not only that, he wanted to scuttle his career in Canberra as well. He used his press secretary to go after him.

The other phone call I had about the Mayo preselection, which I thought was fascinating, was the involvement of the members for Bragg, Finnis and, everyone's favourite, the federal member for Sturt, Chris Pyne. Chris Pyne, I understand, was a former associate of Mr Briggs. When he first joined the Liberal Party, Mr Briggs joined the moderates (the 'wets', or whatever you want to call them), also known as the left in the Liberal Party. This group was very upset when Mr Briggs defected and joined the conservatives. Mr Briggs wanted to have a very interesting career with the former prime minister as the architect of WorkChoices, the person who tried to impose unfair work conditions on Australians, and probably he was one of the architects of the Liberal Party's defeat.

Mr Pyne said publicly that he played absolutely no involvement in the Mayo preselection and that he and Nick Minchin were as one on this issue of non-involvement, which I find fascinating because, when Mr Pyne was asked on 891 by Mr Matthew Abraham whether he had made any phone calls in relation to the Mayo preselection to eligible electors about whom they should vote for, Mr Pyne refused to answer.

I have also heard from an excellent source, which I take to be gospel, that there were over 300 or 400 members of the Mayo branch who were eligible to vote in this preselection—the first ever held in Mayo because previously we have hardly ever had plebiscites—and this is the first time there has been a contest for Mayo. Apparently, the candidates were finding that almost 30 to 40 per cent of the membership—now I could be exaggerating and I do not want to get ahead of myself—were actually saying that they did not know they were members, that someone else had signed them up.

I am going to write a letter to the AEC because, if it is true that people who have voted have not known they were members of the Liberal Party, perhaps the election of Mr Briggs is invalid. It is surprising to think that people who have been telephoned or doorknocked and asked, 'Who are you voting for in the Mayo preselection?' have said, 'I'm voting Liberal.' 'No, who are you voting for in the preselection?' and they said 'Am I eligible? Can anyone vote?' They are told, 'No, you have to be a member of the Liberal Party.' They replied, 'Oh, I didn't know I was a member of the Liberal Party.'

I have been sent a few names of people who have had their doors knocked on by people who say that they were approached by potential candidates to vote without them knowing that they were members; received no mail, paid no dues, paid no fees, may have had fees paid for them. If that is true, it is corrupt.

Time expired.

COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:35): As opposed to the member for West Torrens and his rather strange ravings about Liberal Party preselections, I intend to talk about quite a serious matter and that is country health. Other members in the chamber have spoken about it today, but I want to give the house some account of the degree of emotion that has been running in the electorate of Goyder.

Since the release on 5 June of the Country Health Care Plan, via a website, people have inundated my office; it has been continual. I reacted quickly and recognised the fact that there needed to be a forum for people to be able to express their concerns, to ask questions and to be informed about it, so I have held three public meetings in my electorate. The first one was at Maitland, and it was fantastic to see 700 people there. These are not fictional numbers that people make up; 700 people came along. The upstairs part of the hall was full, every seat was taken downstairs, and 100 people sat in the supper room listening to the debate through the loud speakers—but there were 700 people all concerned about the future of the Yorketown Hospital. They wanted to know answers and they asked questions. It was not just a rant and a rave, it was not incited by political parties at all.

I chaired the meeting, I will be honest with members on that, only because I had taken the lead and wanted to ensure that people had the opportunity to find out. We had two representatives from Country Health SA present, Mr Nino DiSisto and Mr Gary Stewart. Everybody was given a chance to speak. Dr George Coker also spoke. George has practised in Yorketown for about 35 years. The mayor of Yorke Peninsula council was given a chance to speak. I spoke, and Vickie Chapman, the shadow minister for health, also spoke briefly, but our contribution to the meeting only went for about 45 minutes. Beyond that it was people who stood up and asked questions and tried to get answers.

I am sure that, when Mr DiSisto went home, he had a nightmare about the fact that, when he was asked where Yorke Peninsula people should go when they need the next level of care beyond what is provided in a country community hospital—and our closest one is at Wallaroo—he said, 'Whyalla.' You can imagine when people on Yorke Peninsula are told that they have to go to Whyalla—

Ms Breuer: As if.

Mr GRIFFITHS: You weren't there, member for Giles. You might say that we are lying on this side, but I am telling you what 700 people heard him say. He would have regretted that fact because he knew instantly it was a mistake. If Yorke Peninsula people travel anywhere for a greater degree of health care, they go to Adelaide.

Ms Breuer: Of course they do.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Yes, why then did the Country Health SA representative say Whyalla? They need to get their facts right. People asked how long they would be admitted to the Yorketown Hospital if they were ill or seriously ill. We were told at that very first meeting that observation beds were only 24 hours maximum and that, beyond that, patients had to be transferred to a country community hospital; in our case, Wallaroo. Since that time the minister has reflected upon that, recognised the error in that it does not give people the level of service that they want and the time has been extended, but we still do not know for how long people can be admitted to their own local hospital.

I held a meeting in Balaklava that 500 people attended. That was three weeks ago tonight. Again that hall was full. I have enforced at each of my meetings that the people from Country Health are just delivering the message. They are not the ones who develop the policy, that is the responsibility of the minister and the cabinet. The people from Country Health are there to try to give answers, but there are so many areas in which questions are being asked that they have not been able to provide answers.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: The minister was invited to the next meeting at Maitland, which was held a couple of weeks ago, and 400 people turned up on that occasion. Sadly, people have been conned a little bit. They have read all these advertisements in the paper and they have heard the minister on the radio, repeatedly trying to get himself out of trouble, and fewer people attended, but still we had 400 people there who were really passionate about the hospital.

The local press told me that, in the case of one journalist who has been reporting in the area for 25 years, she has never known people to be so incensed about one thing and so concerned about the future of one issue. ABC Radio came to Yorketown two weeks ago. Matthew and David spent the entire morning there on Friday, they conducted interviews with the local people, they pre-recorded interviews on the way down and they held a forum from 11 o'clock to which people rang in, wanting information.

