

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### Thursday 25 September 2008

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

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD DISPUTE RESOLUTION BILL

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (10:32):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to provide an alternative dispute resolution mechanism for residential neighbours. Read a first time.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (10:32):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have my second reading explanation (from Thursday 5 June 2008) inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

I guarantee that there would not be a member in this house who has not had to deal with a dispute between neighbours, whether it be in relation to trees, dogs, cats, car parking, noise, alleged voyeurism, car access—all sorts of things. In my experience I have had to deal with many of those situations, some of which seem quite petty, yet they involve a lot of time and often the local council also finds itself in a difficult situation when trying to deal with a dispute between neighbours. From the perspective of a local MP, you might win a vote (if you can sort out the matter) but you might lose a vote, as well, from the other neighbour.

This bill creates the position of a neighbourhood ombudsman. Some people have suggested that we could use the existing ombudsman. I would not have a problem with that, but I think it is better to have a specialist position to deal with disputes between neighbours. Unlike the current arrangement where we have mediation services, the neighbourhood ombudsman could and would be able to require the disputing parties to attend a conciliation meeting or conference. At present mediation does not work in many cases because people do not attend. They cannot be compelled to attend, so one neighbour might want to sort out the issue and the other might not want to participate and, as a result, there is a festering sore in the community over a long time.

I point out that the neighbourhood ombudsman would not be a court. The ombudsman could require the complainant and the respondent to attend a meeting and he or she could look at the written material. The complaint itself must be in writing and it must not be frivolous and vexatious—the usual provisions apply. The ombudsman can require such books, papers or other documents to be supplied to him or her, but no-one is required to produce material which could incriminate them in an offence. It provides a simple mechanism for getting the neighbours together—it might involve an issue of trees, fences, dogs, cats, car parking arrangements, access to driveways—all those sorts of things—so the ombudsman can sit them down and hear from both parties in relation to the matter.

The ombudsman can refer the issue to the police, if he or she thinks fit, or to any other agency. The main thrust of the bill is to ensure that as far as possible the matter is conciliated so it does not have to go to court and it does not have to be dealt with by another agency. The bill has confidentiality provisions to protect the people involved. It has a provision that the ombudsman will not entertain anything which is frivolous or vexatious. The complaint must be lodged within six months of the act or omission (the subject of dispute) or, if it is a series of acts or omissions, within six months of the last of those acts or omissions.

There is a provision that the ombudsman must cause a written summary of the particulars of the complaint to be served personally or by post on the respondent named in the complaint, to avoid any suggestion that the respondent has not been contacted. I am not aware that the position of neighbourhood ombudsman exists anywhere else in Australia, although I cannot give an absolute guarantee that that is the case.

I think it is a simple measure, which would save a lot of pain and heartache. It would save members of parliament a lot of pain and suffering, and also councils—and I have spoken to people in councils. In fact, I was talking to a senior elected member of the City of Onkaparinga last night. He thought it was a very good measure, because these sorts of issues—disputes between neighbours—take up a lot of council time, and allowing them to fester is not good for the neighbours or the wellbeing of the particular neighbourhood.

So, the sensible approach that is reflected in the bill is to bring the two parties together and require them to sit down with the ombudsman to conciliate the issue, and I would predict that in most cases that is likely to occur. Under the current arrangements, where it is optional to attend for mediation, a resolution is not reached because the warring parties do not want to meet.

I commend this bill to the house. I believe it has merit, and I would like to see it taken on board in South Australia. One suggestion last night from the elected member from the City of Onkaparinga was that we could trial it in a couple of council areas. I am not opposed to that. If someone is keen to amend the bill to provide for a trial in one or several local government areas I do not have a problem with that. However, I do not think that is really necessary. There are provisions in the bill for the Attorney-General to provide for regulations to deal with some ancillary matters. I commend the bill to the house, and I trust that members will support it.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

**PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (FORESIGHT COMMITTEE) AMENDMENT BILL**

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (10:34):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991. Read a first time.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (10:34):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have my second reading explanation (from Thursday 31 May 2007) inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

This is to add to our current range of committees and it is based on a concept adopted by the Blair government, although they do it in a different way. In England, in order to look in advance at issues which might confront the UK, they have set up a foresight committee. It is not part of the House of Commons, but it does the same sort of thing.

It tries to look five, 10, 15 years down the track at issues which will confront us such as the ageing of the population. It could even be things such as water shortages—I see the minister is in here—population, science, developments in science and technology. I do not know whether members realise but, with development in nanotechnology, the next 20 years will see a different world altogether. It will be totally changed in relation to things such as electricity and all sorts of things which will affect our lifestyle.

It is not wishful thinking, but if members talk to people such as Professor Clarke from the university, he will tell them that, theoretically, people will be able to live forever because we will be able to regenerate organs. That means that, sadly, I could be around for a long time—hopefully, not introducing more motions or bills! People might think that this is science fiction, but what will be the consequence of people living maybe not forever but, say, 400 or 500 years?

The impact would be dramatic and significant. What will be the impact of new ways of transmitting electricity more efficiently and more effectively? There will be new developments in things such as desalination. At the moment they are working on new techniques for desalination which might make the current reverse osmosis process obsolete.

What I am trying to say is that, with the current committees—and I am not being critical of them—in effect, they are always looking at today's issue or yesterday's event. We do not look far enough into the future. We do not look at what will happen in the future and try to do something about it. I am not suggesting that this committee would have a crystal ball. It is not tarot card reading or fortune telling: it is based on science and credible information about what will happen in the future and how we will deal with it.

We know that we have an ageing population. How well equipped are we, in terms of care, to deal with a population that is ageing? In the future, it is not in the realm of science fiction to imagine that we will have people working into their 80s and 90s and, if you can regenerate organs, you will be able to have people working basically ad infinitum.

Population changes, not just demographics in terms of age profile and economic trends, will impact on us. For example, the mining industry boom is about to happen in South Australia. How well equipped are we to deal with that in terms of training, education and housing developments? The committees we have now by their very nature tend to be looking at current issues or past mistakes.

Ministers by the very nature of their work rarely have the opportunity to sit in a lounge chair and say, 'What will come into my department's responsibilities in 10 or 15 years?' It does not happen. If you are a minister doing your job, you have barely time to go to the toilet—and I speak from experience, and I guess other ministers and past ministers would agree with me. If you are a minister, you do not have time to look at the big issues and the future challenges for South Australia.

I think this would be a very good investment for our parliament. I am suggesting a very small committee of six. It can draw in people from outside, so that it can bring in people from the community to give evidence and draw on the best brains in the community—and we have some fantastically talented people in South Australia and the rest of Australia. We could bring them in and start preparing for some of these things so that we will not be caught out like we have been caught out with the drought and like we are starting to get caught out in terms of treating people for illnesses because they are living longer—and we can see the impact of that on our hospital and medical system.

I urge members to support this measure. As I say, it is based on a very successful approach in the United Kingdom by the Blair government. They have it based in the Public Service. I think it is better to have it based in the parliament. Japan does it. Germany has a similar forward-looking committee. Obviously the details and the way in which it is structured will vary from country to country, but the progressive countries have this sort of measure. They look to the future and try to deal with issues before the issues overwhelm them.

So I ask members to support this bill. I think it would return many times to the community any minor cost that goes into it, and I think we (as well as our children and grandchildren) would see the benefit of being able to look to the future and deal with issues in the way I have explained. I urge members to support this bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (DEATH CERTIFICATES) BILL**

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (10:36):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996 and the Cremation Act 2000. Read a first time.

**Mr HANNA (Mitchell) (10:36):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I bring before the house a tragic story of a woman who died in the Brighton Aged Care Nursing Home in July 2007. The nursing home concerned was owned by doctors Jagdish and Madhu Saraf, and one of them signed the death certificate in relation to the woman who died. I am told that Sturt CIB had concerns about the manner in which the deceased met her death. The fact that the doctor had signed the death certificate allowed for a quick disposal of the deceased's body, and thus it was difficult for police to pursue any inquiries they may have wished to make about the nature of the death. The death certificate suggested cardiac arrest, but staff at the nursing home had made some observations which raised queries that gave rise to that concern by police.

There is a basic principle here that if it is within the power of someone to sign a death certificate it should be at arm's length, in the sense that if there is any suggestion of wrongdoing in relation to the death there must be an independent view of that death. The bill is straightforward. I must say that, apart from reading about this story in the *Independent Weekly* and making my own inquiries about it, I noticed that the Minister for the Ageing in the federal Labor government, Justine Elliott, said, in response to the issue:

Australian State and Territory laws should be changed to prohibit doctors with financial interests in nursing homes from signing both the death and cremation certificates of their own residents.

It was indeed a cremation in this case which prevented police from pursuing the inquiries that perhaps they should have made. I do not intend to cast any aspersions in relation to the doctors concerned. Obviously, as a matter of financial investment, they have taken an interest in that nursing home, and there is nothing wrong with that, in itself. However, the principle that there must be an independent view of deaths which occur in such institutions, I think, is plainly desirable and I would expect everyone in the house to support it.

The bill is quite short and clear and it is designed to do no more or less than prevent a doctor with a pecuniary interest in a hospital, nursing home or aged care facility from writing the death certificate for a person who dies in such a facility—in fact, a facility owned by the doctor concerned.

I commend the bill to the house. Members can read it for themselves. It requires an amendment to the Cremation Act because it is the cremation permit that is perhaps the most important point of the bill. We do not want to see bodies of loved ones cremated before appropriate police investigations, should there be any suspicion whatsoever in relation to the manner of death.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

**STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION**

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (10:43):** I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to move Notice of Motion: Private Members Business: Bills: No. 1 standing in my name for Thursday 30 October forthwith.

**The SPEAKER:** I will count the house. There not being an absolute majority of members present, ring the bells.

*An absolute majority of the whole number of members being present:*

**The SPEAKER:** Does the member for Davenport wish to speak to the suspension at all?

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS:** No; only to thank the government for its support.

**CIVIL LIABILITY (OFFENDER DAMAGES) AMENDMENT BILL**

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (10:45):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Civil Liability Act 1936. Read a first time.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (10:45):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I thank the government for agreeing to suspend standing orders to enable me to bring this bill forward. It relates to setting up a system in South Australia whereby victims of crime can get access to damages payments made to criminals who happened to be in prison at the time.

I took a trip to New South Wales earlier in the year and noticed a media article there indicating that a New South Wales convicted drug dealer, who had won \$300,000 in a compensation claim for an injury he sustained in prison, had been forced to share \$100,000 with his victims. The case was the first successful one under the legislation that parliament introduced in 2005, providing for victims to be informed within 28 days and a public notice inserted in the *Government Gazette* immediately when an inmate has a compensation win. This way the victims can start their own action in the Supreme Court for a share of the money. This successful case has led to three similar actions. In the case to which I refer, apart from \$100,000 to victims, tens of thousands of dollars was taken to repay debts to the Victims of Crime Fund for previous payments made under the scheme to the inmate's victims.

In New South Wales, public liability claims are common, and 19 inmates have been successful since April 2005. This bill relates to damages paid to people in custody for death or injury arising from or caused wholly or in part by the negligence of the Crown. This bill gives the Crown the ability to withhold money from the damages for the following two purposes: to cover the interim payments to victims of crime relating to the offender; and/or amounts requested to be paid as part of the judgment against the offender under the Victims of Crime Act.

The bill requires that any net amount of offenders' damages be held in trust by the Crown, through the Public Trustee. Payments can be made out of this fund only for the two purposes outlined above. Other claims against or payments from the fund cannot be made. In regard to damages held in the Eligible Victims Claims Trust Fund, the Crown must inform people who may have a victim claim against the offender within 28 days of the offender damages award date. Claimants can get access to the information that tells them the total amount of the damages awarded, amounts in the fund, and the number and size of other claims. Payments from the fund are made by court order. Once all eligible claims have been made by the Crown, the Crown can declare a surplus in the trust and then pay the surplus to or at the discretion of the offender. The Public Trustee costs are taken out of the fund, and there is an appeal to the Master of the District Court.

In South Australia, payments are also made to prisoners on behalf of the Crown. I undertook an FOI on this and found that between 2002 and 2008 roughly a quarter of a million dollars has been paid to criminals. Under my bill, that money would become available to go back to the victims. It seems a commonsense move to me. Why would we not support a proposal that looks to put more money back into the pockets of victims from the pockets of offenders? The system works well in New South Wales.

I first had this bill drafted back in July of this year. I raise this because I know that some people would say that I have introduced a bill only as a result of comments made by the DPP in regard to my stance on another matter, where he questions my commitment to victims. The reality is that this bill was being drafted before those comments were made; so the commitment was already there. With those few comments, I hope that the house will see its way clear to support what I think is an eminently sensible bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

#### **HEALTH CARE (HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCILS) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10:50):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Health Care Act 2008. Read a first time.

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10:51):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is with pleasure that I move the Health Care (Health Advisory Councils) Amendment Bill. Historically, this has a genesis in the single fact that the government has moved to abolish hospital boards across the state, except with some protection originally to the hospital board of the Repatriation General Hospital and not attempting in any way to move with the health board that operates in the APY lands. We have since, of course, seen the demise of the board at the Repatriation General Hospital.

Having seen the abolition of the boards, which we had given very clear warning to the people of South Australia would silence the local communities in South Australia, particularly in country regions, we have subsequently seen the release, deliberately after the abolition of the boards, of the ill-fated country health plan by this government. This was a country health plan which had been issued after 12 months of alleged consultation and which was exposed as a complete and utter sham.

During the course of the attempt by the government to force feed country people that they should just accept in silence the savage attack on their country hospitals and health services, they responded. They filled halls across this state and objected loudly to the government's attempt to impose this measure and slash those services and to expose the fact that they had not been consulted at all and, indeed, that it was a complete and utter sham.

After this attempt to silence the people—having, of course, secured the absolute control and the single employment by Dr Tony Sherbon of all health professionals and employees in our public health system across the state and have them sign and execute as part of their employment contract that they are not to make any statement in relation to policy and having gagged their employees and silenced the people—the outrage, however, overflowed into the halls, the streets and other public forums on this issue.

The response to that is that the opposition says that we must give back to the people of South Australia—these communities—at least three rights. The first is to enable them to have a say—an absolute and clear say, which is the first of the proposed amendments—in what services are provided to the community. This amendment will allow the local community to have a say on the services that they have and any change of those services by the approval of the Health Advisory Council, which, for the purpose of this debate, I identify as the replacement body for health boards.

The government will retain absolute control of the funds, which has been the case for some 32 years, since the transfer of powers from local communities to state government funding, in the wake of the Whitlam reforms. So, if a hospital is entitled to \$25 million or \$30 million as an allocation through the budget, that will still be within the realm of the government. I seriously ask the government to accept this amendment. If it is genuine in its support for country people to have a voice, this will allow them to have one.

Interestingly, on this point, the government has allowed the Pika Wiya Health Council and the Ceduna/Koonibba council to get out of this whole central control system, and that is to be applauded. Frankly, it should let some others out, and I hope it will allow that to happen. However, in the meantime, we move this amendment to ensure that, if the people in the local community say, 'We want more aged beds and fewer acute beds,' or, 'We want more acute beds and fewer aged beds,' or 'We want obstetrics instead of paediatrics,' or whatever provision of services their hospital requires, they will have a say about it.

The second aspect of this bill is to provide for the local health advisory councils to have some control over the money that is raised in the local community. At the moment, we have the absurd situation where, a local community having raised its own money, the minister has to approve any project where it spends more than \$5,000. What an absolute insult that is, especially as the local community has raised the money. We have already had the scandalous situation where the government has received money from the Mount Gambier district, which had raised money for a hydrotherapy pool, but where that money is languishing in a fund under the control of the government, and it has refused to give it back.

This amendment will ensure that we remove the \$5,000 cap on local HACs being able to decide, on behalf of their community, how this money is spent. So, a minister cannot come along and say, for example, 'No, you are not allowed to put in a new sunroom or development area for the people who are living in this hospital; you have to spend it on the guttering.' That is totally unacceptable, it is unnecessary and it is an insult to the intelligence and the commitment of local communities to their hospitals.

The third matter is to ensure that the financial accounts of the health service or hospital are disclosed to the health advisory council. We have this absurd situation at the moment where the health advisory council is supposed to be advising the minister on important issues relevant to the health service in its community, yet it is isolated from the financial accounts of the hospital. It is one thing for the government to have now employed everyone to control all the money, to absolutely control the management of what happens in a hospital: it is another thing to expect that the health

advisory council has the full capacity to properly advise a minister, freely and without fear or favour, without even knowing what the financials are.

So, that aspect of this bill will enable the health advisory council to be fully briefed with respect to the ongoing financial position of the hospital. This amendment, therefore, will require the department and/or Country Health SA (wherever it might be hidden) to at least provide the financial accounts every month to the health advisory council. I am talking about the balance sheet, the profit and loss statement and the cash flows. A full financial account will therefore be provided to the members of the health advisory council so that they know exactly what is going on in their hospital, understand which services are under pressure and are able to properly advise. At the moment, the isolation from this information is unacceptable.

I have asked a number of health advisory councils whether they have received the information when they have asked for it, because there is power for the health advisory council to write to the department and seek the minister's permission to have certain pieces of information, and some of them have not even received this. When we have asked about this at public meetings, the response has been, 'We will provide such information as we consider is reasonable.' Again, this is a complete isolation from fundamentally basic information that is necessary for those councils to form an opinion, consult with their local community, seek further advice and present a report to the minister. Without this information, they are unable to undertake even the very basic responsibility that the minister has given them.

These three initiatives which the opposition presents not only reflect many voices in country communities, but also we suggest they are modest in the area of reform that could occur in relation to governance. Governance has been absolutely executed at the local level, and we consider that a number of areas in the Health Care Act should never have been permitted. We are not proposing to revisit that, but we ask the government, on just these three areas, if it is genuine in its commitment to consult with the people of South Australia in the regional communities, to carefully consider and accept these modest areas of reform as some recognition of the concern of these communities. Indeed, if the government gives this matter its wholehearted support, it might be believed.

Interestingly, just this week, the government has released details of the task force, chaired by Mr Peter Blacker, that will prepare a report. It will revisit, consult on and redraw the country health plan. Of course, during the course of the last few months, mark 1 has been withdrawn, mark 2 is to be prepared as a revised draft, and further consultation is to occur. We still think the government has got this back to front. Before it does mark 2, frankly, it should be doing the consulting first.

But I think the task force has done two things. It has reported that there does need to be a new plan, full consultation and further monitoring on workforce issues, which we suggest the government will use as an instrument to get a backdoor reform through and decimate acute care services. We have given this warning before, and it is very clear that the government has not been listening. But, if it is genuine in saying, 'Yes, we agree we are going to revisit this and we are going to do a new plan and properly consult,' this is a bill that it can support, and we ask it to do so.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

### **MARBLE HILL (PROTECTION) BILL**

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (11:03):** I move:

That the bill be restored to the *Notice Paper* as a lapsed bill, pursuant to section 57 of the Constitution Act 1934.

Motion carried.

### **STATUTES AMENDMENT (SURROGACY) BILL**

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (11:04):** I move:

That the bill be restored to the *Notice Paper* as a lapsed bill, pursuant to section 57 of the Constitution Act 1934.

Motion carried.

### **POWERLINE UNDERGROUNDING**

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (11:05):** I move:

That this house calls on the state government to follow the example of the Western Australian government, which in partnership with power companies, local government and ratepayers, has helped underground half of the domestic powerlines in Perth.

This has been one of my many hobbyhorses—I have a few. My experience of riding horses was not all that great on a property up north while I was at uni—

*Mr Pengilly interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** Yes, the horse wanted to keep going under these low branches—even then it must have had a political inclination. Governments of Western Australia have had a program extending over 16 years which has now resulted in half of Perth being undergrounded. The way in which it works is that the equivalent of ETSA, Western Power, and the local government sector are involved, but, in effect, the government oversees and, I guess, underwrites a program where property owners (ratepayers) pay for the undergrounding over an extended period. It has worked brilliantly. I have spoken to people in Perth who initially had some little apprehension, but what they have found is that their streets not only look better but their property values have increased.

There are no poles to hit when you are driving around and you do not have the ugliness of the overhead powerlines. We know that, in new subdivisions, the power is now underground, but, as Perth did, we still have many above-ground power poles, wires and so on. They do not have Stobie poles. What also happens is that you no longer need to have contractors pruning trees under powerlines because there are no powerlines to be concerned about, and the streets end up being very attractive because you can have a range of trees and shrubs without any limit on their height. You do not have to amputate the trees every year, as happens in Adelaide and causes a concern to many local government areas—Unley and Payneham St Peters. Many councils here are often in dispute with ETSA about its pruning techniques.

I think it is a fantastic initiative. I understand that the opposition is committing to some form of undergrounding as part of its election promise leading up to 2010. I hope the government will do the same. I have heard the Premier respond on radio to a query about undergrounding. He said, 'It will cost too much.' Yes, it would if you try to do it in one hit, but the ratepayer pays on an instalment basis. People might say, 'Look, under the Local Government Act, you can do some undergrounding now,' but councils that have tried it have had very mixed results. The City of Onkaparinga has basically walked away from undergrounding along the foreshore near Christies because other ratepayers say, 'Why are you getting involved there and giving them a free kick, when you should be helping us, as well?'

The beauty of a comprehensive scheme, with the government having the oversight and helping to facilitate, means that you make real progress, and that is what has happened in Perth. The principle is quite simple: if you make the instalments affordable, the ratepayer gets the benefit because their property value increases and you have fewer accidents. Ultimately, the power bills do not have to increase as much because you do not have to do line pruning. All those very positive aspects result from having an undergrounding scheme which is coordinated by a state government body.

In essence, if it is correct that the opposition will commit to some sort of undergrounding, then I would make a plea to the government to get on board and I commend the opposition for adopting an enlightened approach. We know that there is an undergrounding scheme for areas of high tourism value, but this scheme goes beyond that and involves residential areas. Next time members go to Perth they should visit suburbs like Cottesloe and Claremont to see some of the work done there. I would be surprised if any member came away not convinced that it is not a good thing to do.

I have a lot of detail, and there is no need to put that on the record, but if members are interested I can provide them with information and with contacts in Perth where they can get more detailed information on the Western Australian underground power program. I commend the program to the house and urge the government to get on board, and I again commend the opposition for already indicating that its support for an undergrounding power policy.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

#### **PENSIONER CONCESSIONS**

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11:12):** I move:

That this house condemns the government for failing to increase concessions for aged pensioners and urges the government to immediately provide for interim additional concessions for utilities, council rates and public transport.

In moving this motion I remind the house that the Premier of this state is the National President of the Australian Labor Party and is well positioned in terms of having the opportunity to make a difference for aged people in our community, in particular those on an aged pension. However, he has, in this great new spirit of cooperative federalism, remained silent when the Australian government under Mr Rudd has failed in every way to make any provision for aged pensioners in this year's federal budget. That is the first matter on which I condemn the state government for its failure to consider aged pensioners.

The federal government had a \$22 billion surplus in this year's budget and would not even give one penny extra for the provision of aged pensioners. I note that the federal opposition this week moved successfully in the Senate, with the support of minority parties and Independents, to pass legislation requiring that an extra \$30 be paid to pensioners, which we welcomed. This was proposed on the basis that, while the Henry review was under way federally, which is apparently to report to the federal government in early 2009, at least this would make some extra provision for our pensioners.

It also comes at a time when in 2008 we celebrate 100 years of aged pensions being provided in this country, pensions having been introduced in 1908, at a time when retirement at 60 and 65 years respectively was perilously close to the time of departure from this earth. Indeed, people were lucky to get in a year after retirement before their life was extinguished. Things have changed—there is no question about that—and the resultant burden on the community, including the provision of financial support, has significantly increased for all governments. It is even more important, when you have massive surpluses in budgets, to ensure that there is adequate provision.

I notice that Ian Yates, Chief Executive of the Council on the Ageing, has called for this in a background where malnutrition is a reality for aged pensioners and they need some support. Apart from the fact that the leader of this government is also national President of the Australian Labor Party and has done nothing at the federal level to seek support for this measure from the new Australian government and left them scandalously isolated, what else could he do? In his own state budget—which followed the federal budget—he could have made provision for the support of aged pensioners in the community by concessions.

Already this jurisdiction is undertaken. Aged pensioners as a result of means testing can be eligible for public transport concessions, energy concessions and supplements, and also for council rebates. But, at present, even they are significantly confined to certain people. For example, in order to take advantage of a public transport concession a public transport system must be available to use. Of course, for nearly one-third of the state's population that live in rural South Australia this is almost inalienable for many. Even if they are eligible under a means test it is often remote.

Recently, on a country visit to Mannum (in the member for Schubert's electorate) it was brought to my attention that, while one can be eligible for a rebate in relation to gas in metropolitan Adelaide where the gas is connected, if you have to rely on gas bottles you get nothing. You get nothing on the rental of the gas bottle or the amount that is consumed. The important thing is that aged communities—

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**Ms CHAPMAN:** The government may attempt to interject on this, but they should go to Mannum and listen to these people because they are very concerned about it.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Do they have electricity?

**Ms CHAPMAN:** They have gas bottles and they are using them for their services.

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Noting the mindless interjection of the government, these people are expected to convert gas services—which might be their hot water or stove—to electricity in order to access that service.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Do they have electricity? If so, they get concessions.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** How cruel and inhumane!



*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** They have not got enough money to pay for the utility, let alone the capital cost to replace those services—a new stove—

*The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will have an opportunity to respond.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** —and a new hot water service—whatever infrastructure is needed in their home. Of course, how typically mindless of the government's interjection to suggest that these people should use another type of facility in order to do that. They have not got enough money to pay the bill, let alone buy a new stove or hot water service—so members opposite should think about that and understand what a stupid comment and interjection it is; and how horribly insulting it is to the people in country areas of South Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Of course, aged pensioners can apply for a rebate of council rates. Again, as a result of means testing aged pensioners can be eligible for a rebate under certain circumstances. We are seeking that the government at least review access to this in order to understand that the poorest of aged pensioners often do not even have a home to start with. Of course, they will not get the direct benefit in any way. I have raised this issue before in the area of land tax. I have suggested to the government that this has a direct effect on tenants. If there is no access to a land tax concession by the landlord—whether or not they are a pensioner—on a rental property, then that cost will transfer on to the tenant.

In relation to land tax, the government's typical mindless response is to say that they do not pay land tax. Any donkey could understand that when you have a cost imposed on a property, which is subsequently tenanted, one way or another the rental payment is reflective of the costs to the landowner.

He or she will therefore add in the cost of rates and taxes in relation to water installation, services to the property, applicable council rates, land tax, etc. What is important for this government to understand is that, whilst there is some concessional access when the aged pensioner is a landowner, there is no direct benefit to them, no concession available, of course, if they are a tenant. As a tenant, they will have to pay a rental payment that is commensurate with the add-on costs of that property. If it has one bone in its corporate body, I ask the government to appreciate the level of despair that many aged pensioners are currently facing.

We have had numerous articles about this. They cannot even afford to eat dog food, states one article I read about this situation. The situation is that they are having to sacrifice basic services, very often we hear during the winter season. People turn off heating services because they cannot afford electricity, and they eat inferior food. The government needs to appreciate that, if there is no clear attention to this to ensure that there is sufficient funding, this problem will only balloon out to become an extra weight on our health services.

One other matter which was recently brought to my attention—again in country South Australia—was the cost now of medication. Whilst the PBS makes provision for supplement via federal government support into the drugs administered under a prescription, there is often a very significant extra cost. In one household, I was told, this is now up to over \$100 a month in extra payment for necessary medications. The truth is that people who are in households, particularly on a single aged pension, are not able to meet fundamental, basic accommodation (shelter, protection) and in particular food (sustenance) not only to ensure that they stay healthy and alive but also to maintain a reasonable lifestyle.

It is an environment where clearly the Australian government has now demonstrated its colours—its true spots have been disclosed. It does not give a fig about the aged-care pensioners. It is even more important that this government—the Premier having failed to do anything nationally as the Australian Labor Party president—appreciate its responsibility and ensure that it gives some consideration to this motion and act on it.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (11:22):** I want to make a brief contribution. This issue has been around for a long time. I do have a lot of empathy for pensioners. The fundamental problem

with our system relating to pensioners and other retirees is that we do not have and never have had a proper, comprehensive retirement policy and practice for them. I have raised this before, but from the day you start work in many countries in Europe you start paying towards your retirement so that, when you retire, you live at a standard which is commensurate with and relates to the standard of living you had when you were in full-time employment.

Obviously, the pay is at a slightly lower rate, but there is a relationship. You do not have people becoming pensioners and retirees who must try to live off the smell of an oily rag. It is a federal government issue, ultimately, but the fundamental problem is that no federal government has ever had the ticker—the spine—to implement a genuine and comprehensive retirement policy to cover the situation people face when they leave the workforce and retire; so, any system of concessions will be a bandaid job.

What we have across Australia (and the minister would be able to correct me if I am wrong) is that the ministerial councils are trying to address the issue and have consistency and equity across Australia in regard to people getting concessions. The other day on the train I counted the number of concession cards that people in the relevant categories may be required to produce. I think it is something like 23. The same person would not have 23 cards, but the point is that what we have got is a dog's breakfast of concession cards covering not only aged pensioners but other categories as well.

This is an area that needs to be refined, reformed and brought into line with, I guess, modern-day thinking. The fundamental issue is that we have a hotchpotch of retirement arrangements—with some people in private sector schemes; some in government schemes; some in no schemes, or in very minimal schemes—so, when it comes to retirement, you will have the haves and the have nots out there.

Unless and until a federal government decides to implement a comprehensive retirement scheme, which goes beyond a minimal contribution—which we currently have through the compulsory superannuation contribution—we will always have problems with people in their retirement years being unable to afford their council rates, public transport or whatever.

That is not to say that some of the current concessions do not need to be looked at, but the problem is that even under current arrangements some people who technically qualify as pensioners might have incredibly large assets. It is not just the widow who is asset rich and income poor. The arrangements for pensioners are very generous in some ways. You can have assets, you can own property worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, and still qualify to receive a pension. Some pensioners also have other additional income, and some people receive pensions from more than one country; so what exists is a mishmash of arrangements.

My father, who has long since passed on, was better off as a pensioner than he ever was when he was trying to provide for six children because, as a pensioner, he owned his own house (because he had been fairly diligent). If you do not pay rent as a pensioner then the burden is not as high as it otherwise would be. If you have to pay rent, then you are in a difficult situation, which is compounded by the fact that the pension is very low anyway.

This is a complex area and it needs someone to get hold of it at the federal government level, working with the states, to sort out the whole mishmash of arrangements and to try fundamentally to address the basic issue, namely, that we do not have enough allocation for pensioners and other retirees because we do not have a proper, comprehensive national retirement policy or practice which involves everyone, from the day they enter the workforce, contributing to their ultimate retirement.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON (Elder—Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Minister for Energy) (11:27):** I feel obliged to respond to the contribution of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It is difficult to know whether her contribution was driven by breathtaking ignorance or breathtaking dishonesty, but I can assure you of one thing: it was full of breathtaking hypocrisy—absolute breathtaking hypocrisy. Right at the centre of the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was the condemnation of this government for not increasing concessions on utilities to pensioners. But, of course, the truth is that this government increased the concession from \$70 to \$120—the single biggest increase the concession has ever seen. Why did we need to make such a big increase?

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Because—wait for it, Deputy Leader of the Opposition—in the nine years, when your disgraceful government was in charge, the concession did not increase once. You did not increase it in nine years. Nine years! We put it up by something like 40 per cent because you did not increase it in nine years. You are also running around telling people that if they are using bottled gas that they do not receive concessions. What breathtaking dishonesty; if they are on electricity, they receive the same concession as everyone else. No wonder they said about you on that program, 'How does that member get it so wrong?' Either you do not care, or you are quite happy to present to this chamber things that are not the facts.

Let me tell you about this breathtaking hypocrisy. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is in here today pretending that she cares for the hard-up but, of course, she was in here with her team just a couple of days ago doing dog whistle politics because we lend money to poor people to get into home ownership. We were attacked because we lend money to the poor and indigenous people, but now they are in here full of care for the pensioners. What breathtaking hypocrisy!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** On a point of order: the member is accusing a member of the opposition—

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** You.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** —not even me—who asked questions, and he is reflecting on the motive of the questioner in question time: (a) it was not I (yet I was being accused); and (b) it is a reflection on the motive of the member—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Debate is not in order. There is no point of order. Member for Bragg, if you wish to claim you have been misrepresented, you make a personal explanation.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I do not care what you want to call it. I will call it dog whistle politics and people can work out what that means. I can tell you that the Leader of the Opposition came in here and attacked HomeStart in a series of questions—

**Ms Chapman:** Asked questions.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Asked questions—of course, we just asked questions! He raised questions about HomeStart being a serious risk to the taxpayer because we had the temerity to lend money to people who otherwise would not get into home ownership—that is, the people who are not well off, the most disadvantaged in our community. Of course, one of the questions was about Nunga loans. You call it what you want; I do not care what you call it. It was a campaign for you. I do not blame him; it was all of you. It was your tactics, your strategy; it was dog whistle politics. We do care. That is why we are the only people who have increased the concession when you did not increase that concession for nine years, yet you come in here and criticise us. What a disgrace!

Let me make one closing remark about what you did for pensioners who are paying for utilities: you privatised ETSA and put the price up 25 per cent. That was your contribution, so take your rank hypocrisy, your dog whistle politics, and get out of this place. Roll on 2010 when we can put you to proper scrutiny in an election campaign and show your barking Leader of the Opposition what happens. He barks and he has a dog whistle. We will show your barking Leader of the Opposition all the things—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Look at them. They are the Scarlet Pimpernel of policy, 'They seek them here, they seek them there, they seek them everywhere,' because their policy changes from week to week. The one place not to look for them is wherever they were last week because they will not be there, and what they are doing today is just a further extension of the rank hypocrisy of their federal party, which has a private member's bill to give pensioners another \$30 a week. What was it? It was 12 years of government—12 years of starving them and punishing them. But suddenly they get into opposition and they discover they have a heart. Rank hypocrisy, like the rank hypocrisy here, should be dismissed by this chamber.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN

**Mr VENNING (Schubert) (11:33):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) condemns the Rann government for the complete failure of the Natural Resources Management Plan;
- (b) notes that there have been huge cost increases for local government and the community at large;
- (c) shares the concern of local government with respect to the cost shifting from state to local government; and
- (d) expresses general concern about the future and efficiency of the plan with respect to service delivery and effectiveness.

The levy increases in some cases have been astronomical. It is a favourite subject of mine, and I have raised it in this house many times in the 18 years that I have been here. The Northern and Yorke board has increased its levy by 320 per cent. You would not mind if the level of services had gone up commensurate with that, but it has not. In fact, in most cases, it is less than we had before. Some regions have experienced a jump from a \$200 levy to, say, an \$800 levy. The Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island and South-East regions have also had their levies increased by a large amount—all this for services that are not as good as they used to have.