At the Maitland public meeting, one comment was made by a chap who had been a member of the HAC board (previously the health board) for 27 years, and in his time the community raised \$2.2 million towards upgrades that have taken place at that hospital. They are really concerned about it and they want to be assured. My community does not rant and rave: my community wants to be informed. What they have been told does not give them enough confidence that there is a commitment there in the long term from Country Health to ensure that country hospitals stay open.

The retention of hospitals is absolutely critical to the future viability and economic wellbeing of the communities I serve. They all want to make sure at Yorktown, Balaklava and Maitland that their hospitals have a future. Indeed, all 43 GP Plus emergency hospitals across regional South Australia, which have been identified by the minister, want a stronger future. At the moment, they are not getting that; they are not getting the commitment they need.

Time expired.

SOUTH ROAD UPGRADE

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (15:40): I am very pleased today to report good news for the Ashford electorate. I was very impressed to hear and be briefed on the government's announcement yesterday to design a bicycle overpass for the northern side of the Glenelg tramway overpass project. I would like to acknowledge the great work that has been done by minister Zollo and her department, along with members of the transport, energy and infrastructure portfolio. In particular, minister Zollo is always available to listen to the concerns that I have raised about this particular project.

The reason that I have spent time talking to the department, as has the South Road Neighbourhood Action Group, is to raise the concerns we have had about pedestrian and cyclist access to that particular area. I understand that, currently, at least 50 cyclists cross South Road near the tram crossing. I think it would be fair to say that we would expect this number to increase as further sections of the city to Glenelg cycling route are completed. I also understand that the City of Marion, a very progressive council, is currently designing a section to the north of the Morphettville Racecourse, and it should be commended for this. The member for Morphett should certainly be pleased to hear that this work is in the planning and taking place.

Many of the residents who have looked at what has been happening with the South Road underpass in the Ashford electorate have been very concerned about a number of issues. However, the issue that has come up over and over again is that of road safety. I am very pleased that a proper consultation process has been conducted by the department of transport. Certainly, there have been some complaints, but, overall, I think people have had a very good opportunity to have an input into what they want to see happen in that particular part of the South Road underpass and also the tram overpass.

Although we are trying to encourage people to use public transport wherever possible, local residents are concerned that, if that is at the cost of huge car parking facilities being made available along the tram track, instead of having the usual 10 to 20 cars in their area they might have 100 or so cars parked near where they live. As much as they understand the need for people to park somewhere, this would cause a different problem in our area. We have needed to work through a whole lot of issues to make sure that local people not only have access to public transport themselves but also that it is done in a safe way.

One of the other issues raised concerns a couple of residential areas where more elderly pedestrians live. We wanted to make sure that there was access to the tram for people in wheelchairs, those who use frames, and also the many children who attend the two nearby schools. With the number of cyclists and the amount non-vehicle traffic in the area, it is very important that this is done properly, and, dare I say it, that it actually looks good as well. One of the issues raised from the concept plans is that we want to enhance our area, not make it look worse than it does or how it could look. Thinking about the amount of traffic that goes through that area, it is really important that that is taken on board.

I congratulate minister Zollo and her team for listening to what local people in Ashford have said, particularly the South Road Neighbourhood Action Group, and trying to make sure that all people in the area, particularly cyclists, pedestrians and local residents along the tram track, have a fair go.

MARBLE HILL (PROTECTION) BILL

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (BUDGET 2008) BILL

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

ABORIGINAL LANDS PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE

The Legislative Council appointed the Hon. R.L. Brokenshire to fill the vacancy on the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee caused by the resignation of the Hon. A.L. Evans.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 22 July 2008. Page 3905.)

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:47): I indicate that I will be the lead speaker for the opposition on this bill, which has been debated at length after its introduction in the Legislative Council. The opposition supports the bill in its current form.

I do not want to take up a lot of time, but I would like to put some issues on the record. The effort of South Australia in 1977 to introduce progressive legislation such as the 5¢ deposit in the container deposit legislation for non-refillable containers was a very good move. Originally entitled the Beverage Container Act, it is now incorporated into the Environment Protection Act. South Australia holds the title of being the only state in Australia, regrettably, that has adopted this legislation.

In reading some of the documents included in the file, I note that some of the other states are looking at introducing similar legislation, and I think Western Australia now has a 20¢ deposit. Minister Gago, when holding the environment portfolio, campaigned quite extensively in this area. It is a progressive step, and South Australia has certainly benefited from it over the last 31 years.

Not only has it improved enormously our recycling rate of these items but it has also allowed South Australia to be a much cleaner state and to lead by example, compared with many other states of Australia, in what we are prepared to do. While it might be said that this is an expensive effort to bring in now, due to the infrastructure that may be associated with it, there is no doubt that the state has benefited from it.

The scheme was amended in 2003 to cover a wider range of beverages, including plain milk, wine and fruit juice. Containers of over one litre were exempt, but others were included. I think something like 7,000 different products are included in the scheme, and around 1,600 are being added each year.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: I have just been warned by the member for Kavel not to talk about too many things—but too bad.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: We are sharing information, and that is important. In reading some of the comments made by the Hon. Michelle Lensink, in her research on the bill as the shadow environment spokesperson, there was a lot of concern expressed by some of the recycling centres about hoarding because of the timing, that is, from 1 September the deposit refund will automatically increase from 5¢ per item to 10¢ per item.

There was a fear that a lot of people would hoard items and deposit the money after 1 September so they could receive a far greater remuneration. Based on figures that I have seen, in this state, about 470 million items per year have been recycled. Because of hoarding and delays in actually processing these refundable items—which could take some weeks to get them through the initial return depots and then to the larger super collection facilities; it might take at least a month in some cases, and up to three months—there was some fear that, with the additional cost being imposed upon the higher level of refund compared to the amount paid prior to 1 September, it could cost between about \$3 million and \$5.8 million.