I have a lot of friends still in this industry who are chairs in the system and they all admit to me, 'Ivan, the system is not as good as it used to be, and look at these costs.' The bureaucracy has taken over. It has destroyed a fantastic volunteer organisation that we used to have. When the minister introduced this plan—and I had a fair bit to do with that—he said it would be cost neutral, and we trusted them to do that, but no extra funds were put into the budget by the state government to aid the establishment of the NRM boards. The money has been generated by the levy through ratepayers and collected by councils. The odium is unfairly with them.

Late last year, the presiding member of the Northern and Yorke NRM board, Mr Merv Lewis, whom I have known all my life, said it was necessary to increase the levy as the board had been forced to take additional responsibilities under the NRM Act. The state government has withdrawn \$1.08 million in funding to the board—withdrawn it from the board. The Adelaide and Mount Lofty board also had \$309,000 in funding withdrawn by the state Rann Labor government; that is the member for Kavel's electorate. No doubt the same thing could be said in Hammond and all the other country electorates, and, indeed, even in Fisher, the Hon. Bob Such's electorate. This goes right across.

The government has taken \$1.08 million of funding from the board. That was never in the grand plan and never spelt out, but those people were out there diligently selling this concept. It was never spelt out to them. I feel that they have been betrayed. This year, the Adelaide Mount Lofty Natural Resources Management Board will have a budget of \$24.5 million, with \$14.7 million of that coming from ratepayers through the NRM levy. Over \$2 million of the \$24.5 million budget will be spent on staff and running the board. Here we go; what a massive bureaucracy! Kym Good, whom I have known personally, because he was with the Barossa board, is now with the Mount Lofty Natural Resources Management Board. When asked on radio if everyone will be paying more to fund natural resources management, he said:

We're coming up to, yes, a higher contribution, but we believe a balanced and affordable contribution. If we don't make these investments now it's going to cost us many times that amount into the future.

Well, talk about a cop-out! I know that he could not say anything else; he is a public servant, but no doubt he would be quite embarrassed personally about what has happened. Mount Barker councillors have questioned the level of service the region is receiving for the money it raises. The council's strategic planning mantra states:

The extent to which the allocation of board resources and programs benefit the Mount Barker district is not readily apparent.

The NRM system has turned into a massive, burgeoning, bureaucratic, expensive system. I regret that I may have inadvertently supported or initiated some of this. I had in mind a certain vision for natural resource management in South Australia. I never envisaged this, and for that I apologise.

A greater level of transparency at state government and board levels regarding the funding generated through the levy and given via government is necessary. The public need to know how their money is being spent on bureaucracy or NRM projects. Yes; this subject has been raised one way or another by me in this place for over 18 years, and I have been involved with this subject for nearly 40 years. My main interest has been in getting the best possible protection for our lands, particularly our native flora and fauna, environment and water.

I was previously chairman of the board when these things were discussed at a local level. Understand that this was mainly volunteer driven then, when we received no fee other than a small sitting fee to cover petrol and the telephone—nothing else—and it worked well. When I was chairman of the board we could see advantages in amalgamating some of these services. It was our board, under my chairmanship, that first put the pest plant board, of which I was chairman, together with the vertebrate pest board.

We had two boards running side by side with the same people sitting on them, so we put them together, and we did it at a local level. That then became the animal and plant control board. We got rid of half of the officers and one car, and there was no difference in service to the people, and they all said, 'Good'. We then thought, well, that worked very well—bloodless; no problem. It is just a movement from one to the other, all-encompassing, and no hiccup or problems with the public service or anything. We thought that we would then move to the soil boards and bring them in as well. When I was moving on soils this argument started to become political. That is also when I was elected into parliament.

See what we have done: we have gone from that, where we brought in soils, and we brought in everything else, too. I can live with that, as the previous minister, minister Hill, said. I am happy to accept that, but we lost control of it and now, as we all know, Sir Humphrey has just taken over and seen a way to strap the cash out of the community, particularly landowners, the so-called wealthy people in our community.

Right now, landowners are hurting. We will not be here for two weeks but, if this state has not had a reasonable rain by the time we come back, I have to say that we will be in serious trouble. We will lose approximately 300,000 tonnes of grain every week if we do not get substantial rain, and substantial rain is 15 millimetres or more, but all we seem to get is three, four, or five millimetres.

You see crops that looked good now dying, and all farmers can do is cut it for hay if it has a value. It is happening now, and we are at a critical time. If we do not get that rain by the time we come back here, all I can say is that we will be in serious trouble, and there is no doubt about that. When I look at my own bank account, I am lucky because we run a very low debt situation on our farm, and I thank God that I am able to do that because my father, and his father before him, put an asset there that we now use.

Those farmers who bought an asset in the last three, four, five or 10 years are very anxious, particularly those who went to the bank and were just able to get finance to put in a crop this season, but what will happen next season? In all sincerity, I say to the Treasurer, who is in the chamber: that we have a very serious problem. Food is most important to our state and nation. It is as important as water.

**The Hon. K.O. Foley:** What can you do?

**Mr VENNING:** I don't know. I spoke to minister McEwen yesterday and I asked what he could do and whether there was any light at the end of the tunnel. We already have the EC loan funding, but what can you do? We are now looking at a huge problem, and I would say that probably 60 per cent of our farmers will have huge financial problems putting in a crop while this weather goes on. I heard a speaker say this morning that it could be 2014 before we see a change in the weather pattern. If that is the case, even I might have to get another job when I retire!

This is a serious matter and it is not something to be political about. The Treasurer just asked, 'What can you do about it?' I do not have the answer to that, but I suggested in a previous speech that you could subsidise some of the costs for farmers. This is how ridiculous it is: next year, we are told that phosphorus, which is the base fertiliser, will be \$2,000 a tonne, and that is up from \$600 tonnes two years ago. Where are our farmers supposed to find the extra money for that, let alone for the huge cost of fuel, farm chemicals, labour and the on-costs?

Our farmers are rapidly becoming unviable. What do you do then? Food is most important. I think that it is time that the Minister for Agriculture, the Treasurer and others started considering working through this situation with organisations such as SAFF and others and asking, 'What is the way ahead?'

To return to the motion, it hurts me that I was involved with the NRM process all those years and this is the final result. I asked minister Hill and the officer in charge (who was Mr Wicks at the time) how they would control this. We all know that, as soon as you lay some of this bare and take apart the carcass, the bureaucrats will come in and pick at the bits, and that is what has

happened here. They have set up a structure that is massively expensive and not service driven. It is all about providing a bureaucracy.

We have all seen it, and we all know how to build up a bureaucracy. We all do it, and we can even be accused of it ourselves in our electorate offices, and at times I have issues with the Treasurer about this matter. We have to make sure that we strive for efficiency and that people are getting value for their money.

I hope that the house will support this motion, and I urge it to do so. I am happy for the government to amend it. It is a serious situation, and I do not think that, in all fairness, anybody can disagree.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (11:45):** I can understand the member for Schubert expressing concern, but I think he overstates it. His motion says 'complete failure'; I do not agree with that. The original catchment boards, which were, as I understand it, set up by the previous Liberal government—I think the Hon. David Wotton was one of the drivers for that—have now morphed into the NRM boards and are working to implement various natural resources management plans.

In fairness to the boards and to the plan, I think we need to give it some time to take effect. I am not aware of any group in the public sector that gets put through the hoops more vigorously than the NRM boards and, previously, the catchment boards. In contrast, we have huge government departments that spend billions of dollars and are never put through the grill in the same way as the NRM boards.

*The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** We probably should. I was on the Economic and Finance Committee during the halcyon days, and members used to question almost how many pencils the catchment boards had and whether people were claiming for two meetings instead of one, and all that sort of stuff. That is fine, and we should have accountability, but I think the NRM concept is a good one.

The member for Schubert says that costs have increased. There is no free ride. We cannot expect the wider community always to subsidise people who are involved in economic activities. We need farmers, we need people in horticulture and agriculture. We desperately need them and we want them to survive, but there is no such thing as a free lunch or a free ride for people in industry or any economic activity. They all seek it at times. They never call it a handout or a subsidy; they call it restructuring, or something similar—a bit like the milk levy that the federal minister, Tony Bourke, is finally getting rid of, I am pleased to say. However, he is taking until next March to do so. That was a plan to assist the dairy industry to restructure, and now we find that the money was going into purchasing igloos and other bizarre sort of activities.

An amount of \$1,500,000 million went into that tax on milk that is drunk by our children, supposedly to help people in the dairy industry to restructure. It certainly did help some. Dairy farmers did it tough for quite a while and then world prices picked up a bit. They were lucky if they got anywhere near 50¢ per litre for white milk at the farm gate. Then we find that, if a bit of sugar and coffee are added, it sells in the deli for nearly \$3 for 600 mls. That is just another example of a backdoor subsidy, if you like, called restructuring.

There should not be any major subsidy involved for people required to deal with soil erosion, management of soil, weeds, pest plants or pest animals. They are economic costs that someone has to pick up. I do not object to a minor cross-subsidy. If members look closely, they will see that ratepayers in urban areas, for example, are actually subsidising some of the rural component of the NRM plan and implementation. I do not get too upset about that because I do not think that it is too out of whack with what we could, and should, expect.

The catchment boards have become the NRM boards. They will take a while to settle down because, every time reform is undertaken, there are additional costs and a settling down period. It happened with the catchment boards. When they were first set up, members said, 'Look at your administrative costs; they're 20 per cent.' It takes some time to get the operating and administration costs down. However, the concept of an integrated, comprehensive approach to managing the environment is a very good one.

The NRM boards are doing, and have done, some excellent things. Most of the money, for example, to help restore the Torrens down at Breakout Creek is coming, as I understand it, out of the NRM levy. In the upper reaches of the Torrens, the NRM has been subsidising fencing so that

stock is less likely to get into the upper reaches of the Torrens. One would query why we have to subsidise people to keep their stock out of the catchments for the drinking water that ultimately the people of Adelaide and elsewhere will consume.

The reality is that at the moment the law is weak. The law does not prevent people from grazing animals in the catchment streams and, as we know, cattle and sheep leave their signature where they graze, and that faecal matter ends up in the Torrens and in the Kangaroo Creek Reservoir from which the people of Adelaide ultimately drink. So, the NRM board in the Mount Lofty Ranges is subsidising people who are running animals in the upper reaches of the Torrens to keep those animals out of the catchment and thus help maintain the quality of the water for Adelaide and also improve the quality of the water in the Torrens itself. That is just one example.

The NRM boards have helped restore many creeks which have been degraded over time with weeds and exotic plants. There are many more that they need to work on, and I have given them some examples recently. The creek between Stirling and Aldgate next to the Old Mount Barker Road is an absolute environmental disaster; likewise, the creek running through the town of Clarendon is a nightmare. They are the sort of jobs that the NRM can do and should do. They cannot do them all at once, and I acknowledge that, but they are doing a lot of good things. Part of their brief is to educate young people. They spend a lot of time and money trying to get the message across to schools and schoolchildren.

I think the member for Schubert is being overly harsh and unfair in his motion in talking about complete failure. I do not believe it is a complete failure at all. It needs to be managed tightly. We do not want unfair burdens on farmers, many of whom are doing it tough, but the reality is that you cannot expect other people in the community to pick up the tab for managing pest plants and animals and for soil conservation. That should fall primarily on the people whose properties are involved or are likely to be involved.

I make the point that, as with the carbon tax or carbon trading, this idea that there is a free ride for people in the community is a nonsense. There cannot be a free ride. Everyone has to contribute and play their part, and the fact that the costs have gone up for the NRM plans and their implementation is a reflection of the fact that the community is much more serious about protecting, restoring and managing the environment than it was many years ago when there was a cowboy mentality that resulted in widespread destruction of flora and fauna in this state.

We have come forward a long way. We still have a long way to go, and the NRM, I think, is a step in the right direction, but it needs to be managed tightly. I am sure that the people within the NRM boards and management are well aware that they need to keep their administrative costs as low as possible but still be able to do the job that the community expects them to do.

I have not had anyone come to me criticising the NRM plan or the local board or objecting to paying the modest levy. The people in my neck of the woods pay a significant amount towards the management of our NRM. On reflection, I think the member for Schubert is probably overstating his concerns, and I think that if he gives the NRM a chance to settle down and bed in he will have a different view in five or 10 years' time.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

## PREVENTATIVE HEALTH

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (11:55):** I move:

That this house calls on the state government to increase its commitment to preventative health measures.

In moving this motion, I was very careful to include the wording 'increase its commitment', because I am not saying that the state government is not committed to preventative health measures or is not doing things which will assist in improving the health of the community: it is. What I am saying, and it is a legitimate point to make in here, is that I would like the government to do even more. As I said, that is not a criticism of what it is doing; it is really just saying, 'Let us see if the government can improve on what it is doing.'

Some of the things in which the government has been involved and to which it is committed—for example, improving the eating habits of children in schools—are worthwhile measures. I suppose a cynic may ask what it will achieve, if the children come out of school and then go to the local fish and chip shop and hoe into hot chips. Well, nothing anyone can do in terms of preventative health measures will ever be 100 per cent perfect, because unfortunately we do not live in a perfect world. However, it is a step in the right direction.

Some of my local primary schools have their children growing vegetables, because if you conduct a survey of children (which has been done by various groups) you would find that many children do not know the names of vegetables and cannot identify them. Indeed, it is just as well that the major supermarkets train their checkout staff to identify vegetables because many of the young people who work there part-time have admitted to me that they had no idea what some of the vegetables were before the supermarket trained them.

It is an unfortunate situation when we have young people who probably would not know spinach if they fell over it. We ate it as kids because we did not have a lot of money, and it was one of the things we grew out in the backyard. However, awareness and knowledge about what to eat, as well as eating certain fruits and vegetables, is an important part of a preventative health program. Obviously some of those things are long term, but more schools should be involved in getting children to grow vegetables at their school. The ERD Committee recently visited the Blue Mountains council in New South Wales, which gives every family in its area what I think they call a 'mini garden'; it is a box of herbs and so on to encourage people to eat healthy foods. The council actually supplies that in the Blue Mountains.

A lot of other things need to happen in relation to preventative health. One aspect is that I believe most schools are not doing enough in terms of providing regular physical activity. Years ago primary school teachers themselves would run a physical education program; it was integrated into the school day. Then some teachers seemed to get a bit lazy and did not want to change into a tracksuit, or perhaps they did not want to get sweaty and come back into a classroom, so that approach to inbuilt physical activity in the school gradually weakened in some schools. It is not simply about playing sport on a Saturday: it is about integrating physical activity into the daily activity at school, and it should be absolutely mandatory that schools do that at every level. There should be regular integrated physical activity as part of the school curriculum; it should not be an optional provision, but a mandated requirement.

I have also been trying to encourage the state government with regard to manufacturers of so-called 'fast foods'. Incidentally, 'fast food' has generated a reactive movement called the 'slow food movement', which was a bit confusing to someone who is very keen on cooking because I took 'slow food' to mean cooking all day in a pot (a great way to cook a meal if you have the time). What they mean is an alternative to hamburger, french fries, and all that sort of thing.

One of the things that those companies could do is reduce the amount of salt, sugar and fat in some of those fast foods. Later on (hopefully, this morning) we will be talking about food labelling laws. People do not know what is in a lot of the fast foods they eat. If you ask companies like McDonald's and Hungry Jack's, they will tell you what is in the food, but you should not have to ring them up or send them an email to find out what is in the hamburger: it should be displayed in the fast food area so that people can, at least if they want to, understand what they are eating.

Many of those companies are now offering healthier alternatives. I am not a health food Nazi who says that you should never eat those sorts of things but it is a question of getting it into proportion and balance, and that is where the government needs to step up its awareness and information programs to ensure that people better understand.

Likewise, in terms of health, many people suffering from high blood pressure (hypertension) would not even know about it. How would they know, if they do not go and have a regular check-up? One of life's great ironies is that we get our vehicles checked and serviced but we do not necessarily do the same for ourselves or, within a family, ensure that every member of the family is having a regular medical check-up. The servicing might be a little different from that involving a motor car but the principle is the same.

Likewise, a lot of people have diabetes but are not aware of it. Undetected diabetes is very harmful and does long-term damage. Likewise, undetected high blood pressure can do a lot of damage to kidneys, eyes, and so on.

What are we doing in relation to screening children in schools, for example, as previously happened? That is something the state government could do and follow the example of the Scandinavian countries. I do not have a problem with children of various ages in schools, including secondary schools, being checked out physically, as well as being tested for learning disabilities and checking for psychological factors. I have previously mentioned that some of our more notorious murderers—and these are extreme examples like Worrell (the Truro murderer)—were known by the teacher in junior primary to have problems but they were not picked up professionally or dealt with professionally.



If children in schools are screened for physical aspects—I know someone who cannot have children because, as a boy, his testes did not descend and he is sterile—something like that would be picked up immediately by a qualified nurse or medical practitioner. Deafness would be picked up. People might think that parents should pick up deafness but I can tell you that that is not always the case and I know some parents (who were professionals) who did not pick it up. The deafness, at the level the student suffered from it, was picked up at primary school during the screening which used to occur but which does not seem to occur now. That is one area where the state government could intervene.

Some people might say, 'Let them go to their local doctor.' That is wishful thinking, because many people do not go to a GP for regular check-ups, and certainly not necessarily for their children. So people are allowed to get through the system and, in the long term, that omission is going to cost not only them personally in health ways, but also the taxpayer as an enormous burden in the future as we try to deal with these medical issues down the track.

Professor Graeme Hugo (professor of geography and demography at Adelaide University) said a week or two ago that, when the baby boomer population really hits the hospital demand era, then look out, because the costs are going to be enormous if we do not get a handle (and that means the government does not get a handle) on preventative health.

We do not need all these people going to hospital. When I look around, I see people, even in this parliament, who smoke. I say to them, 'Look, it's an awful way to die, if you get emphysema, to drown in your own fluid.' It is a terrible way to die, and that is apart from the other things, such as cancer of the mouth, having bits of your tongue cut out. It is an awful thing. I say to these people, 'We want you to be around, irrespective of your political affiliation,' and they say that their father lived to be so and so, and that is just a silly answer. People need to get real. The minister acknowledged the other day in a chat: how do you make people do things that will help them in terms of their health? Well, you cannot make them, but I do not think the government should make any apology for going in hard on some of these issues.

In the workplace, progressive councils, such as Onkaparinga and Marion, have in situ workplace health checks, not just for blood pressure but they also check for skin cancer. They also help people who have stress. They do a lot of fantastic things like that, and so does the ANZ Bank. The state government could also be doing it through the Public Service. We should be doing it in this parliament, too, making it available to members and staff. If you can pick up some of these things early on, you can often deal with them effectively. It is not simply physical health: it is mental and psychological health as well. So, with councils like Marion and the City of Onkaparinga, if someone has a family-related stress issue, they get that person the assistance that is required.

The state government runs a fantastic breast cancer screening program, yet 30 per cent of women in the target group do not bother to avail themselves of that program. A lot of men do not get checked out for prostate cancer. If anyone has a male family member who has had prostate cancer they should be getting screened from the age of 40; and, for anyone else, certainly from the age of 50. One area I hope all members in this place would focus on is that, at the moment, country people are disadvantaged in terms of health provision. They do not have access readily to doctors and specialists, and that is particularly true, but not exclusively true, of country men. They are in the category, along with indigenous people, of having the worst health in the country.

Then you come to the lower socioeconomic categories and find that, in our suburbs where we have low socioeconomic categorisation, the level of their health standards is appalling. We cannot and should not sit back and allow that to continue. I know the minister is personally committed to doing something about that and is helping to fund information gathering but, more importantly, action to deal with that poor health profile that exists in some of our poorer suburbs and certainly amongst country people and indigenous people.

The information about things like prostate cancer—and it is the same with any cancer—is to get it early and, if you can get rid of it quickly, you are halfway on the road to recovery. If you leave it too long, you will often pay a very severe price.

There are some people who say that screening for prostate cancer is not cost effective. Well, it is if you are the person who is saved from an awful death. I think we will find in time that there will be increasing commitment to earlier screening for men on a widespread basis to detect prostate cancer. To that end I am pleased that the state government now has a men's health strategy. It is not perfect, but it is a start. It has come a long way since the time when we did not

have one in this state. The federal minister, to her credit, has a men's health policy in operation, so some progress is being made.

Some other things that can be done are: improved areas for exercise, walkways and cycleways. All those things are part of a total package of preventative health. What I am saying is that I would like to see the state government increase its commitment. It is already committed, but let us really lead the world.

Time expired.

**Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (12:10):** I move to amend the motion as follows:

Delete all words after 'government' and insert: 'to continue supporting preventative health measures.'

Keeping people out of hospital by promoting healthier lifestyles is actually the central part of the South Australian Health Care Plan 2007-2016. We cannot emphasise more how important we think this issue is, or be more committed to ensuring that South Australians take responsibility for making their own good health a focus and priority. At the heart of the South Australian Health Care Plan is the wellbeing and healthiness of all South Australians.

We know that healthier lifestyles can reduce chronic diseases and, hence, the need for health services. Prevention is always better than cure. We need to help our community make its own healthy choices, and I believe we are doing that. Yesterday, the Minister for Health announced that, following the launch of the state government's TV campaign urging people not to go to our emergency departments for minor ailments, there has been a drop of 7.1 per cent in presentations this winter.

People are choosing to go to their GP, GP Plus centre or use the very valuable Health Direct call centre to obtain advice on their medical condition before deciding how to proceed. The number of people choosing to get a flu vaccine hit record levels this year, and flu cases in South Australia dropped to 89 cases, compared to 431 cases for the same period in 2007.

SA Health has significantly increased its investment in prevention programs as part of its GP Plus health care strategy. In 2007-08, an additional \$21 million was made available for primary health care, and this has increased to \$35 million in the 2008-09 budget. This money funds a range of preventative, early intervention and clinical services in the community, often in people's own homes. This is very important for our older population, who may not be mobile enough to access programs out in the community.

These initiatives include a greater focus on supporting individuals to change their unhealthy lifestyles; for example, the Do it for Life program, which provides one-to-one coaching to individuals with extreme risk factors that put them at risk of developing a chronic illness, such as heart disease and diabetes. There are also new programs aimed at the broader community, encouraging them to eat well and increase their activity levels, as well as increased support to existing successful programs, such as those encouraging people to quit smoking.

I agree with the member for Fisher that this is one of the biggest drains on our health budget, and it is one to which we need to pay particular attention. Like him, I encourage our parliamentary colleagues who still indulge in smoking to think very carefully about what the end of their life may look like.

We are confident that this approach, which has often been undertaken with other key partners, such as schools, as part of the SA Strategic Plan, will improve the health and wellbeing of South Australians. As I said in my recent Address in Reply speech, this government is also committed to ensuring that children have a healthy start to life. We know that if they are not healthy they will not achieve their true potential.

According to disturbing South Australian data, 20 per cent of four year olds are overweight or obese. I am a member of the Social Development Committee of parliament that led an inquiry into this subject in 2007. The member for Fisher may well be cynical about the banning of certain foods in schools, if the children are then going out to the fish and chip shop afterwards, but this government believes that by putting a major focus on healthy eating and physical activity in schools we are fulfilling an important role in enabling students to develop their capacity for healthy growth and development into adulthood and, hence, healthier futures.

Members will be aware that we have announced that we are adapting the French EPODE program to local conditions. EPODE is a successful program run across more than 100 communities in France, Belgium and Spain, which has shown proven results in helping to

combat obesity in children. We want to introduce the program here and bring communities across the state together with the common goal of fighting childhood obesity. The member for Fisher is quite correct in saying that we cannot leave this up to the children: it has to be a whole of community approach.

This initiative will involve the whole community, with leadership from local government and the active participation of health services, businesses, shops, workplaces and community organisations. Already some Adelaide councils have expressed interest in being part of the program.

The new program is in addition to other measures by the state government to combat childhood obesity including, as we have said, the banning of junk food in public school canteens; releasing a consultation paper flagging a ban on junk food advertisements on TV during children's viewing time (about which I personally feel very strongly, as did the Social Development Committee); working with preschools and schools to encourage children to swap soft drinks and junk food snacks for water and fruit; and introducing the Premier's *be active* Challenge (on the back of the Premier's Reading Challenge, we hope that this will be equally as successful). We have also introduced the Start Right Eat Right healthy food program in child-care services, with over 100 sites now accredited, and we have recruited 10 healthy weight coordinator positions across the state.

We are taking all these measures because we know that obesity, in addition to other new century illnesses in adults, continues to put huge pressure on the SA health system. This government has taken the advice of the Menadue Generational Health Review very seriously, we are taking urgent steps to refocus the culture of health care in this state. Our reform places an emphasis on preventative measures, lifestyle change and engaging members of the community in making healthy choices for themselves. I therefore commend the amended motion to the house.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

#### COUNTRY DOMICILIARY CARE

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:18):** I move:

That this house condemns the government for increasing fees for domiciliary care type services provided by Country Health SA.

It is with pleasure that I move this motion. As if country people have not been abused enough in the attempt by the government to impose the ill-fated Country Health Care Plan, it proceeded, in July this year, to publish a statement of its reviewed provision for the use of domiciliary type care in country areas. This matter came to the attention of the opposition by way of a letter that had been sent to people in Port Pirie, which stated:

There has been changes recently to the eligibility criteria for a waiver to bring Country Health SA units into line with Domiciliary Care SA to ensure uniformity across South Australia.

That is another direct example of this government's inane idea that everyone across South Australia has some kind of equal, equitable access to health care services and, in particular, domiciliary type health care services. What a pea brain of an idea is that to start with—to suggest that the government will now bring domiciliary type care services, which are often provided and administered through local country hospitals, to the people in country communities (the more remote they are, the more isolated and costly it is to have access to them), and that has to match up in some way with the domiciliary care services that are now provided under the supervision of the Minister for Families and Communities.

That is another ridiculous idea from this government, which has a direct financial consequence on those who already have the extra costs of transport and accessibility to health services. The announcement was that the expenditure threshold for the fee waiver application would be increased from \$76 per household per four week period to \$96, a \$20 increase. If that was not bad enough, they also announced that private health insurance costs are no longer a claimable expense in a fee waiver application. This is, of course, an indicator of how inhumane the government is in not recognising that the people who apply for these services are already in very impoverished circumstances. Adding \$20 to the cost will, of course, have a direct consequence of excluding some people from a very necessary service.

The people who use these services are obviously sick, frequently aged and frail, and/or disabled. They certainly do not have access to the myriad services available in Adelaide. It is bad enough that they should have this imposed on them, but it is not surprising that the government would do this. It attempted to increase the rental fees of wheelchairs for disabled people earlier this

year. Of course, that was condemned around the state and, ultimately, the then minister had to withdraw that idea, which I think identified a saving to government of \$200,000—peanuts, in the scheme of things, but it would mean a lack of any kind of independence through access to wheelchair hire, the use of aids for the disabled, etc., It was a scandalously ill-conceived and, I think, an inhumane attempt. We know what form they have and we know what precedent they tried to introduce, so it does not surprise us that they do this.

The interesting aspect of this that I bring to the parliament's attention is that it is consistent with the Australian Labor Party's ideological hatred of private health insurance. Its blind obsession is to undermine the survival of independent health services in this country. I say that because to no longer make private health insurance costs a claimable expense in a fee waiver application has a direct consequence of undermining the viability of people maintaining health insurance—which many people do even though keeping it causes a sacrifice in their family budget. It results in a loss of access to any other discretionary money that they might use for holiday, some respite, an extra bit of food, a minor bit of entertainment or social activity, and those things are frequently sacrificed in these households to ensure the maintenance of private health insurance.

Bear in mind that people living in the country also often do not have access to public health services in country areas, let alone private health services. If they need to travel to Adelaide and receive immediate health care, to avoid the extra burden and cost of accommodation and staying in Adelaide, of course, they need to be able to maintain their private health insurance. So the argument is that, for people in remote or regional South Australia, it is even more important that they be encouraged to maintain health insurance.

We know again that this is the form of the Australian Labor Party. The federal health minister attempted to introduce a new regime in respect of the thresholds to which the Medicare levy surcharge would apply. Recently, the federal government and minister announced an increase in the threshold, which would again provide a major disincentive. Let me go back a stage. The 1 per cent levy is imposed for those people who do not take up private health insurance. In other words, if you do not do that, not only are you not eligible for the rebate that the previous federal government had introduced and which this government tried to get rid of (but, of course, had to step back on because it wanted to win office last year) but, also, the surcharge means that if you do not pay it you have another penalty, namely, an extra percentage of your tax is taken, again, as an incentive to get to you to be independent of the public health system. It is a very sensible policy, but Ms Roxon wanted to introduce a system of increasing that threshold. It is a backdoor way of undermining private health insurance.

Here is the interesting thing: as a result of research undertaken by the Catholic church, the AMA and private health insurers (to name but a few), they say that there would be a mass abandonment. For the state government and minister Hill not to have addressed this issue is bad enough—although, fortunately, last night in the Senate, this ridiculous idea was voted out—but minister Hill should not be carving off the benefits which are necessary to support people living in the country and which ensure that they have access to these important services. He should be telling his federal minister that she needs to understand that this type of ridiculous federal policy will overflow, balloon out and bust state budgets when it comes to the provision of public health cover.

The direct consequence of the research undertaken by the Catholic church, the AMA and the private health insurers is that hundreds of thousands of people will be forced to abandon private health insurance which will increase the burden on the public health sector. The Minister for Health, rather than introducing these ridiculous ideas, should be saying to the federal minister, 'We will not accept that, or, at the very least, if you want to impose this type of policy at the federal level, you pay for it', because it will have a direct consequence on the budget line of our state budget and the casualty will be the people of South Australia, the taxpayers, because either a much bigger slice of the state budget will need to be allocated to this and/or the state budget will need to expand for the purpose of funding it. Minister Hill should also say, 'You ensure, federal minister that, if you want to introduce these ridiculous ideas, you understand the consequences to state administrations.'

Instead of that, what does he do? He nitpicks and tries to make a buck out of the poorest and most vulnerable people in our community—the sick, the disabled and the poor—namely, people living in country and regional parts of South Australia. It is about time this state government understood the importance of the real issues out there, and that taking a few dollars from the poor and vulnerable is not the way to govern. They should be dealing with this issue at a national level, understanding the financial consequence of the millions of dollars that we will have to pick up in

this state—in fact, state governments across Australia (and not just current state governments but subsequent governments)—and understanding that, as a result of their failure to deal with this matter, the casualties will be the people of South Australia who currently have no other option but to rely on the public health sector.

They are isolated from any other access to services. Usually, it is due to their impecunious state, but sometimes it is due to the isolation of the community in which they live or their special need which impedes them from being able to get access to that or even to make the decision to get it. They are already isolated and they are in desperate need, and their only available service is through the public health system. That will haemorrhage and be a casualty if this minister does not address that most important issue and not try to make a miserable buck out of some poor, disabled pensioner who is trying to live a reasonable life in his little country town—in this case, Port Pirie.

I urge the government to understand the real consequences of this to real people, the damage it is doing and its ultimate neglect and irresponsibility in failing to deal with the big issues.

**Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (12:29):** It is my pleasure to contribute to the motion moved by the member for Bragg and to congratulate her on bringing it to the attention of the house. It is important that we in this place understand the pressure under which people in regional South Australia live. It has been my pleasure to have lived in regional areas for the absolute majority of my life. It has been my great pleasure to get to know the individuals who make up a community. We all come with different perspectives to our lives, but everyone is part of a community and they contribute in some way.

Importantly, the suggestion to increase fees for domiciliary care services provided in the regions is disappointing. These people have circumstances in their life that create a difficulty for them, but they are fiercely independent and want to retain their independence. They want to live in their home and community and to continue to contribute to their community, but they are fearful that it is becoming increasingly expensive to be part of it because there is difficulty getting the services they need in the town in which they live or they are too expensive for them.

These people make an enormous number of sacrifices. I meet them every day and, as we get around the electorate we serve, we meet people doing things tough and whose circumstances are difficult. That is why it is important that the philosophy of government, when determining policy and fee structure for services and when providing services to people, considers the effect on real people, people who are struggling. It is important that we have the belief that, when we put in place a process to give people a service, we provide it at a cost that is attractive to them.

Most of these people do not have large incomes, many have struggled most of their lives, raised large families, potentially lost a partner as they got older and are by themselves. Their immediate family may no longer be living close to them and they rely on friendships and relationships with neighbours and people in the town in which they live, but they want access to the types of services provided through so many different agencies.

The service that Country Health coordinates is important because people need domiciliary care. I know there are good programs that provide assistance to ensure people can remain in their homes for as long as possible, and that is a strong focus and policy of government at all levels, to encourage people to do that. The day will come when it is necessary for them to go into a care facility, but people who want to remain in their home and independent need services to do that, and it is important that structures are in place and dollars go into these programs to ensure they can be available at a reasonable cost.

There is no debate from the people I speak to that they expect to pay something for the service they receive, but it is important that the fees are structured in such a way that they are an option for people to take up and not something that is discretionary. It should not be a case of choosing to take up this service from domiciliary care or putting food on the table. No South Australian wants to live with that sort of pressure.

The fact that the member for Bragg has brought the issue before the house is important. Members on this side support her motion. Let us hope we get a change in thought so people can have confidence that the government they elect, of whatever political persuasion, makes the right decisions at all times to ensure that these people can continue to live in the communities that they have loved for many years.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:33):** I, too, support the motion moved by the member for Bragg and congratulate her and the member for Goyder on their comments. It seems that the

government does not acknowledge the massive amount of money saved by people living in their own homes and not looking for places to live because services are currently supplied to people living in their own homes. It is entirely relevant that these care services are supplied by Country Health to keep people in their homes. My 88 year old father still lives in his home, and I hope he does for a while yet, but his health issues will need to be monitored.

When you live 150 kilometres from the centre of Adelaide, services wither away the further from the city centre you go, particularly when you have a city-centric administration that does not realise that things exist outside its mainly city-based electorates and we run into trouble. I acknowledge the services that have been supplied not just through Country Health but through some of the federally funded programs and non-government agencies that help people stay in their homes, which are to be commended.

Some of these services, including services provided by Country Health, need a full audit in order to see how much of the money that goes into funding these services actually hits the ground and how much is tied up in the bureaucracy running these vital functions for regional communities. They save the government hundreds of millions of dollars in aged-care facilities, whether they be independent living facilities, low-needs facilities or high-needs facilities. It saves that full continuum of service for as long as people can live in their own home.

As a result of my father's situation, things such as handrails and other facilities have been put into the house to ensure ease of access. It makes it so much easier when someone can be in their own home, especially in the country. Too many people from regional areas have been moved off for whatever reason—probably because of a lack of services—and gone into homes, and they shut down and end their days far quicker than they would if they were able to stay in their own home.