When change such as this is implemented, it is hard to do it in such a way that it does not affect the industry. There is no doubt that currently, when the items are being sold, the scheduled amount is being paid. The doubling of the refund to 10¢ from 1 September creates some complications, but I have read some correspondence from the Department for Environment and Heritage stating that it has considered all these issues and it has determined that swift implementation from 1 September is the best option. Let us hope that that works out.

There has been considerable concern also about large amounts of refundable items being brought in from interstate. I think that would predominantly affect the South-East community of South Australia, where items have been brought in from Victoria. In our shadow cabinet discussions, we have heard about truckloads of materials coming over. I note that this bill introduces fines for that and, where more than 3,000 containers are returned within a 48-hour period, there is an option, I think, to refuse it or to pay a lesser amount to ensure that the opportunity is not rorted. It is a concern.

It is recognised that, over the years, the 5¢ deposit has been a great fundraising opportunity for a lot of small community groups. Scout groups have been known to do it for many years. I know of sporting clubs and communities where I have lived have done it. There is no doubt that young children have used it as an opportunity to supplement their allowance from their parents. Kids have ridden their bikes over enormous distances to collect cans. I note that some older people in the community also do it regularly.

Mr Goldsworthy interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: There is some malicious gossip going on behind me. It has been a great initiative by South Australia. I recognise that the debate on this bill in the Legislative Council offered some varying opinions. The shadow minister informed me that she had considered introducing amendments, but decided to withdraw them. The industry has been quite strong in its representations to our shadow minister that they wanted the bill to pass through both houses of parliament during this session to allow the legislation to be implemented before 1 September. So, it is a positive step. With those few words, I confirm my personal support for the bill and that of the opposition, and we look forward to contributions from other members about issues that I have not yet canvassed.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel) (15:53): I am very pleased that the member for Goyder has left me some scope to make some remarks in relation to container deposits. From discussions within our own ranks and from comments made by members of the broader community, I know that the system we have in South Australia is really the envy of the nation. Other states wish that they had bitten the bullet, so to speak, and introduced this container deposit scheme. As I see from my notes, the scheme was introduced back in 1977.

It has been in place for 31 years. As I said, I understand that the other states in the nation wished that they had taken those same steps 30-odd years ago. You can see the benefit of this scheme in relation to the general amenity of the South Australian countryside and also in and around the metropolitan area compared to other states. Our roadsides and our streets are relatively clean. I know the KESAB (Keep South Australia Beautiful) program has had much to do with that, too. You only have to travel to the eastern states to see the amount of rubbish, litter, garbage—whatever you like to call it—laying around the streets and the countryside compared to our state. Obviously the scheme we have in South Australia has gone a long way to bringing about the benefits that we enjoy.

I certainly participate in the system. I keep all our containers that we use—stubbies, children's cool drink bottles and items such as that—on which there is a 5¢ refund. I keep them in our garage and, when I think I have a trailer load, I take them to the recycle depot and get enough money to buy some petrol for my lawnmower and things like that. It is a saving. What do they say—if you look after the cents, the dollars look after themselves.

I imagine that this legislation was relatively controversial 30-odd years ago. I have not gone back to look at the debates that took place in this place and the other place, but I imagine that, as with most of these schemes where there is a financial impact or a monetary implication, there would have been some controversy around it. As the member for Goyder, our lead speaker on this side of the house has indicated, we are certainly supporting the legislation. There has been considerable discussion concerning these new proposals but, in general terms, we do support what the government is proposing in relation to the container deposit legislation. We have seen tangible evidence of improvement to our state's amenity and, as such, we are pleased to support it.

Dr MCFETRIDGE (Morphett) (15:59): I also speak in support of this bill, and I do so with great sincerity and passion because, with the electorate of Morphett being a beachside suburb, certainly littering—everything from fast-food containers to cigarette butts—is a real issue. Anything we can do to reinforce in people's minds that not only is littering an offence but you can also make money out of keeping empty containers is something we should applaud. Twenty-five years ago, I was working for an airline flying racehorses around the world and we took a load of horses into Kota Kinabalu in Sabah. We were cleaning out—

Mr Griffiths interjecting:

Dr MCFETRIDGE: I did not bring home cans, no. We went to get some soft drink from a little store which was on the side of the airport. There were bottles of this Jukapoy Joy juice. I remember the stuff now because of the name—Jukapoy Joy juice. The guy who was selling it would not give us the bottles.

An honourable member interjecting:

Dr MCFETRIDGE: It was purely soft drink—although the name would suggest it might be worth a bit more. He would not give us the bottles but we insisted on taking the bottles. Some 25 years ago they valued these bottles so much that they wanted to recycle them by pouring the drink into a plastic bag and giving us the plastic bag with a straw it—and that is how you would walk off with the soft drink. We said, 'No, we don't do that where we come from,' so the guy followed us around for the next half an hour until we finished the drinks and gave him back the bottles.

Recycling is not new to some other parts of the world because they value the materials, never mind the potential to make money out of those materials. In fact, in South Australia we have been doing this for a number of years. If members drive across the border they would see the difference. Why other states have not learnt from our experience is just amazing; it is stupid. There is a need to enforce in people's minds that it is all about the environment. Whether it is global warming, recycling or container deposit legislation, it is all about the environment. It is just so important to give people—like the member for Kavel with his trailer load of cans going to the recycle depot—a small reward for recycling in the form of a refund. My daughter keeps all the cans—and I drink far too much soft drink—in order to recycle them. It is so important that we pay attention to recycling so that we are not littering.

There is a real issue with cigarette butts at the beach. I wish there was some way in which we could put into people's minds, other than fining them—and we do need to increase the fines—that dropping a cigarette butt is a serious littering offence. It offends me when I walk along the beach and see a beach full of cigarette butts. It is an atrocious thing to see.