That is the crux of this motion. People will be priced out of being able to stay in their own home, where they want to be, and will have to go somewhere else, which in the longer term will cost the government hundreds of millions of dollars in the bigger scheme of things. I commend the motion of the member for Bragg; I think it is an excellent initiative.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

### PARLIAMENTARY REFORM

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (12:37):** I move:

That this house supports the reform of this parliament and, in particular, reform of the Legislative Council, including a change to the term of office from eight to four years and the power to delay but not veto, as well as significant changes to the processes and procedures of the House of Assembly.

This motion is an alternative to the series of bills that I have introduced into this parliament previously, seeking to bring about some change to the Legislative Council, in particular. Of course, those changes have to be accompanied by referenda proposals. I seek to achieve the same end by raising these issues via a motion. I deliberately refer to reforming the parliament, meaning both houses, because, while the Legislative Council in my view needs some changes, we also need some changes.

In relation to the Legislative Council, I believe that any attempt by any government to seek to abolish the upper house would fail and backfire and probably burn whoever proposed the measure—not because the wider community necessarily is in love with the Legislative Council but, rather, because it is sceptical and wary of governments. People would be reluctant to see anything which is seen as a possible brake on government or some review of government behaviour and processes abolished. The government could save itself a lot of pain and money by not even contemplating the issue of the abolition of the upper house. It will be a no-win situation for the government and a waste of taxpayers' money if it does that.

The public would support a reform of the Legislative Council with some measures which need to change the Constitution Act. One important aspect is that the term in the upper house needs to be changed from eight years to four years.

The theory underlying the Legislative Council that it is a house of review and that it is very different from the House of Assembly is only partly correct. It was more correct when it was not dominated by political parties—or both chambers were not. The present situation, of course, is that the government does not control the upper house. My prediction is that it is unlikely that any government in the future will be given a mandate in both houses because, as I said earlier, the

public is cynical and sceptical of governments and generally fearful that governments might overstep the mark.

What could happen is a change which reduces, as I say, the term of office in the upper house from eight years to four years. That does not create a mirror image of this house because it has, as we know, a different electoral arrangement. I think that the upper house should have an electoral arrangement different from that in this house, not in terms of the entitlement to vote but in the way in which it represents the people of South Australia. I do believe that the upper house should have regions or zones. It used to have something like that years ago, and I think that needs to be revisited, because my view is that if you represent everyone you represent no-one and you are never held to account in the way you should be.

It is the same in councils: if you do not have a ward system, you can pass the buck and blame someone else. If nothing happens, you can say, 'Well, it's not my fault.' I think you must have accountability as a fundamental in a democratic system so that people can say 'You haven't done your job and you will be dealt with via the ballot box.' The reform should not only be to reduce the term of office to four years but also to create regions, or some form thereof. I think that previously they were called 'districts'. You can call them what you like, but what you need is accountability so that people do not get lost in the electoral black hole.

The other thing which I think is vital is that the upper house should have the power to delay but not veto legislation, and the delay should be sufficient so that, if a government of the day was putting forward something which was completely out of sync with the public's desires, the media and the public could organise and agitate to get that measure changed or the government to withdraw it. At the end of the day, a government has to govern and, whilst it is good that a government has the rough edges taken off legislation and has to consult, and so on, a government must ultimately take decisions, some of which will be popular and some of which will not be.

As we know, sometimes we have to do things which may not necessarily be popular in the short term but may be in the public interest in the long term. If you select a reasonable time for a delay without the veto, I think that is the way to go. The bill I introduced previously allowed, in effect, for what you could call a glorified conference of the houses to sort out aspects of the disagreement. However, ultimately, if that did not work out, the measure would come back to the lower house for a re-endorsement. So, checks and balances are built into the system. Many other aspects of parliamentary reform are needed in our house, but one aspect that I think we should be looking at is bills which are controversial and bills which are significant other than the rats-and-mice type of legislation.

Those bills should come before a committee where members can meet and discuss so that, when it comes to the chamber, we do not have long, drawn out, repetitious debate about a matter which should have been sorted out ages ago. I think we should be moving towards a system where a major piece of legislation—and the definition of 'major' could be spelt out so that it could be triggered by a number of members or by some other process so that a matter would go to a committee to which any member could attend and participate in a more informal setting, and the minister could be there with advisers, and so on, and refine the measure down so that, when it came in here, the rough edges had been dealt with.

There are many other things. The estimates committee process, which I have been on about for years, is very ineffective. I think there are other alternatives and ways in which that can be made more effective. I believe that members from the upper house should be able to participate in that process. Likewise, in regard to the matter of prorogation, which has received some attention lately, I believe that a suitably qualified constitutional expert should have a look at that and, if it does need change and if we have to change the constitution, we could put it to the voters at the next election.

Tasmania does not do it and the commonwealth does not have this ongoing stop/start parliament. I do not think it is necessary in this day and age. It was meant to be a safeguard years ago to stop governments becoming, in essence, arrogant and avoiding scrutiny, but I do not think in the current format that it is necessary. I think it is a costly and unnecessary interruption to the business of the parliament.

In regard to some of the other measures that are needed, I like the idea in Victoria and Queensland, where the Speaker can send a misbehaving member out of the chamber immediately, without any reference to a vote. I think that is a simple, common-sense approach. If a member is disorderly or is acting in a way that disrupts the house, I think the Speaker should be able to say,

'You're on your bike; you're out,' for half an hour, 10 minutes, or whatever. In this place the Speaker has to have the support of the house, which is difficult because, if the offender is a minister, the government is unlikely to support such a motion. So we have a lopsided disciplinary process that is unnecessarily complicated. Many members would only require a bit of extra oxygen and a bit of reflection in the corridor for five or ten minutes to encourage them to behave themselves when they returned to the chamber.

I think we have been far too conservative in this parliament in not bringing about changes in the way that we conduct ourselves. There have been some changes. For example, giving the public a right of reply, or potentially a right of reply, is good in theory. It may not always be that good in that it can initially, anyway, cause a hassle if someone does not have a substantive complaint to make, but in principle it is something that I support. This parliament has lagged behind other parliaments, and we still do, in relation to reform. Other parliaments have moved on in simple things such as when dealing with a bill. Our current arrangement is that we go into committee and the Speaker goes out. Other places do not have the stop/start, Speaker in/out arrangement that we cling to.

These are not all the reforms that could occur, but I think it is in all our interests and certainly in the interests of the people of South Australia to ensure that we have a parliament that is as efficient and effective as it possibly can be. We need to look at things such as electronic voting, and I believe the new sound system that has been installed can be modified to allow electronic voting, so members might be able to vote from their office without actually coming into the chamber, or the whip could, in effect, indicate a vote on behalf of some other member. Obviously you need checks and safeguards in that event, but some parliaments now basically allow the whips to indicate the support or otherwise for a measure. We would have to be careful how we do it so that it is not abused and there is no denial of a member's right to have a say but, done properly, I think we could do things a lot more efficiently and effectively in this house.

Likewise, I think a lot of our processes in terms of using paper could be reformed. I am a bit of a Neanderthal in that I still like paper rather than electronics, but I think we could save a lot of money and time by moving to more electronic formats of paperwork in this place. We do some of it, but I think we could do a lot more. I question whether—and this is no reflection on Hansard, who do a great job—it is vital to our democracy to record everything we say in this place. Some of it may be important, but how many members would have read all the copies of *Hansard* that stretch back 100 years? Most of them gather dust, which is probably what they are worth. It is an incredibly expensive system that we run here, and I wonder whether it is really in the interests of democracy or whether it is more to do with our egos.

We need to reform this place and the other place and we need to get moving on it, because we are currently at the end of the pack. If you visit other parliaments, you will find that we are dragging the chain in terms of reform. We do not want reform just for the sake of it: we want reform which makes this parliament genuinely representative and a key player in what is a fantastic, but not perfect, democratic system. I have great respect for the traditions of this place; sometimes we get a bit casual about them, but what we have in this place is the result of many people sacrificing their lives in developing a system which gives us the privilege to represent the people of this state. I think we need to ensure that we reform frequently but not unnecessarily, and I think the challenge is there to reform both houses. I commend the motion to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

### GRAFFITI LAWS

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (12:53):** I move:

That this house calls on the government to adopt more effective anti-graffiti laws and policies.

Once again, I have worded it carefully, because otherwise the Attorney will be doing burnouts on his bicycle in anger at any suggestion that the government has not been doing anything. The government has been doing things in relation to dealing with graffiti.

**Mrs Geraghty:** Yes, we have; exactly. We have been doing things.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** But not enough. In fairness, let us put on the record what the government has done. It has trialled in the south some clean-off measures. Recently, in the north it announced 'detag' and a program called Repay SA which sounds more like something to do with a financial institution but which is targeting adults to do community work as an alternative to a fine or other punishment. The government also has the wheel clamping measure but, as I have indicated



in this house before, that does not do much if you do not own a vehicle. Nevertheless, it can be a useful measure.

I am saying that the government needs to look at some more effective strategies. I am happy to work with the government. I have introduced three bills. The first one was to tighten up the availability of spray cans and broad felt pens. The government, once again, has tightened up in relation to the selling of cans but there are some loopholes there and, hopefully, I will get to that in a moment. What we have is still a very serious problem. Some people say that it could be worse, that they could be out there robbing banks. Well, that is just a pathetic argument.

Once again, some people confuse aspects of graffiti vandalism. Tagging is the graffiti vandal laying their 'memento' (as dogs do), putting their tag. There are people who do 'pieces', which are at a higher level of skill. But, the point is, whether they are tags or pieces—the more colourful, larger aerosol work—it is vandalism if it is done without permission on private or public property. It is not vandalism and it is not illegal, obviously, if people have permission. So, I do not have a problem if people do aerosol art on a fence or a business which the owner is happy to have it on. That is not problem, and I have never suggested that it is. I am quite happy if there are special billboards for people with artistic talent to do aerosol art on them; that is approved and done within the law. We are talking about people who do not respect public or private property.

The cost is enormous. In the city of Onkaparinga, in which my electorate sits, the following are the costs for 2006-07: City of Onkaparinga, \$573,000; City of Marion, \$321,885; City of Holdfast Bay, \$486,160; City of Port Adelaide Enfield, \$227,700; and City of Salisbury, \$315,050. In total, the cost each year of graffiti in South Australia is somewhere between \$10 million and \$20 million. But the cost goes beyond that, because it helps to destabilise the community, it makes the community look bad, it makes people in the community uncomfortable and it makes them feel insecure and threatened.

My argument is that, for those who think graffiti is fine, do it on your own property; do it on your own fence or on your own house. Do not do it, as some people have done, on vehicles on Yorke Peninsula or on trees and private or public property. If it is so good, do it on your own place, on your own fence, or on your own house. What should the government do? The first bill that I put up, as I started to say earlier, was to restrict access to bona fide users. I am not convinced that many people need aerosol cans or broad felt pens. I am not convinced that it is an essential item. In fact, the New South Wales government has been looking at maybe banning cans altogether. A lot of people tell me that that is what the government ought to do. In fairness to the legitimate—

*Mrs Geraghty interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** The broad felt pen is usually used when people are packing their boxes to move electorate or district. Not many people need a pen which is 25 millimetres wide; it has limited use—if that is the point that the member is raising.

**Mrs Geraghty:** I am talking about spray cans.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** My first bill was designed to allow people, who have a legitimate use in art, craft, or whatever, to get them. I am currently working on some new legislation which would hopefully restrict the outlets that sell those aerosol cans to legitimate users. But, what we find now is that a loophole in the law is allowing people to use, for example, aerosol tyre paint and also shoe cleaner on a stick. I have written to the Attorney about this, but the government needs to close off those particular loopholes which enable the vandals to get access to new material.

The second measure I raised was for vandals to clean off graffiti, not necessarily their own. The government did not support that, yet its latest announcement suggests that it is sympathetic to that idea.

Debate adjourned.

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

#### TOUR DOWN UNDER

**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) (14:01):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** It is my very great pleasure to update the house about what has been described by sporting commentators overnight as the greatest sporting coup in the state's history. As members and, indeed, cycling fans around the world now know, world cycling superstar, Lance Armstrong, is to make his official comeback debut to professional road racing at South Australia's 2009 ProTour Tour Down Under.

The point I want to make right from the start is that the critical issue that occurred last year was, of course, that we secured ProTour status. I am told that a number of places were seeking ProTour status—China, California and Russia. I know that all sorts of people were talking about the millions of dollars in licensing fees (although that was not actually true), but it was vitally important to convince the UCI, which is the council that runs world cycling. In particular, we had to convince Pat McQuaid, who is the President of World Cycling. I know that the Minister for Tourism was involved in negotiations in French, and she was apparently even speaking French with an Irishman. There have been discussions with and advice sought from people like Jean-Marie Leblanc, who was the head of the Tour de France for many years.

First of all, we had to secure ProTour status—the first race in the world outside Europe to secure ProTour status. Once we had that, we had to try to build the event even more. Last year, at the Tour Down Under there was a special guest appearance by Miguel Indurain who, as everyone in this place would know, was one of the world's great cyclists and won five Tour de France races and two Giro d'Italia. Whilst he was not here in a cycling capacity, he gave the Tour Down Under his blessing, and a whole series of world stars from the Tour de France were here participating in Adelaide.

So, as members and, indeed, cycling fans around the world now know, world cycling superstar, Lance Armstrong, is to make his official comeback in next year's Tour Down Under. I am told that, at the news conference last night, there were not only about 500 or 600 journalists but also a few extras—Bill Clinton, Al Gore, George Bush Senior and Bono.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Is Bono still married to Cher?

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** No, Bono is not married to Cher. Lance participating in the Tour Down Under will mean the biggest influx of overseas and interstate visitors to any sporting event in South Australia's history. That is why we have events like the Clipsal 500, which for years has been growing bigger and bigger: to attract more people across the borders than other events—except until last year, when the Tour Down Under attracted 15,000 interstate and overseas guests.

Attracting world cycling icon Lance Armstrong to begin his comeback in South Australia is a major coup for our state and will place the Tour Down Under front and centre of the world professional cycling events. Lance Armstrong's global profile has the potential to double the 15,000 visitors who come to South Australia to watch the race. We are told that we can anticipate a quadrupling of worldwide media coverage for the event because of his immense popularity. Indeed, the worldwide interest generated by Lance Armstrong's participation has been phenomenal and has already exceeded all expectations, and the estimate of quadrupling the coverage is beginning to look very conservative.

Overnight, there have been more than 650 articles published worldwide—more online coverage than the entire 2008 event. Given that the TV coverage of the 2008 Tour Down Under amounted to 84 hours of international TV coverage throughout Europe, India, Asia and North America, the exposure for both the race and for South Australia next year will be massive.

Of course, one of the advantages of the Tour Down Under for promoting tourism is that, rather than being in a venue like a stadium or a track that could be anywhere in the world, it showcases the Barossa Valley, the Adelaide Hills and the Fleurieu Peninsula, as well as our beautiful city.

In January this year, the tour resulted in more than \$17 million being pumped into the state's economy, and a total of 548,000 people watched the week-long event. The event next January will be bigger by long way. Lance Armstrong, who famously survived cancer, has made it very clear that part of his comeback is to raise awareness of cancer and its global burden.

The Tour Down Under's race director, Mike Turtur, first approached Lance Armstrong's management earlier this year to discuss the possibility of a guest appearance by Lance for the 2009 Tour Down Under; that is to come here as a guest—as did Miguel Indurain—not to participate. Mike Turtur has been keeping the door wide open with his discussions all year, with the

full support and encouragement of the tourism minister Jane Lomax Smith, the Tourism Commission and myself.

Yesterday, I spoke to Lance's manager who told me that Lance last visited Australia in 2000 for the Sydney Olympics and loved the event and loved the welcome he was given by Australians. I told Mr Armstrong's manager yesterday that he could be guaranteed that hundreds of thousands of South Australians will give Lance a huge welcome here.

Last year we edged out the toughest rivals—China, California and Russia—to be the first place outside of Europe to host a pro-tour event. We have now edged out another series of international rivals who were all vying to host Lance's comeback race. I also spoke to Lance's management regarding South Australian cancer research and treatment credentials, and promised to support Armstrong in his mission of raising awareness of cancer prevention, cancer awareness generally, and also treatments. We are happy to join with him in supporting those causes.

I want to personally congratulate the tourism minister, the race director Mike Turtur, Andrew McEvoy of the Tourism Commission, and others, for their work on securing this cycling coup for our state. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the member for Mawson who, in his former life, covered Lance Armstrong's first Tour de France win in 1999 and ever since has kept in touch with Lance's team, promoting our tour and urging him to come to Adelaide to see it for himself. Indeed, he wrote to him last November and, of course, I am very pleased that the member for Mawson has just given me this wonderful present: a 2001 yellow jersey from the Tour de France signed by Lance Armstrong.

**An honourable member:** Put it on!

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** No; I don't think South Australia is ready to see me in lycra. South Australians are embracing the event as never before. Registrations for the Mutual Community Challenge Tour, part of the Tour Down Under's Skoda Breakaway Series recreational ride program, have skyrocketed overnight with the announcement that world cycling superstar Lance Armstrong will contest next year's Tour Down Under. Here is an opportunity for South Australians and visitors to reach the finish line before Lance Armstrong in one stage of the event. The Mutual Community Challenge Tour has always been a popular fixture during the Tour Down Under, and the 2009 event is set to reach new heights.

At this time last year we had 91 bookings for the Challenge Tour. This afternoon the number reached nearly 2,200 and, since I announced yesterday that Armstrong will be making his comeback to cycling right here in Adelaide, nearly 200 more cycling enthusiasts have registered to ride stage 4 from Burnside to Angaston. I would urge cyclists wanting their chance to cross the stage finishing line just hours ahead of Lance Armstrong to be quick because, after last year's record 3,400 participants, we are capping it this year at 5,000 and we expect all the places to be taken up very quickly.