The fast food people need to be more aware of what they are doing. Certainly, I hope that people who buy fast food are aware of the damage they are doing to the environment, as well as the straight out littering and untidiness they cause by dropping fast food containers. It is something to which they should pay attention. I get quite upset and angry when I see people throwing things out of a car. Along the Esplanade, where cars are parked overnight, people open a car door and deposit all the fast food containers—and sometimes other things—in the gutter. It is something of which we all should be aware. This legislation should go some way towards achieving that aim, by giving a reward and an incentive to people to recycle. I strongly support the legislation.

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (16:03): I rise to support this bill. I note that the first act of the new Minister for Environment and Conservation is to put up an increased charge to the consumer; I cannot believe it. I am a former environment minister and I expanded the range of containers to which the deposit applies. It took a number of occasions to go through cabinet because it was very hard to describe what was in and what was out. I clearly remember a cabinet meeting when we got there early and set up a visual display of used containers on the window ledge, so that we could simply say, 'All those are in and all those are out. Can you actually understand why they would be out?'

I remember it had something to do with the size of the container. We increased it to a litre because anything over a litre is not really a take-home product and is not generally found in the litter stream. From memory, there was an issue with carbonated and non-carbonated products and there was also an issue with flavoured milk. We expanded the range of products. It has helped increase recycling rates and, therefore, I support the bill.

I raise some issues in relation to the bill. Scouts, for instance, at the 5¢ level turn over around \$5 million a year. They will now turn over \$10 million a year. I am sure they will enjoy that benefit and good luck to them—it is good for the community. There are issues the government needs to consider in relation to the bill. I know that it will not be today, but we have a new minister, new eyes, new mind, possibly a new decision.

I draw to the minister's attention the role of the beverage industry in the sense of the four super collectors. Essentially, they are owned by the beverage industry. Does that matter? I say it does matter. We all know every time we buy a can of coke there is now a 10¢ deposit on it—and that applies to 100 per cent of the products sold. But 100 per cent of the deposits on the products are not redeemed, so we recycle 85 per cent of the products. So 15 per cent of the deposits are collected by the manufacturer but not redeemed. That used to be 15 per cent of all the containers sold at 5¢. We have just doubled the amount of unredeemed deposits from 5¢ to 10¢.

In fairness to the beverage industry, it has to pay a handling fee for the recycling. The handling fee is paid to the super collector. The super collectors are owned by the beverage industry. The question comes to a matter of competitive fairness. What eyes are watching that the handling fee rate the super collectors charge to all recyclers is equal? I am not alleging for one second that the unredeemed deposits are 100 per cent kept by the beverage industry because a handling fee is paid out of it. I am suggesting that the beverage industry charges itself, in effect, the handling fee.

So, they save a lot of the unredeemed deposits by charging themselves a handling fee. If you are not in the beverage industry (you are simply a normal recycler) you still get charged the handling fee; but, of course, you do not have the unredeemed deposits. So, there is an issue about the equal treatment of how those unredeemed deposits are kept and how the handling fee is charged. I notice that a licensing regime is coming in as a result of this on the super collectors, which might provide the opportunity under the licensing conditions to seek certain information from the super collectors in relation to that sort of matter.

A matter always of great protection by the beverage industry was the level of unredeemed deposits. How much is 15 per cent? Let us say they are recycling 85 per cent of plastic bottles. If they are recycling 85 per cent, the unredeemed deposit then is 15 per cent—15 per cent is not collected. So, how much is 15 per cent at 10¢ of all the containers that are sold? It is a significant amount of money. It is millions. In fairness to the beverage industry, I am not saying that it is keeping that money unfairly. What I am saying is that the parliament, or the minister in particular, needs to convince itself that the system is working fairly.

I hope that the minister takes the fight for a container deposit scheme national. I note that Family First in the Senate, through Senator Steve Fielding, has moved for a national system of container deposit. I would hope that the Rudd government might support that, and I would hope that the federal opposition might support that. However, I sense that neither of them will. I have been on the end of the lobbying by the very powerful beverage industry. It has an association that goes around and lobbies governments to make sure that the container deposit legislation is not brought in—for what reason I could never quite understand because I think it is quite a good system.

Western Australia, of course, is developing a far broader system than just container deposits, and I personally support that. I think that the deposit scheme is easy on containers. It is a little more difficult when you move to other objects, but I can see a time when you might move to deposits on other objects. From memory, James McAdam, the Hon. Michael Armitage's ex-chief of staff, was involved with the Electronics Industry Association a few years ago when there was talk of national electronic waste recycling. That got tied up again. It was a cross-border issue. In simple terms, this is a good measure; it tidies up the bill. The government has made a decision to increase it to 10¢.

I note that the member for Morphett raises the issue of cigarettes. I have a slightly different perspective on cigarette litter than the member for Morphett. If I was a beachside council I would be telling my litter officers to sit down on the beach and simply fine away—as simple as that. The current fine is \$315. I reckon that if you started issuing 100 of those on a Saturday or a Sunday at the beach you would tidy it up pretty quickly. However, the reality is, as I told the house this morning (and this might be of interest to the minister), across all its agencies, South Australia issues only 150 litter fines a year.

Victoria issues 28,000 fines of which 22,000 are paid. Victoria has a system similar to our system with respect to speeding fines: 'It wasn't me who littered. It was someone else.' So, 6,000 or 8,000 fines get wiped out in that sense. Of the litter fines in South Australia in the last year they were collected, 212 litter fines were issued but 75 of those related to hoons laying rubber on the road. The councils fine people for laying rubber on the road. I think that the council officer might not be sponsored by Bridgestone!