Another event to be held during the 2009 Tour Down Under is the Legends' Night Dinner, which will be held on Saturday 24 January at the Adelaide Convention Centre. Already more than 550 tickets to the event have been sold, including more than 200 in the past 24 hours. So, the world will be watching us in January, and I encourage all South Australians to come along and get involved by registering on [tourdownunder.com.au](http://tourdownunder.com.au).

## PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Non Metropolitan Railways Transfer Act 1997—

Section 5—Schedule of Approvals to Remove Track Infrastructure—  
Report 2007-08

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

Criminal Law (Undercover Operations) Act 1995—Report 2007-08

By the Minister for Families and Communities (Hon. J.M. Rankine)—

Children in State Care Commission of Inquiry Report—

Allegations of Sexual Abuse and Death from Criminal Conduct—  
Implementation Statement

By the Minister for Industrial Relations (Hon. P. Caica)—

Industrial Relations Advisory Committee—Report 2007-08  
Inquiry into Balancing Work and Life Responsibilities—  
Government Response to the Parliamentary Select Committee

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

Adelaide, University of—Report 2007—  
Part 1 Annual Review  
Part 2 Financial Statements  
Flinders University of South Australia—Report 2007  
South Australia, University of—Report 2007  
Training and Skills Development Act 2008—  
Charter establishing the Training Advocate's functions

### WATER SECURITY COMMISSIONER

**The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (14:13):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD:** Today, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Robyn McLeod as the new full-time Commissioner for Water Security in South Australia. The appointment will commence on 10 November 2008. Ms McLeod is highly qualified for the role. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in the water and energy sector.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD:** In particular, she has experience in developing and delivering sustainable water supply strategies and innovative infrastructure projects in the areas of water recycling, desalination, system augmentations, irrigation modernisation and conservation measures.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD:** She also has significant experience in intergovernmental negotiations, water resource planning and water market development. Ms McLeod currently holds the position of Director, National Water Group, within the Sustainability, Climate Change and Water Practice of KPMG, where she has developed a national water practice supporting key water reform and infrastructure projects across Australia including Western Australia and Tasmania. She is very highly regarded and was selected as one of the 1,000 participants in the Prime Minister's Australia 2020 Summit on population, sustainability, climate change and water panel. Previously, she has held senior executive roles within the Victorian government, including the role of Executive Director of the Major Projects Division with the water sector group of the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment.

As Commissioner, Ms McLeod will lead and coordinate the development of integrated policy solutions across government to ensure the long-term security of the state's fresh water supplies to meet the state's economic, environmental and social goals. She will lead the Office for Water Security and support me in driving South Australia's commitments under the National Water Initiative, coordinating the development of the Murray Futures project and developing a comprehensive statewide water security plan that builds on and incorporates the Water Proofing Adelaide strategy.

As deputy chair of the state's Water Security Council, she will also assist me in leading the council to identify and address the important challenges of ongoing water security. Until now, the office has been headed by an interim commissioner, Professor Rob Lewis, who was appointed pending the appointment of a permanent independent commissioner. I want to thank Professor Lewis for his valuable work in establishing the office and progressing the water security agenda for the government whilst it sought a permanent commissioner.

Delivering long-term water security remains one of the South Australian government's highest priorities. I look forward to working with Ms McLeod, who will bring valuable experience, added energy and drive in leading a whole of government approach to water security policy. I look forward to working with Ms McLeod, continuing to work with Dean Brown, and to working with an across government approach as to how we manage water security in this state.

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Mr RAU (Enfield) (14:17):** I bring up the 24<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, being the Annual Report July 2007-June 2008.

Report received and ordered to be published.

### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I draw to honourable members' attention the presence in the galleries today of students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, who are guests of the member for Enfield, and students from Mount Carmel College, who are guests of the member for Cheltenham.

### QUESTION TIME

#### TOUR DOWN UNDER

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18):** Will the Premier support legislation to enable the 2009 Tour Down Under to be declared the world's first smoke-free major cycling event? The announcement in New York yesterday that Lance Armstrong will bring to Adelaide his global profile and his commitment to cancer prevention and research was a coup for the Tour Down Under, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. It came on the same day that legislation was proposed in the other place by Liberal MLC David Ridgway that would enable local councils and governments to coordinate their powers to declare a specific place or event as smoke-free.

Mr Armstrong's Livestrong Foundation is committed to promoting anti-cancer programs and cancer prevention messages. In a world first, this event could be declared smoke-free and focus attention on South Australia as a state committed to a healthier lifestyle. The government rejected this legislation when it was first proposed, but the Premier can now perhaps see it in a different light. I am wearing the Livestrong wristband now—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader is no longer—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will take his seat. When I call the Leader of the Opposition or any member to order they must sit down, not try to talk over the Speaker. The Premier.

**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) (14:20):** I was going through some of the clippings from last year's event, and it was really interesting. Even though we had a whole series of the world's great cyclists participating in the Tour Down Under—those who went on to win a series of stages and who were big stars of the Tour Down Under, the Robbie McEwens and the Stuart O'Grady—we saw an incredible and extraordinary attack on the Tour Down Under by the South Australian Liberal Party. It even came out and attacked the fact that we had signed the ProTour agreement, and claimed that millions of dollars had been passed over in licence fees—totally wrong.

Even though 15,000 visitors had come from around the world and interstate to attend the event—at that stage the biggest number of attendees of any event that we have had; bigger than even the Clipsal 500—the Liberal Party tried to white ant it. So, I made a prediction today, because I heard that the Leader of the Opposition had a staff member ringing around the country trying to get dirt. Ultimately, my challenge to the Leader of the Opposition is this: put your state before your party, because ultimately—

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** I rise on a point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will take his seat. The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH:** Standing orders require ministers to answer the question. The question is about lung cancer and cancer prevention.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier does need to turn to the substance of the question. The Premier.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Basically, I am challenging the Leader of the Opposition to put his state before his party, because being a leader in this place is about being a patriot for South Australia. Only he would criticise and try to undermine the Tour Down Under. In terms of his question, let me state this today: I will be making a series of announcements in terms of cancer prevention with Lance Armstrong in the lead-up to the finale of the Tour Down Under, which Lance Armstrong has every intention of winning.

### PARALYMPIC GAMES

**Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (14:22):** My question is to the Minister for Disability.

*The Hon. K.O. Foley interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Deputy Premier will come to order.

**Ms SIMMONS:** Can the minister advise the house of the achievements of South Australians at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Families and Communities, Minister for Northern Suburbs, Minister for Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability) (14:23):** I thank the member for Morialta for her question. Members of this house would know about her very long association with a range of disability organisations. This morning I had the honour of joining the Premier, the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing and the Lord Mayor at the Adelaide Town Hall to welcome home South Australia's Paralympians who competed in the Beijing Paralympics.

We were joined by the Lieutenant-Governor, Hieu Van Le, and our former governor, Marjorie Jackson-Nelson. There were also many excited school students. The students from Grange Primary School, which is in the electorate of the Minister for Industrial Relations, were very excited about welcoming home these sporting heroes. The International Paralympics Committee chief, Phil Craven, declared the Beijing games to be the greatest Paralympics ever, and certainly we in Australia should be very proud of the performance of our athletes, having finished fifth overall with a total of 79 medals.

All in all, South Australia had eight athletes who won medals in 13 different events in Beijing, with some truly outstanding performances. At the top of that list is undoubtedly our very own superfish from Salisbury Heights, Matthew Cowdrey. It is not surprising that he was chosen to be the Australian flag bearer for the closing ceremony. Not only did Matthew win a remarkable five gold and three silver medals at the Water Cube to be crowned the most successful individual athlete of the games, but all five gold medals were secured in world record time.

Hallett Cove cyclist Kieran Modra and his pilot, Tyson Lawrence, repeated their effort from the Athens games in 2004 by winning gold in the 4,000 metre pursuit and a bronze medal in the time trial. South Australia's three representatives in wheelchair rugby—George Hucks, Ryan Scott and captain Steven Porter—as part of the Australian squad, reached the gold medal playoff and proudly came home with silver medals. I can only imagine what wheelchair rugby must be like. I know how rough wheelchair basketball is.

Another cyclist, Felicity Johnson, and her pilot, Katie Parker, produced a personal best time to win a silver medal in the time trial. Ferryden Park swimmer Jay Dohnt turned in a fantastic performance to win a bronze medal in the 400 metres freestyle. Like Felicity and Katie, Jay was competing at his first Paralympics. At 66 years of age, Libby Kosmala competed in her 10<sup>th</sup> Paralympic Games in Beijing, and she has not ruled out competing in London. She showed she has lost none of her skill or competitive spirit by finishing fourth in the air rifle competition, and narrowly missing out on her 13<sup>th</sup> Paralympic medal.

The efforts and achievements of our 2008 Paralympians are quite outstanding, and I venture to say these people would challenge the most able-bodied of us. They are clearly an inspiration to all South Australians, and I am certain these efforts will spur a number of budding athletes with disabilities to aim for London in 2012. They are all great role models to all South

Australians, with the courage, determination and commitment that they portrayed throughout their training period and at the Paralympic Games.

#### INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen) (14:27):** My question—

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Go on, tell off the kids.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Come on, take the point of order, like you said you would.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heysen.

**Mrs REDMOND:** Thank you, again, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Attorney-General. Does the Attorney-General agree that, if a developer pays a significant amount of money by way of donation to an individual or organisation charged with the assessment and approval of the developer's proposal, either the recipient of the funds should not in any way be involved in or take part in the consideration of the development proposal, or the decision regarding the development and the payment of the funds should be open to scrutiny by an independent body to ensure the process was not corrupt?

Today, the member for West Torrens said on radio that he:

...sees corruption being this...there is a piece of property a developer wants to develop, the developer then pays the council illegally or gives them some benefit to approve the development—that is corruption.

Is this the agreed position of the state Labor government?

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Treasurer, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Federal/State Relations) (14:28):** The issue of political donations is one that is well canvassed publicly and, under incredibly strict requirements of the federal and state electoral acts, political donations are extremely well publicised.

That is unlike a period when I was in opposition, when my then wife and I spent two days in the corporate affairs offices in Hong Kong doing a search of microfilm to uncover a web of companies called Catch Tim. I think there were 50 companies. You had to get one microfiche and one company and go back to the line. Of course, those who can reflect back will remember the then president of the Liberal Party (now Deputy Leader of the Opposition) running from the media because she would not stop and face scrutiny over this issue when she was outed as the mastermind behind this elaborate architecture to hide donations from corporate donors to the Liberal Party.

I can certainly see why the member for Heysen has asked this question and not the architect of Catch Tim, which was designed to hide from public and any other scrutiny some serious donations leading into earlier elections.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Yes; it was quite a unique experience. Again, I have some experience and history as a member of the opposition during a time of the Liberal government, and we well know certain donations that were made to the then Liberal government and projects that subsequently followed. I do not think we actually tied one in with the other. I think we were very generous in what we did do in that area in terms of accepting that we would entrust upon the then Liberal government due accountability and due good process to ensure—

**Ms Chapman:** Rubbish!

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** Yes; we shouldn't have done it, I agree. I can talk to you about some water contracts, if you would like. We can give you some nice little bits of information about the water contracts. As it relates to the government, we have an incredibly tight code of conduct for ministers; and all ministers, if they have either a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest, absent themselves from that decision in cabinet.

**The Hon. M.D. Rann:** And donations are declared according to law, not disguised.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** And donations are declared according to law, not disguised as it was with Catch Tim. Equally—

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for MacKillop will come to order!

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** How much did John Howard raise when he was here a little over a year ago with his quiet dinners at certain people's houses? I remember John Howard hosting very private dinners at the homes of prominent South Australians at a very high price. We did not hear much about that from members opposite.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** It was made on the basis that it not be spent on the state Libs.

**The Hon. K.O. FOLEY:** That is right; yes: it was made on the basis that it not be spent on the state Liberals. Individual members have a responsibility that, if they believe there is a real or perceived conflict of interest when they are considering a matter, they would refer that matter to another minister. I have certainly done that on a number of occasions and, equally, I have acted for other ministers when they have felt either a real or a perceived conflict of interest. I would argue quite strongly that the level of ministerial accountability, transparency and responsibility far outweighs anything that we saw under the last government by a country mile, and I am quite confident that the processes we have in place ensure a very accountable and properly administered government.

I would strongly suggest to the opposition that both sides of politics in Australia and in South Australia do receive significant support from the private sector. Now, if members opposite are suggesting that should no longer occur, then let us have that debate. If members opposite do not wish to receive corporate donations, so be it; that is their decision. I am happy to have a debate about the role of donations from the business sector, if the opposition wants to have a serious debate and if they wish to say that we should not be doing it. However, I am confident as Treasurer of this state that this government has a very good code of conduct and accountability, and the appropriate ministers would absent themselves from any decision where there is a real or perceived conflict.

#### **MARJORIE JACKSON-NELSON HOSPITAL**

**Mr RAU (Enfield) (14:34):** My question is to the Minister for Health. What would the implications be of patching up the RAH compared with building a new hospital?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:34):** It is an excellent question and it is always a delight to answer the honourable member's questions and to give the house further information about the outstanding proposition on which we are working, which is the building of a new hospital, the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital. Rebuilding the RAH would cost more, would disrupt staff and patients for 15 years and, in the final analysis, provide a poorer quality hospital.

If we had begun rebuilding the Royal Adelaide Hospital at the beginning of 2007 it would cost \$1.4 billion. However, if the government were to change and in 2010 the opposition (if it were then to be the government) started the rebuilding, it would not start until 2010. The Department of Health advises me that those three years of delay on an already very long patch-up job would add approximately \$370 million in escalation costs during the construction stage. This would take the cost of the Liberals' policy to \$1.75 billion. In addition, it would not be finished until 2024-25.

Of course, other important factors need to be taken into account. The Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital will be one of the most efficient in the world. Also, it will be bigger—it will be 800 beds compared with 680 beds. It will save this state at least \$50 million a year in operating costs and generate at least \$400 million in operating savings over the eight or nine years.

Secondly, rebuilding the Royal Adelaide Hospital would seriously impact on its capacity to undertake its day-to-day work. If the Liberals were still rebuilding the hospital in 2024-25 they would need an additional capacity of about 150 beds somewhere else. That could cost at least \$100 million. Lastly, by the time of the next election the government would have spent about \$25 million on the project. So, if the project did not proceed, \$25 million would be lost. These combined factors take the Liberals' policy to at least \$2.2 billion in round figures. That is at least \$500 million more than building a new hospital. These costings are independent of remediation of the site which we have to do in order to build a new hospital but which the Liberals would have to do in order to build a stadium on the site.

In addition, today I released new figures showing the estimated additional cost of rebuilding the RAH in the forward estimates, at the time of the next election and over the six years from 2010. I table a document which demonstrates that matter. Between 2010 and 2016, when the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson Hospital will open, the Liberals would have spent an additional \$202.5 million. The



proposed PPP payment arrangements will commence only once this project is complete. Under our plan, in 2016, an 800-bed hospital will open.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Members opposite are outrageous in their behaviour. Under our plan, by 2016, our 800-bed hospital will be the most advanced in Australia and provide brand new facilities for our doctors, nurses and patients. Under the Liberals' plan, by 2016 they would have spent an extra \$202.5 million and the first new beds would still be three years away from opening; and the RAH would remain a construction site for another eight years or so. The Liberals need to explain where the \$202 million will come from. Will they stop rebuilding the Lyell McEwin Hospital or pull \$200 million from education, for example?

Anyone who has renovated a house while living in it will know about the disturbance created by construction work. The Liberals' plan would effectively condemn patients and staff at the RAH to working and being treated in a construction site for 15 years.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Mr Speaker, I hope we have that on film; it would be worthwhile having.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left will come to order.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** We will get some Meaty Bites for you.

**The SPEAKER:** The Attorney-General will come to order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Obviously, members opposite do not like the facts. They always have trouble with the truth. D.G. Fenwick, a retired anaesthetist from the RAH, wrote an excellent letter to *The Advertiser* today. The letter states:

...over the years I had to cancel operations on critically ill patients during times of renovation. This was because of the overwhelming noise made at the time, which filled the operating theatre, precluding the safe monitoring of ill patients during a difficult time...The worst offenders were jackhammers, resulting in noise from many floors away. Renovating the RAH over 15 years...would disrupt work, compromise patient safety and make health-care providers' jobs more difficult.

That is the Liberal Party promise. The choice for South Australians at the next election is between a brand new, purpose built, state-of-the-art hospital open in 2016 at a cheaper rate or the compromised position put by the opposition which would disrupt patients and staff, which would not be finished until 2025 and which would cost more money.

### HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:40):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Why did he claim that, as a result of the government-funded advertising campaign, there had been a 7.1 per cent reduction in presentations at emergency departments when today emergency department doctors have refuted the minister's claims and confirmed the lack of government resourcing for emergency departments? Today, on ABC Radio, Mr Tony Eliseo from the Royal Adelaide Hospital said:

Certainly, the figures that we have show that access blocks have never been worse. Certainly, this week at one of the major hospitals, there were 81 patients in the emergency department which only has 41 beds, and 41 of those 81 patients were admitted and waiting for an inpatient bed.