Take this out of the equation. I would not call that traditional litter. If you take that out of the equation, you are talking about only 150 fines for all local government, all the police force, all the national parks' officers and all the forestry officers. For all those people who have the power to issue fines, we get three a week. My view is that the government sector is simply not serious about litter. The member for Morphett talks about litter at the beach. Litter at the beach is very simple. Send your officers down to the beach and let them fine away. It is no different to speeding fines: at the end of the day, if you do not litter you do not get fined. It is pretty simple.

You would soon raise a lot of money and you would soon curtail cigarette litter. From memory, just for the member for Morphett's interest, something like five million cigarette butts are littered in South Australia every year. It staggers me that you drive down any street at about 10.30 and the smoking brigade is outside, just throwing their cigarette butts down on the ground—a lot of them. You could just sit there as a litter officer at every morning tea break and, *bing, bing, bing*, you could just fine them all. They would soon get the message. All they have to do is put it in the bin.

How can you have five million cigarette butts hitting the ground every year and only 150 litter fines getting done? I say: there is no focus on litter. The minister might be aware that I introduced a litter bill this morning in the house to try to deal with this issue outside of container deposit legislation, and I look forward to the minister's support of that bill when we come back in September. Other than that, I congratulate the government on the bill. I look forward to further improvements to CDL.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (16:14): I rise very briefly to support this bill. Travel is one of those great ways to be reassured about things we are doing here that are done well, and also to look for new ideas. Last year I was in Queensland driving on roads near Dalby and Cunnamulla, those sorts of roads, and all the glass and plastic lining the roads was an absolute disgrace. The year before that I was in the Ukraine, and the Black Sea was full of empty bottles—you did not want to go in for a swim. Then, when I visited Kiev, I saw parks and gardens littered with bottles. I thought at the time how we must look back and thank those legislators in the 1970s for taking what was then fairly brave action. We know it was brave action because people in other states and at the federal level still have not taken this action. They have been too scared about some sort of public backlash and the fact that people might think that, if they introduce container deposit legislation, the world may end.

Indeed, I think that the legislators in the 1970s here in South Australia and this minister, brand new to the job today, need to be congratulated on bringing this legislation to the house. Far from being the end of the world, we might actually be postponing the end of the world by looking after our environment and making sure that, when people use a container, they take it back for recycling and do not just throw it on the side of the road where it gets into our streams, ends up on our beaches and, unfortunately, kills animals and does terrible things for our environment.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:16): I, too, rise briefly to support this bill. I think it shows absolute common sense and I, too, endorse what the legislators did 30 years ago. It was visionary and they took a bit of flak. They were getting on with the job in introducing container deposit legislation with the 5¢ scheme. As time goes on and if you look at it in real terms, I think the figure could possibly have been more than 10¢. It is pleasing to note that scout groups, sporting groups and even individuals for charitable organisations have raised quite a substantial amount of money through having containers that they can recycle. I endorse the comments of other members in this place today. When you travel around interstate, you notice the state of the roads and the disgrace that they are in as a result of discarded containers. We cannot get away from food packaging but containers are just thrown out of windows without any care in the world.

I am one of those people at fault. I get home from a week in this place and, basically, I have to empty out the water and soft drink containers just to clean up the car, but I know I am doing my bit for the state and the country. It is interesting in the country when you live in a place like Coomandook, as I do. We usually collect a tandem trailer load of cans and bottles—milk bottles, wine bottles and whatever is around—and put them in wool packs. I had an embarrassing moment one day when I had not tied them in properly, and obviously milk cartons do not weigh much. When

you are driving along and you see a wool pack just float out the top of your trailer when you are on the Dukes Highway, it is a little embarrassing. Mind you, I retrieved it and got on with the job. I never did it again.

Mr Griffiths: I would have thought you'd have tied a knot.

Mr PEDERICK: No, I thought I could get away without putting a rope on it because I had it jammed in but it did not work. When you are in the country it is pleasing to see that people who live in the outlying areas bring in their trailers, utes and sometimes their trucks with a few years' supply on board of empties, and they come into the recycling depots. I note that industry works with the depots and will have to help fund this change. Looking back, years ago now, the beer industry promoted echoes. I cannot remember how long it is since that name disappeared.

Mr Bignell: Kero still uses it.

Mr PEDERICK: Kero still uses 'echoes', okay. Certainly, it is common-sense legislation and, along with the rest of the Liberal Party, I think that it is fantastic and that it should move forward as quickly as possible.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (16:19): It is my great pleasure to make my first contribution as Minister for Environment and Conservation in promoting this bill, and I pay tribute to my predecessor in this role, the Hon. Gail Gago. I take this opportunity to thank members of the house for their contribution and support for this important piece of legislation.

As has already been noted, South Australia is the only state in Australia with container deposit legislation. Based on the Oregon USA model, it was introduced in 1975 by the Dunstan Labor government when, I think, the minister was the Hon. Glen Broomhill. The Beverage Container Act was later incorporated into the Environment Protection Act 1993. That allowed for an improved and more transparent approval process, regulation of super collectors, increased penalties for offences and the introduction of new offences in regard to interstate rorting.

In particular, the government has determined that beverage manufacturers and distributors will be provided until 2010 to amend their labels to show the 10¢ refund. It is anticipated that there will be a smooth transition to the new labelling requirements with manufacturers simply amending their labels during the next print run. I am pleased to report that several manufacturers have already commenced their label change process.

The legislation underpins South Australia's leadership in promoting sustainable and best use practices in the reuse and recycling of valuable resources. As a litter reduction measure, it is a tremendous success and has had substantial benefits when providing community groups with a source of income. I note the remarks made by the honourable member for Davenport, and I am advised that redeemed deposits are theoretically kept by the manufacturers to cut their costs. The bill requires greater reporting by super collectors which was previously unavailable. This information will inform the government to ensure greater equity to all parties in the beverage recycling industry.

Once again, I thank members of this house for their support of the bill. I foreshadow that in committee there will be an amendment in order to correct a small error which I understand is an agreed matter.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 18 passed.

New clause 18A.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I move:

Page 16, after line 18—

After clause 18 insert:

18A—Amendment of section 103N—Special management areas

Section 103N(1)(a)—delete 'proclamation' wherever occurring and substitute in each case:

notice

The government proposes this amendment to correct an error recently discovered in section 103N of the principal act (Environment Protection Act 1993). Section 103N enables the EPA to declare a widespread area of land to be a special management area. If the EPA believes that it may be affected by site contamination, such a declaration is made by notice in the *Gazette*. Part of the section incorrectly refers to a proclamation rather than a notice and should be corrected accordingly.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I confirm the opposition's support for the amendment.

New clause inserted.

Remaining clauses (19 to 22), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:24): I wish to comment on some remarks made yesterday in this place by the minister for SA Water regarding ministerial briefings and the River Murray. Since November 2006, the occasion of the infamous weir announcement, I have made over 20 tours and site visits from Renmark to the Murray Mouth. I have attended 55 meetings, including public meetings, fora, workshops and community discussion groups, most of which have been attended by departmental representatives, who present briefings as a matter of course. Regarding the few meetings I am unable to attend, I have minutes and briefings forwarded to me.

I have spoken on the subject of the River Murray in this place 45 times and that includes speeches, questions and budget responses. Apart from these, I receive briefings from the department on a regular basis. Unless the information in these briefings is different from what the minister herself might say (I guess with a bit of political spin), I believe I have been kept very well informed, by not just departmental officials but also the people who live in these places and work with the system.

By invitation, I will be at an all day forum tomorrow conducted by the Murray-Darling Basin Commission looking at how to manage the Lower Lakes in their present stressful condition. As members of the house would also know, I have just spent a week driving some 3,000 kilometres around the north-western part of New South Wales and flying at low level over a large part of the Murray-Darling Basin looking at waterways, storages, diversion channels and the like, trying to assess other options for South Australia's water supply.

More importantly, I have spoken to the people on the ground who run the facilities, who work on the land and know where things are, what things are and how things used to be. I wonder if the minister can claim to have such first-hand knowledge that has not been distorted and distilled by numerous intermediaries before she sees it? I could not begin to guess the number of phone conversations and emails on the subject that I have received from concerned people, many of whom are well outside my electorate and some of whom are constituents of Chaffey, keen to ensure that their information is fed through to me.

I have been waiting for over 12 months for a ministerial briefing regarding the Mount Bold reservoir, but I guess I will not receive it now because it seems to have fallen off the front page of Labor Party policy. I was going to be given a briefing on why Mount Bold would not be a drain on the River Murray, but obviously someone suddenly realised that the science does not match the fact that they would drain the River Murray continually to keep it full with an expansion of Mount Bold.

The attempt by the member for Chaffey to portray my concentration on this subject as simply a ploy to unseat her is delusional and insulting. She deludes herself that she is that important and it is insulting that, while it is true that I look forward to the day when her electorate passes that judgment on her, I can assure her that my actions are in pursuit of a far more important goal, that being to save the River Murray from a century of mismanagement, characterised and

perpetuated by the glaring procrastination and incompetence of this government and its federal colleagues.

PUBLIC HOUSING

The Hon. P.L. WHITE (Taylor) (16:28): I draw to the attention of the house some judgments that have been delivered by the Residential Tenancies Tribunal pertaining to cases resulting from the Residential Parks Bill, which we debated in this place and which was assented to late last year.

As members would know, for the entire time that I have been the member for Taylor representing the outer northern suburbs of Adelaide, I have for all those years been a passionate advocate for people living in caravan parks as permanent residents. I made two attempts in opposition to introduce bills to this place in order to afford those residents rights that they did not have—to give them access to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal as do all other people in South Australia who rent in a landlord-tenant arrangement. I also contributed to the bill behind the scenes, and it was brought forward by this government to that end.

I want to read into *Hansard* a letter, a copy of which I was given from an applicant, regarding the very first case under the Residential Parks Act 2007, which addresses a number of issues. The case dealt with the Beachside Village Estate at Victor Harbor, where nine applications were lodged by residents of the Beachside Village Estate complaining of conditions that were put before them. The letter, written by Ms Sandra Copley, is addressed to the president of the South Australian Residential Parks Residents Association, an umbrella association set up to represent residential park residents of all caravan parks and transportable park-type accommodation in the state. The letter, dated 14 July 2008, states:

Dear Laurie,

I write to inform you of the outcome of our trial before the Residential Tenancies Tribunal.

As you are aware, a group of residents from Beachside Village Estate, Normanville, had ongoing problems with a number of issues, initially the responsibility for the payment of rates of the Park Owner's land. (We have been issued with Rates Notices as well as paying our rates in our rent.)

This resulted in the group taking the Park Owner to the Small Claims Court at the Magistrates Court. A Review of the findings were sought by the Park Owner in the District Court. Both jurisdictions found in favour of our group. The Land Owner is always responsible for the payment of his own rates.

As a result, the Park Owner issued us with eviction notices, as outlined in the Residential Parks Act 2007. We answered those notices by appealing to the Residential Tenancies Tribunal. The issues of a fair and reasonable site agreement, fair rent, equal tenure with other residents and the relocatability of our homes were also raised with the Tribunal.

Most of these issues pertain to Beachside Village—but the relocatability issue may be of vital importance to other residents in other villages, at some time.

In the case of houses built on site at Beachside Village, the Tribunal found our houses to be 'permanently fixed dwellings' within the meaning of the Act. (See Part 1 (3) Interpretations, page 7)

(The Act poses the question of whether 'under any reasonable arrangement' the dwellings can 'be removed in a state which would allow the structure to be reused as a dwelling at another place.' We were able to show that, particularly financially, it would be 'unreasonable' to move the houses that had been 'purpose-built' to allow residents to retire and live '40 years, plus 40.'

I would be happy to provide as much information as possible regarding these issues, if it would be of use to the organisation, to keep for future information.