He went on to say:

Even though the government has come out and said that this media campaign which was put on television earlier this—well, in the last few months which I—which have repeatedly shown, these media campaigns have been shown not to have any impact at all on access blocks. That's what has frustrated us, that we hear that there has been a reduction in presentations and I've looked at the September figures for the—well, for one of the major hospitals in this state for September last year versus September this year, and there has been only a one per cent change in the number of people waiting to be seen.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (14:42):** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked why I said yesterday that the advertising campaign had reduced the number of attendances at emergency hospitals by 7 per cent. I did not actually say that. What I said was that a range of factors contributed to there being a 7 per cent reduction over the winter months in emergency departments. Those factors included our advertising campaign, and I will get into the detail of that. That is what I said yesterday, and we always have to work from the basis of truth, Deputy Leader of the Opposition—always from the basis of truth.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Read the *Hansard*. I said yesterday that there had been a decline in the presentations to emergency departments in city hospitals over the winter months, that is, June, July and August, but not September.

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** You asked the question, and I am answering it for you. It will take time, however, as you have to go through the building blocks to get to the point you want to be at. We talked about winter, which is June, July and August, and not September, which you and he quoted. I said that, over those three months, there had been a reduction of 7 per cent in presentations to emergency departments.

The causes were: first, there was less flu around this year compared with last year (which I said yesterday); secondly, more elderly people have been vaccinated, more people over the age of 65 have been vaccinated; and, thirdly, we had put in place a \$35 million Hospital at Home package to help people who had chronic disease and those who were subject to falls and were 'frequent flyers', as the health system refers to them, that is, people who are in and out of emergency departments all the time. We are dealing with more of those patients in their homes, so fewer of them go to hospitals. Fourthly, we had an advertising campaign, which operated over the month of August.

In relation to the advertising campaign, I said that the figures showed that there was a 16.5 per cent reduction (95 patients a day) in the lower urgency categories—that is, categories 4 and 5—attending hospitals during the month of August.

*Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The Leader of the Opposition says that the doctors did not agree. He was talking about the month of September. I was talking about the month—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** Let me talk about September.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** The deputy leader's question was based on the assumption that somehow or other I was misleading the parliament and misleading the house. I made the point that I was talking about the winter months of June, July and August. Our advertising campaign had a profound effect on the presentations of lower urgency cases in the month of August. We stopped the campaign at the end of August and, as a result, I assume that the presentations have gone back to normal levels.

If there has been a decline in presentations in September this year compared to September last year, that is a good thing, too. I would wish that it were more than 1 per cent but, if it is 1 per cent, that is an improvement on previous years. We know that, year on year, presentations at emergency departments across our hospitals have continued to go up, so we are doing everything we possibly can to get those presentations down. What the doctor was talking about today was not about presentations: he was talking about admissions. Our advertising campaign was not focused on admissions: it was focused on presentations. However, I am happy to inform the house what we are doing in relation to creating greater access to hospital beds.

Primarily, the main thing that we have done, and will continue to do, is to open more beds. Since we have been in government, over the last six years we have opened approximately 250

beds in the metropolitan area, and our building program—including Flinders Medical Centre, Lyell McEwin and the Marjorie Jackson-Nelson—will create an extra 250 beds. We have also undertaken, as part of the enterprise bargaining arrangements with the doctor's union, to put on an extra 20 emergency doctors across our emergency departments.

In addition to that, we have made commitments to them to set targets for the throughput of patients going from the emergency department to being admitted. For example, the initial target is for 50 per cent of people being admitted within two hours of admission and 70 per cent being admitted within four hours of admission, building up over the next 12 months so that 99 per cent of people are admitted within eight hours of the admission request. We are working on that immediately so that, within 12 months, we have 90 per cent of people admitted within four hours. So, they are stretch targets. They are difficult targets for us to reach, but it relies on our reforming the way we manage emergency departments.

For example, the Flinders Medical Centre—with a \$153 million rebuild—is having a rebuilt emergency section which will increase capacity from 55,000 to 70,000 emergency department patients each year. We will reorganise that so that the model of treatment used will be similar to the model that is now used in London hospitals. As I have told the house before, we sent some clinicians over there to have a look at how that should happen. So, we have a range of processes in place to fix the bed blocking.

One of the things that we most need in relation to bed blocking is to find appropriate accommodation for people who do not need to be in hospital. That means greater investment in aged care facilities and greater investment in disability beds. These are areas where we are looking to the commonwealth government for greater resources. We believe that the commonwealth will come to the party on this because, before the last election, the Rudd government—the then opposition—promised to invest more heavily in clearing beds and creating places in the community for people who are otherwise kept in hospital. It is a terrible thing for a person to be in hospital when they do not need to be there. Apart from blocking the bed, it is not in their best interests. So, we are working through all those arrangements.

In relation to the winter strategy, it did work: there were fewer presentations to the hospital. However, it was never intended to fix the bed blockage issue; that is another problem, and we are dealing with that in other ways. We are dealing with it, and we are making progress.

I would say to the citizens of the state that we are very lucky in South Australia to have an excellent health system. In Australia, we have survival rates amongst the very best in the world, from a whole range of conditions. People in our state live longer than most other people in the world. The life expectancy in South Australia is second only to the Japanese, and that is because of a whole range of factors, including an excellent health system.

### SA WATER BUILDING

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (14:49):** My question is to the Minister for Water Security. What is the final cost of the fit-out of the SA Water building, and would that money not have been better spent providing funding to Riverland irrigators? On 5 October 2006, the parliament's Public Works Committee heard that important infrastructure works had been postponed so that SA Water could fit out its new headquarters at a cost of \$46 million.

**The SPEAKER:** The member's explanation was the answer to the question. I am not sure what the minister has to add; \$46 million, I thought you said. The Minister for Water Security has the call.

**The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (14:50):** A new building is under construction at the former tram barn site, 250 Victoria Square, for lease to SA Water for office and laboratory accommodation. This will be a state-of-the-art building; it will have fabulous facilities. It will house SA Water. It has an objective to bring together a number of SA Water sites into one collective site. It will have a fabulous education centre there.

It is currently being built by the Catholic Church and it is a tremendous project. I recently went on a tour of the project. I understand that the fit-out cost is in that vicinity, but I will get the actual figure for the member for MacKillop. As to the question as to whether it would be better invested in the Riverland, the Riverland itself has in recent times been the recipient of many announcements in relation to funding packages.

Back in July, the Murray Futures package was announced by the federal government. It was a package that South Australia put forward for funding, of which \$110 million will be invested in the future of the River Murray and the Riverland. There is also funding that goes with that of \$80 million for the purchase of water from willing sellers.

There are also now changes to the exit package strategy of the federal government. We called on the former federal government and we have been calling on this federal government to change the criteria of the exit package to enable people to stay on their land and to get access to the exit package so that they can move from a farming business and transition into another career or transition into retirement. That provides \$150,000 per household, plus the sale of their water. The water will be sold to the commonwealth government for environmental purposes. This is a very important project and at this stage the commonwealth has committed \$57 million to it.

So far, we have \$110 million plus \$80 million plus \$57 million and then, on Tuesday this week the Premier announced a new initiative to underwrite permanent plantings in the Riverland at a cost of up to \$67 million. Now we are up to a total of over \$314 million to be invested in the Riverland to support that community through what is an extremely difficult time.

What would be useful in this chamber is if the opposition could support this community instead of trying to drag them down. That community needs bipartisan support. It needs to have the support of the leaders of our community, and it certainly is not helpful when the opposition tries to drive a wedge in the community that does nothing but undermine the future prosperity of the region. Opposition members should be ashamed of themselves.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hammond.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** New shirt day!

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for West Torrens!

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** Soak it in water!

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the Attorney-General!

#### **MURRAY RIVER, LOWER LAKES**

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:53):** My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Can the minister guarantee that all residents currently dependent on the Lower Lakes for stock and domestic water supply will receive supply from the proposed federally-funded pipelines?

**The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (14:53):** This is another fantastic initiative of the state government. We have applied through our Murray Futures program to the federal government for funding for an integrated pipeline system around the Lower Lakes, which includes the provision of stock and domestic water to the Narrung Peninsula, the Paltaloch Peninsula and also the Raukkan community. It also provides stock and domestic water to the Langhorne Creek community and an irrigation pipeline to both Currency and Langhorne creeks. The details of the route of the pipeline are being worked out with the communities in those areas, and we will endeavour to make sure that the maximum number of people possible can be connected into the pipeline.

#### **MURRAY RIVER IRRIGATORS**

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (14:54):** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier explain how his historic agreement on the River Murray has been of benefit to South Australia when his Minister for Water Security has stated that she expects 1,000 of the 3,500 Murray irrigators—almost 30 per cent—to exit production whilst Victoria maintains a cap of 4 per cent on exits of water from any of its irrigation districts?

**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) (14:54):** Perhaps we can go back to a time when the current federal Leader of the Opposition, Malcolm Turnbull, was the minister for environment and water resources in the Howard government. After calling some years before for a special meeting on the River Murray and having had that denied by your former leader, John Howard, eventually, a one in 1,000-year drought and a one in 1,000-year record low inflow forced a meeting—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Yes. It is interesting. I was at the meeting, and so was John Howard, when a senior official from the Murray-Darling Commission said that the river system had been engineered (this is from memory) for a one in 100-year event, and this was a one in 1,000-year event. Then there was a special meeting—you may remember the one that was held on Melbourne Cup Day. Basically, John Howard discovered the River Murray because he was staring oblivion in the face.

The state Liberal Party called on me to endorse a restructuring of the Murray-Darling Commission arrangements that would involve handing it over from one group of politicians to another. I came out publicly, and was attacked by you for doing so, to urge for an independent commission to run the River Murray, based on science and on the needs of the river rather than on politics—and I was attacked around the country. I remember seeing cartoons of me up the river without a paddle, and all the rest of it.

I remember the day when the Minister for Water Security brought your new federal leader into my office and he gave me a little lecture and said that no-one was supporting my idea and he became somewhat arrogant—I think that is probably the best word to describe it. I pointed out that he had a ticking clock on his own ambitions.

Eventually, Peter Beattie came out and supported an independent commission and it was great that the *Sunday Mail* gave it tremendous editorial support. I remember that day because we saw a change nationally. Eventually, at a meeting, again, with the then prime minister, even though you had asked me to sign up to arrangements that would have been absolutely detrimental to South Australia's long-term interests, we held out for an independent commission, and we got a commitment by John Howard.

In recent times, you have asked what the benefits have been. The benefits have been that, even though the drought continues, there are now new arrangements for setting a basin-wide cap, a basin-wide plan covering a whole range of issues, by an independent commission. We have also seen the commitment of billions of dollars for infrastructure, for piping.

Basically, some people's IQs are so low that they ask, 'But why is this money being spent in New South Wales?' It is called gravity—that is where the water is. We want them to spend money in New South Wales so that, instead of open culverts, we see a better and more efficient form of water reticulation. Of course, we also want to see the \$610 million that we have negotiated with the federal government being spent on re-engineering of the Lower Lakes; money for the Riverland; and also a water grid for the Lower Lakes so that communities down there no longer have to rely on the saline lakes for their water supply.

One has to think about these issues—and an accelerated buyback, which we lobbied for. We also lobbied for a complete audit of all the water in the River Murray, because a magic pudding had been invented whereby some people (including some in politics) would go up to the Riverland and tell the Riverland irrigators, who are in a desperate situation, that there was a huge amount of water somewhere that was available for them, and then go down to the Lower Lakes and say, 'No, there is a huge amount of water for you.'

Of course, what would have happened is that that big poultrice of water would have gone past the Riverland where the people would have waved it goodbye—most of it would have evaporated—past the intakes into Adelaide, and then down to the Lower Lakes to evaporate, the small percentage that would get that far. This is the politics of dishonesty by those who are not on this side of the house.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** Don't forget his policy: kidnap Brumby and put him in a headlock.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Yes; that is right. So, when we talk about public policy, what was the advice given to me—

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** You asked the question and you will get the answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will resume his seat. The member for MacKillop.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I rise on a point of order as to relevance. As the Premier said, I will get the answer, and the question was: why are 30 per cent of South Australian irrigators expected to exit, whereas Victoria maintains a 4 per cent cap on the selling of water?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. The Premier is answering the substance of the question.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** In terms of public policy, in terms of the maturity of someone who wants to lead a state, he said to go and put Brumby in a headlock; bang on his desk; lock him in a room.

**Mr Koutsantonis:** Red-faced.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN:** Red-faced, barking like a dog, all this sort of stuff; we saw it all. Of course, he was going to demonstrate to us how he would deal with people interstate, so he flew off to a Liberal leaders' meeting in Sydney and they told him to nick off. Barry O'Farrell, the leader of the Liberal Party, laughed at him. I guess it is because being in government means you actually have to work for a living. You have to work for a living, and you have to basically do the hard yards and the hard negotiations. He could not even convince those in his own party who were out of power to agree with him. I do not know what happened to his headlock. I do not know what happened to locking him in a room: they kicked him out of the room and laughed at him publicly.

So, we have the \$610 million, we have the handover of constitutional powers that were acclaimed by the *Sunday Mail*, and we also have the accelerated buyback of water licences. We have the complete audit of water in the River Murray and we have a change in the exceptional circumstances criteria to give support to those irrigators who are not sustainable and who are asking for assistance from us. We have a change in the arrangements. We have also announced that we will step in to guarantee a water bank for those who are sustainable. That is the difference between people who work for a living and those who cannot remember what they said the day before and basically mouth off about anything.

#### MURRAY RIVER IRRIGATORS

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (15:02):** My question is to the Minister for Water Security. Is it not fact that the government's package, announced on Tuesday, to assist Riverland irrigators who want to stay irrigating, was developed in haste following the negative reaction from irrigators to the commonwealth exit package?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The Premier was quoted in the *Sunday Mail* as saying that the commonwealth government's exit package was 'the last piece in the jigsaw' to help the Riverland, and his water minister was quoted as describing the scheme as 'fantastic news'. Yet by Tuesday another piece of the jigsaw was apparently discovered, even though irrigators are still unable to obtain details of the package from the contact number provided by the government, and the opposition has been told that the minister does not expect to have such details available for two more weeks.

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Mount Gambier—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development) (15:04):** How those opposite hate the fact that we have a vision.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** How they hate the fact of a basin imbalance. They hate it. They have hated it for 100 years. Why do they hate the fact that we have now put in place, collectively with the federal government, something that we could not do 12 months ago? The shadow minister knew quite well what I was working on with the federal minister. I made the correspondence available to him—a fundamental plank. The shadow minister knew very well that without an exit package it made no sense to put the other bits together. He supported it then, and he supported it in this house last week.

Why does he not come in here and say, 'They let us down 12 months ago but, now, at last, we have in place for the first time the things that matter'? That is, a long-term vision, Murray Futures, and two short-term opportunities—one for those who want to stay, and one for those who would like to go. Why does he come in here now denying the fact that he supported it 12 months ago? He congratulates us because he wants to play games now. He wants to dine out on this disaster. Shame on him, and shame on those—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** The only vision I see over there is a barking chihuahua. Mr Speaker, first you need a vision, and then you need the road map. We all appreciate the road map meant appropriately supporting with public money the perennial plantings, and appropriately supporting with government money those who wished to exit. It is totally consistent, I might add, with EC strategy, which has been a policy of federal and state governments now for a number of years. The exit package here is no different in principle but denied—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** The then shadow minister, who has now moved on—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** The then shadow minister a year ago knew and, in fairness to him—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the Minister for Transport and the member for MacKillop!

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** The then shadow minister a year ago, in fairness to him, did support and accepted—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN:** No, the federal minister said it could not be done. The then federal Liberal minister said it should have been done, but at least at that stage they were prepared to say there was a missing plank. The missing plank was not over there: the missing plank was a policy plank that said there is no point having a long-term vision and a strategy for perennial plantings if you do not have an exit strategy consistent with what was available everywhere else. What made it different here is we had to accept that if you sold your water you exited the horticultural business—without water, you are not in irrigation—whereas in broadacre farming you had to exit the land. The shadow minister recognised that at the time and was prepared to support it. We could not get the support of McGauran. We now have the support of the present federal government. So we can move on. You ought to move on with us.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Hammond has the call.

#### **DROUGHT ASSISTANCE**

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:08):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for the River Murray. In light of the recent support program introduced to assist irrigation communities along the river, what action does the government propose to assist other river-reliant businesses and communities who are similarly affected by the current water crisis?

River communities from Goolwa at the Murray Mouth to Renmark at the border are suffering greatly from the effects of low flows, because much of their local economy is dependent on the continuation and viability of the irrigators and businesses they support. Many of these businesses are directly or indirectly reliant on the river for their own survival and viability.

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Mount Gambier—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development) (15:09):** I thank the member for Hammond, and new shadow minister, for the question. I point out to him, of course, that EC (exceptional circumstances) is federal policy, not state policy. I point out that in these desperate circumstances that policy has worked well, with the exception of the plank that is now in place in relation to exit packages for horticulturalists.

Over 400 families in that corridor are receiving Centrelink benefits, and so they should. Over 300 businesses in that corridor are receiving interest rate subsidy support, and so they should: 50 per cent in the first year and 80 per cent in the second year. Drought policy is working. Drought policy does support both off-farm businesses that rely on primary production and the businesses themselves.

In relation to the plank that was missing, the Premier—who I might add, first came with me to discuss the matter with Tony Burke, and then personally had a number of discussions with the Prime Minister—was able to put in place the one plank that was missing. I fully support exceptional circumstances assistance. It is being reviewed. All state ministers, along with the federal minister, have given a commitment for the duration of the present drought that all support measures will stay in place; they are available. But now, on top that, this state has been able to add two more support measures, and that community is delighted, even if those opposite are not.