As well as this, I am very pleased to say that, as the very first case to come before the Residential Tribunal, we all believe that the Residential Parks Act 2007 worked very well, in our case. We believe:

The process was informal, with ample time to explain our case without pressure.

All findings were completely consistent with the legislation.

The Presiding Officer was very fair to both sides, with evidence being sworn, as in any other jurisdiction.

The Presiding Officer did not award costs. She stated:

'It is intended that the Tribunal will, in general, be a no cost jurisdiction. Parties should not be hesitant in making Tribunal applications because they are wary that they may include costs. Parties should be able to use the Tribunal as a low cost jurisdiction established as an alternative to formal court proceedings.'

We agree with this statement.

In our case, we asked that the Tribunal write us a fair and equitable site agreement. We are very pleased with the result, a simple 4 page document. Our rent was set by the tribunal also, and in accordance with our first

agreement. (Meaning it was found that our initial rent was correct, not the exorbitant additional sums now demanded by the park owner.)

We feel positive in recommending that residents can approach the Residential Tenancies staff in the event of difficulties (for information and advice). Also that they should seek legal advice, preferably from a contracts lawyer, if they have any doubts about their rights under the Act.

Further, we believe it is essential that SARPRA members—

The association I spoke of—

be very conversant with the Act under which they live. Perhaps SARPRA, as a result of its present planning for the organisation, could have Residential Tenancies staff break the Act up into digestible sections—and ensure that all residents of Residential Parks understand each section. Both oral and simple written explanations would be helpful.

We thank SARPRA for its support in our fight for a fair and equitable deal for seniors.

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Copley

I read that to members to point out the difference that an act of parliament has made to a very vulnerable group of people. I am aware of another case that has been decided in the tribunal. A judgment was made on 14 July 2008 regarding an application from nine residents of the Hahndorf Resort and Convention Centre, whereby a complaint about a rent increase was lodged. The result of that case was that the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, having found the increased rent to be excessive, went on to fix the rate payable for the site agreements.

I think that should illustrate this parliament's success in having a Residential Tenancies Tribunal that will step in when residents are being disadvantaged, change rents and make orders for a better and fairer situation. It is a first step, but it is a good step. I was very pleased to receive confirmation of this by how thrilled some residents were in South Australia who have used this new system.

VALEDICTORIES

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (16:38): On behalf of the Manager of Government Business, and on behalf of the government, I offer to all the people who make this place work my thanks and gratitude for their work over the session and particularly you, Mr Speaker, for keeping this house in order. At times, that can be a difficult and testing matter, but you do it with great calm and fairness.

I also acknowledge and thank the Clerk and the table staff who keep us all running according to Erskine May and ensure that everything works well. I thank Hansard staff for interpreting our gibberish and turning it into English. I particularly want to acknowledge a person who has been a long-serving member of the parliament, Carmel Moriarty, who retired today after 46 years.

Carmel began work at Parliament House as a casual employee in 1962 and took up a permanent position in the Reporting Division in 1964 (the year I was born). In the ensuing 46 years, Carmel has recorded parliamentary debate involving 12 different premiers. Carmel Moriarty is famous around Parliament House for her constant smile and for always being willing to help out, often when people need information or copies of *Hansard* in a hurry.

During her time in this place, Carmel has seen many changes in technology and was the first Hansard staff member to take up the offer to try an electronic typewriter—new-fangled thing that it was. About 20 years ago, she and her colleagues made the move to computers, as the South Australian parliament was one of the first in the country to take up the new technology.

I wish to thank Carmel Moriarty for her wonderful service to this place for almost half a century. She apparently still plays tennis three times a week and is off to spend more time with her passions of fine wine, fine food and travel.

I also acknowledge the other people behind the scenes who make this place work. I thank the attendants for keeping us safe and shepherding us in the right direction, as well as the maintenance staff, the cleaning staff and the catering staff. I also thank the other people who make the government work: those in the office of the Manager for Government Business, Manuel Chrisan, and the corresponding officers in the other place; our electorate office staff; our ministerial

staff; parliamentary counsel; and all those who support us in our role. I thank you all very much for making this place work, and I acknowledge your fine work.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:41): On behalf of the this side of the house I, too, would like to respond. I thank the Speaker for the excellent job he does in this place, and it can get trying at times. I like to think that I have a very good working relationship with the Speaker, and I do not believe that we have come to blows yet.

The Hon. J.W. Weatherill interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Probably not physically, no. I also commend the work of the Government Whip and the Opposition Whip. I appreciate Ivan's candour when we get together and sort things out and get things done. I know that at times there are things we cannot tell each other or what is going on but, at the end of the day, we get the job done. I thank you, Robyn, particularly for your understanding when I stuff things up on this side.

Mrs Geraghty: Not at all.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you. I, too, thank the Clerk, the table staff and all the attendants who keep this place running. I also thank parliamentary counsel and Hansard who, as the new Minister for Environment and Conservation noted, try to understand our gibberish. I note that occasionally they have wads of my notes and come back because I have to spell things or print them in English. I appreciate their work and note, too, the work of Carmel Moriarty over 46 years. I think that is an incredible amount of time to spend in this place.

I would like to spend quite a few more years here yet. That will be up to the electorate, but I promise my wife that it will be nowhere near that term. I commend Carmel's dedication to the job, and I think it is fantastic in this day and age, when people do not stay in jobs too long and transition through jobs seems to be fairly frequent.

I certainly note the catering staff and the excellent work they do. Some people would argue that I should not see them as often as I do! I also thank the security staff, who keep us safe; the maintenance staff, who seem to have a job that goes on and on; and the cleaners, who keep the place neat and tidy around us.

I acknowledge all political staffers for the work they have to do for MPs of all colours and sides. They are well and truly under the pump to find things when they are needed in a hurry, and I know what I am like: I say, 'I need this now.' I thank our electorate staff, who are also under the pump at times and do a fantastic job over many hours.

I thank parliamentary colleagues from all sides, not only in this chamber but also in the other place. If I have missed anyone, I apologise. I thank everyone in this place and in the other place, and anyone to do with parliament, for their service. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I wish everyone a good, refreshing break and safe travel for those who are going away.

The SPEAKER: I will not repeat everything that has been said by the minister and the member for Hammond, but I will add my thanks to everyone for the work done behind the scenes; it certainly makes my life much easier. In particular, I would like to thank the clerk, Mr Malcolm Lehman, who does a tremendous job and has done since his appointment. I also thank my secretary, Ms Mary Kasperski, who is of tremendous assistance to me.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens) (16:46): I would like to put on the record my appreciation of the work done by the staff of Parliament House. They make our lives a lot easier, particularly those who work within the chamber. I would also like to thank the whip staff, Carol Putland and Val Williams, for the wonderful job that they do, sometimes under very difficult circumstances. They put up with me on the odd occasion when I become a bit impatient about needing something five minutes ago. They work very cooperatively with the opposition whip staff. Adrian, you are a pleasure to work with and you do not stuff up. It has been great fun this week. Working with Ivan is always entertaining, but we have had a good week.

I would like to thank all my colleagues here who have mostly been on time for their chamber duties. I am sure that Adrian will appreciate the difficulty that whips have. As the honourable minister has reminded me, it is very difficult for members to always be available to undertake school tours and seniors groups. The groups love coming into Parliament House, and we appreciate the fact that they are guided around by either Perry or John. They are very appreciative and they tell us afterwards how grateful they are for the service that they received. I look forward to seeing everyone when we return.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (16:48): I also would like to thank the staff of the parliament for their wonderful assistance. As all new MPs would have found when we came here in 2006, it is a fairly steep learning curve. You think you know what goes on in the place, but there are little rules and regulations, and we often have to turn to people for advice. I offer my deep thanks to the clerk and to the attendants for all their advice over time. I think we have a very good working relationship where we can go and have a chat and find out things.

I would really like to thank Carol and Val in the whip's office. The way they communicate with us backbenchers is fantastic. They ask us who would like to speak on something, and the messages always get through. There is a lot of competing interest with a backbench the size of ours when everyone wants to get up and make a speech about their electorate. Of course, we are all very proud of the achievements of people in our electorates and of the electorates themselves, and we like to get up as often as we can to talk about the very fine things that are happening in our part of the world and to communicate that to other members of the house.

I think it is important that ministers also hear our perspective through the grievance process. We can write to them as often (as we do), but I think the grievance process is very important, and I want to thank Carol and Val for their support when I put in a request to make a speech. It is granted probably more times than I deserve.

To the Hansard staff: it was a great pleasure to be at Carmel Moriarty's farewell this morning. She was quite chuffed at all the members of parliament and her colleagues who attended. It was interesting to hear her perspective on things. As the minister pointed out, she was the first person to volunteer to use an electric typewriter in this place. How things have changed over the years. She would have seen so many changes, with 12 different premiers in this place. She has outlasted even the great member for Stuart, Graham Gunn, whom we all look up to as the stalwart of this place. Carmel has outlasted him by many years.

I think things have really improved over the past couple of years in terms of food preparation and food services, so I would really like to pass on my thanks to the catering staff. They have to work fairly odd and irregular hours, and sometimes they do not know what sort of hours they will be working. It is a bit like us; it is all determined by the legislation before this place and how long people speak on that legislation. So, while we often do not know when we will get home to our families or to meetings in the electorate, the same goes for other staff—not just the catering staff, but all the chamber staff and those in the very important support roles. You come in at the start of the day and you do not necessarily know what time you will get out of here. In the old days, we did not even know whether we would get out on the day that we arrived.

I think one of the great things that I have seen in my time here is the introduction of family friendly hours. I think it is very important that we now start earlier in the day and leave at a more reasonable time. I think we all make better decisions when we are not suffering from sleep deprivation. It allows many of us, particularly those in the metropolitan area or in the near metropolitan area, to attend even more functions and meetings and things of importance in our local electorates. I know that I have been able to attend many more Neighbourhood Watch meetings and school governing council meetings, and with 16 schools either in the electorate or very near to the electorate of Mawson, there is always a governing council meeting to attend.

I wish all my parliamentary colleagues all the very best for the break. I hope people do take the opportunity to take a few days off at least, because it is very important that you have work/life balance. In this job, we can work hour after hour, day after day and, suddenly, three weeks can pass before you realise that you have not had a day off. It is very important to be balanced in our life, and I think we all work better with a little break. I encourage everyone during this break from parliament to take a little time to refresh the batteries and get your mind pack on track and recharged.

The media quite often writes that parliament only sits 67-odd days a year, but we all know there are conscientious, hardworking local members on both sides of the house who, day after day, night after night, attend to the needs of our communities and who are good representatives of the 22,000 or 23,000 people whom we are very fortunate and proud to represent in the parliament of South Australia. As I said, I wish every one a good break.

One of the things I will be doing during the break is taking a group of school students from the electorate of Mawson to tour the Olympic Dam mines and show them first hand the great mining boom. It is something to which I am really looking forward. We all hear the great stories of

this great mining boom that is happening, and to show these students from years 11 and 12 what is happening in Roxby Downs, Olympic Dam and Port Augusta is really important.

We will also take them to visit local businesses in Mawson that are really benefiting from this mining boom. For every one job that is created in the mining areas, there are another four or five support jobs in other parts of the state, including the southern suburbs and the area around McLaren Vale and Willunga. It is something to which all of us can look forward. One of the things that we all realise about this mining boom is that the skill shortage will cause some pressure. If we can take kids from our electorates in the metropolitan area and the southern suburbs and show them what is happening in those areas, then, hopefully, there is our skill base for the future.

Motion carried.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

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

At 16:55 the house adjourned until Tuesday 9 September 2008 at 11:00.