### COUNTRY HOSPITALS

**The Hon. G.M. GUNN (Stuart) (15:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Following the receipt of the Strategic Food Services Review, will the minister guarantee that no country hospital kitchen will be closed? In 2006, the government contracted the Food and Beverage Institute Pty Ltd to conduct a review of food services in public hospitals. Documents obtained under freedom of information state that the project has been initiated at the direction of the minister. Further, the government has asked that the review include the age of kitchens in hospitals. It has been revealed that the majority of kitchens are more than 15 years old.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (15:11):** Shame on me for trying to improve the provision of hospital food services to the patients in our hospitals. The review, as I understand it, was looking predominantly at metropolitan hospitals. It would be very difficult to change the arrangements that exist in most country hospitals. I know that we have invested quite dramatically in a number of hospitals. As a result of some work that was done, from memory, one of the hospitals in the South-East—it may have been Millicent, I just cannot recall—had to have its kitchen upgraded, and we have done that. A couple of years ago, I was very pleased to open the upgrade to the Wudinna Hospital kitchen. Whenever I visit country hospitals, I always look in at the kitchen to see what they are like. Most of them are in pretty good condition; some need work on them. I think, from memory, a couple needed some work.

**Mr Venning:** You haven't been to Angaston.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I have so; I have definitely been to Angaston on at least two occasions. I think the member objected on one occasion that I did not invite him. I have been to Angaston on a couple of occasions. In fact, my wife was born in the Angaston Hospital, and I took great pleasure in standing in the room in which she was born. That room is now a waiting room.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I didn't hear that, but I am sure it was witty. In relation to hospitals, I recognise that country hospitals do a great job. They not only service their local hospital communities but generally, if there is a nursing home, they service the nursing home and also Meals on Wheels. I have no intention of interfering with any of those arrangements. However, a couple needed to be upgraded and, as I understand it, either the budget has been committed or the work has already been done. There is no intention to interfere with the country hospitals.

### DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:13):** My question is for the Minister for Water Security. Will other irrigators who also have high security water licences receive any assistance from the government similar to assistance for growers with perennial plantings? Vegetable growers, dairy farmers and other irrigators whose production and income have been decimated by the current crisis on the river in a similar way to those with perennial plantings are also facing financial and social disaster which will impact on the state's economy, as well as local communities.

**The Hon. R.J. McEWEN (Mount Gambier—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Regional Development) (15:14):** Although the honourable member seems to be directing his questions to the water security minister, he is asking questions about drought. The longstanding drought package deals with most of what the honourable member is talking about. We do not support some subsidies to individual businesses. We have had that debate in relation to fodder subsidies, and so on.



One thing we do support is a public good. Quite clearly, in relation to the perennial plantings, there is both a public good and a private good in terms of keeping open the factory doors. We are not supporting the production of a crop or a cash flow but, rather, along with the owners of those perennial plantings, at least an underwriting of risk up-front. That is what the strategy is about.

In the best case scenario we may not have to draw on our commitment. In partnership, we have had said that we will guarantee to each owner of perennial plantings an amount of water to keep the perennial plantings alive. The honourable member should not mix that up with support to individual businesses—which is available elsewhere in the strategy.

The question seems to be implying that we should be supporting perennial plantings, extending other EC measures. There is a longstanding strategy which has been supported in a bipartisan way in this house; and I appreciated support from the member for Frome in relation to other subsidies, including freight subsidies. I will get a briefing for the shadow minister on the total drought package, those parts for which the state is responsible and those for which the federal government is responsible.

On this occasion it is important to understand the perennial plantings plank of the strategy which is now in place. It is a long-term vision, with \$610 million for the corridor, a transition package for those who choose not to be in horticulture and, obviously, a maintenance strategy in terms of perennial plantings, in partnership with the owners of those perennial plantings. It is totally consistent with the long-term drought strategy. It is an important up-front investment by the taxpayers of South Australia who are saying to owners of the perennial plantings along the river, 'We are in this with you because, like you, we believe that over \$1.3 billion worth of perennial plantings needs to be protected.' Our long-term vision relies on their producing a cash flow—obviously, from a crop.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH WEEK**

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (15:17):** Will the Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse advise what the government is doing to raise awareness of mental health issues in the community?

**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) (15:17):** I acknowledge that the honourable member must realise that next week is Mental Health Week. This is a great opportunity for the government to promote decreased stigmatisation of those with mental illnesses, as well as supporting those invaluable staff who work within our system to produce a culture of excellence and high integrity.

About one in five Australians experience mental illness in their life. Those experiences fall into various categories. About one in 10 experience a range of anxiety disorders, with 5 per cent of Australians experiencing anxiety at such a level that it affects their capacity to operate in normal day-to-day life. About 1 per cent of Australians experience schizophrenia at some time during their life, with a range of other psychotic illnesses affecting 3 per cent of Australians; and that could include bipolar diseases, as well as drug psychoses.

Mental illness is the third highest disease burden in our community, following cancer and cardiovascular disease. As such, it is the fourth most common reason for a visit to the GP. With this level of impact in the community, the importance of being able to focus on mental illness and reduce the stigmatisation of those involved is an important role of government. One of our key events for next week will be the annual Dr Margaret Tobin Awards. These awards were established in 2004 in recognition of the work of the late Dr Tobin and the impact she had on mental health treatment in South Australia. These awards serve two purposes: recognition of excellence and motivation.

In addition to recognising Dr Tobin's contribution, the awards aim to give public recognition to and celebrate the achievements of people who work in mental health services in South Australia. Through showcasing these achievements we hope to motivate those who follow in her footsteps in improving services and treating people with these illnesses. As well as the awards, there is a whole range of events, including performances, films, exhibitions, forums and discussions taking place in a range of communities around the state. In South Australia, Mental Health Week is coordinated very ably by the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia, the peak body of community health non-government sector activities, and details of all events can be found on its website.

It is an exciting time at the moment. The South Australian government is reforming, rebuilding, redesigning and reinvesting in our mental health services. We have committed \$107.9 million to mental health services and added to this will be more than \$130 million in capital investment on a new 129-bed mental health and substance abuse hospital on the Glenside campus, bringing the total budget for mental health to around \$250 million. This reform program will provide a new framework for a modern mental health system and allow public services and facilities to be brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY

**The SPEAKER (15:20):** I inform the house that His Excellency the Governor will be pleased to receive the Speaker and honourable members for the purpose of presenting the Address in Reply at 3.30pm today. I ask the mover and seconder of the address and such other members as care to accompany me to proceed to Government House for the purpose of presenting the address.

*[Sitting suspended from 15:21 to 16:08]*

**The SPEAKER (16:08):** I inform the house that, accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address In Reply to the Governor's opening speech and by other members, I proceeded to Government House and there presented His Excellency the address adopted by the house on 24 September, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:

To the honourable Speaker and members of the House of Assembly: I thank you for the Address in Reply to the speech with which I opened the third session of the Fifty-First Parliament. I am confident that you will give your best consideration to all matters placed before you. I pray that your deliberations will add meaning and value to the lives of our South Australian community.

#### GRIEVANCE DEBATE

##### MURRAY RIVER IRRIGATORS

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (16:08):** What a week it has been! We learned no more in question time today than we generally learn during question time from a government that continues to refuse to answer very sensible questions, the sort of questions that the public of South Australia want asked in this place. I asked a number of questions today, as did my colleague the member for Hammond and some of my other colleagues, but we still get no answers.

In attempting to answer one of my questions about the government's ad hoc approach to irrigation in the Riverland and its hasty change of policy direction, the Minister for Agriculture tried to make out to the house that this was a well organised and thought through plan. The reality is that the Premier gave it all away on Sunday when he was quoted in the *Sunday Mail* as saying that the commonwealth government exit package was the last piece of the jigsaw.

On Sunday, the last thing that was going to happen for irrigators in South Australia was that they were going to be paid money by the commonwealth government to sell their water to it, tear their crops out of the ground and walk away. That was the last piece of the jigsaw, and the Minister for Water Security said that that was fantastic news. That will go down really well in the Riverland: that the Minister for Water Security said that it was fantastic news that people in the Riverland would be encouraged to take \$150,000 and tear their crops out of the ground—because that is what this government was planning.

The reaction was swift from those people in the Riverland, and the government had to act hastily. I can just imagine what happened around the cabinet table on Monday morning. I can just imagine the panic when the government realised what the polls in *The Advertiser* were doing last Saturday and when it realised the stupidity of what was going to happen to the irrigators. So, it hastily put together a plan. The government put out a press release on Tuesday which said, 'If you want some details, ring this number.' That is what it said to irrigators in the Riverland. Irrigators in the Riverland have been ringing that number ever since, and you know what they are being told? 'We have no idea of the criteria.' This was a policy position that was cooked up on Monday morning and dropped out on Tuesday, and the department responsible for administering it has no idea.

At a breakfast this morning we were told by somebody that they met with the minister last night and that the minister said that she will have no idea for a fortnight. So, irrigators are sitting there in this limbo. What we do know—because the Premier said it to the house on Tuesday—is that one of the criteria is that if you qualify for the exit package—and I can tell the house one thing:

it is not difficult to qualify for the exit package—you will not qualify for the state government's package to try to keep you there. So, we will see 30 per cent of our irrigators out of business whilst rice and cotton growers in New South Wales will be insulated. We see that the Victorian government still has its 4 per cent cap on the sale of water out of any irrigation district.

The incredible news that came out today was the appointment of Robyn McLeod as Commissioner for Water Security. She is one of the architects who has led the demise of the South Australian irrigation sector. Ms McLeod has been developing things like the north-south pipeline, which will take 75 gigalitres out of the Goulburn Valley, out of the Murray-Darling Basin, and pump it over the Great Dividing Range into Melbourne. She is an architect of the Food Bowl Project, which the commonwealth government is putting a billion dollars into, but every commentator (including the Auditor-General of Victoria) is expressing doubts about the supposed water gain.

The architect of those plans has now been made the Commissioner for Water Security in South Australia—a failed ALP candidate out of Melbourne. The minister told us today that one of her claims to fame was that she was selected to go to Kevin Rudd's 2020 vision summit, but we know that she is the best mate of Julia Gillard.

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

**Mr WILLIAMS:** That is most unfortunate, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Morialta.

### PALLIATIVE CARE

**Ms SIMMONS (Morialta) (16:13):** Earlier this month, I was privileged to open the second National Palliative Care Nurses Australia Conference entitled 'Leading and Learning'. I start by congratulating the organising committee led by Janet Taylor, who is the project manager of the Program of Experience in the Palliative Approach in South Australia based in SA Health; also Karen Puvogel, Clinical Service Coordinator at the Modbury Palliative Care Unit; and Karen Glaetzer, Nurse Practitioner—Palliative Care, Southern Adelaide Palliative Services and also chairperson of Palliative Care Nurses Australia.

Rachael Sporn, who is a great advocate for health in this state, was also a guest speaker at the conference, as was Dr Mary Vachon, who travelled from the University of Toronto in Canada to speak to the group. She was just one of the most amazing speakers. In my previous career, before coming to this place, both as CEO of the Cystic Fibrosis Association and also as policy manager on the Council on the Ageing, I worked very closely with all levels of government to achieve a better quality of life for South Australians in the palliative care stage. I know how important it is to deal with the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the dying.

I think this house would agree that the role of a nurse places them in a privileged relationship with people they care for and what can be some of the most challenging times, particularly at the end of life. It is important that we recognise and celebrate the essential role that palliative care nurses, in particular, play in our health system.

I would also like to mention a very dear friend of mine who is currently in palliative care in the east wing of the Royal Adelaide Hospital. This person is an amazing lady who, for many years, was my PA, both at COTA and after coming into this place—Cathy Wilson—and I pay tribute to the nurses who are caring for this very special person at this time.

Here, in South Australia, the Department of Health's Nursing and Midwifery Office has a strong commitment to support nursing and midwifery clinical leaders in developing their knowledge, skill and leadership in the area of evidence-based practice and translating the evidence into practice. To this end, the Nursing and Midwifery Office is partnered with the National Institute of Clinical Studies, and co-sponsor of the 2008 SA Health Nursing and Midwifery Fellowship. This NICS fellowship is part of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

This year this prestigious national fellowship was awarded to Ms Wendy Jansen, who was present at the conference—and I pay tribute to her. She is a palliative care clinical practice consultant at the Lyell McEwin Hospital in Adelaide's northern suburbs. Ms Jansen will undertake a two-year implementation project to introduce best practice in palliative care in specialist areas which lie outside the hospital's palliative care unit. This is just one example of a palliative care nurse who, like many, has developed significant skills and expertise in contributing to the evolving specialty of palliative care.

As I am sure many members in this house are aware, palliative care nurses are embracing new clinical nursing leadership roles, such as clinical nurse, associate clinical service coordinator, clinical practice consultant, advanced clinical practice consultant and nurse practitioner status. All of this has been achieved through the willingness and determination of nurses to undertake new skills and approaches to advance their practice. It is important that we (the general public) do not underestimate the essential role that palliative care nurses play in the assessment and decision-making aspects of their practice.

In recent years palliative care nurses have been stepping forward as leaders at all sorts of levels: in the clinical arena as nurse practitioners; in the area of research which I have mentioned already; and in key service planning, project management and executive director roles. Nurses have also made a substantial contribution to the development of the new South Australian Palliative Care Services Plan which will guide the delivery of palliative care from 2008 through to 2016. The plan, which is soon to be released, looks to optimise contributions from all members of an interdisciplinary team; not just nursing expertise but allied health, pharmacy and psychosocial. End of life care will become a bigger part of the total work in the health system as the baby boomers age. I commend them all.

Time expired.

#### **EASLING, MR T.**

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (16:18):** I wish to continue my remarks about Tom Easling. On Tuesday, I raised the question of whether it was acceptable to the minister and the government for interviews to be conducted without notes being taken. Yesterday, in question time, I asked the minister if it was acceptable to the government to have government investigators conducting interviews where the tape-recorder was only turned on for part of the interview. The minister, in her answer, went nowhere near the question and so the parliament and the public are not informed as to what the government view is in relation to that question.

The reason I raise the question is that, in the Easling matter, the court transcript is very clear: not one witness but a number of the government's own witnesses make the claim that the investigators conducted interviews with the claimants off-tape—that is, without the tape-recorder being on. While the tape recorder was not on they talked about matters that were central to the Tom Easling case.

They raised, off tape, that they were investigating alleged sexual abuse. They raised, off tape, Tom Easling's name. They raised, off tape, the issue of massages. They raised, off tape, the issue of alcohol. They raised, off tape, the issue of cigarettes. In some interviews they raised, off tape, the issue of Kangaroo Island. These matters are all central to the prosecution of Mr Easling, of which, of course, he was totally acquitted.

I raise for the parliament and the minister's consideration this question—and she can come in at any time and make a ministerial statement and clarify this for the parliament—why did the government investigators adopt that style of investigation? Why is it acceptable to the government to have that style of investigation? These were 30-year plus experienced ex-police officers, supposedly highly trained. Why have they made a deliberate decision to conduct interviews with the alleged victims—I call them claimants—who are going to be witnesses in the case? Why have they chosen to conduct those interviews, in part, off tape?

Some of these interviews off tape went for an hour and a half: an hour and a half discussion between the investigators and alleged victims off tape, where they are talking about Easling, massage, alcohol and sexual abuse. That has to raise some serious questions about the integrity of the investigation.

A classic question in the trial was this one: how long does it take to turn on a tape recorder? As an investigator, why would you not go in and tape record the whole interview? Why would you not do that? It makes no sense. I think this whole investigation—and my views about the investigation are well known—deserves an inquiry. I do not think the parliament, or the government, should accept an 'ends justifies the means' approach to the investigation. If you are going to be charged with these offences, the investigation needs to be proper.

The defence, in opening the case at trial, right up front, put forward that they would prove considerable doubt about the investigation and the likelihood of contamination by the investigators due to the investigation process. They put that right up front, and that is exactly what they proved in

the case: enough doubt. They showed enough doubt about the investigation process that it contaminated the case.

Regardless of what people think of Easling's innocence or guilt, the courts acquitted him. The investigation was shocking and it needs an inquiry. I invite the minister to come in and answer yesterday's question.

Time expired.

### TOUR DOWN UNDER

**Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (16:24):** What an exciting day it is for cycling fans here in South Australia and, indeed, around the world. I have been a long-time fan of cycling, since my time living in Switzerland from 1994 to 1996, working as a journalist. I was almost an embedded journalist with the Australian cycling team back then, and a couple of young teenagers by the name of Stuart O'Grady and Brett Aitken were part of that Australian cycling team. I joined them in camps in Bergamo in Northern Italy and then travelled throughout Europe, North America and, indeed, South America. We went to the world titles in Bogota, Columbia, in 1995.

The sport was barely understood by most Australians and South Australians back in 1994 and 1995. People seemed to understand the track cycling because of the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics, but road cycling was another world. We had never done particularly well in it. Of course, we had Sir Hubert Opperman, a great pioneer in Australian cycling and a brilliant cyclist who did well on the international stage. Then in the 1980s we had Phil Anderson, who became the first Australian to wear the yellow jersey. I was fortunate to be there as this new era of Australian cycling was born and people such as Stuart O'Grady were about to pave the way for others, including Robbie McEwen and Cadel Evans, who have gone on to do so well in the Tour de France each year.

In 1999 I was working for the ABC as its cycling expert and I went back to cover the Tour de France. What an amazing race it was that year. Lance Armstrong was there. His family had come to say goodbye as he lay dying in a Texan hospital. He had been read the last rites by a priest. He fought back from testicular cancer, got back on the bike and trained and trained. On the first day back he won the prologue, and we all thought it was a fairytale because he had fought back from cancer and he had a stage win in the tour. He had on the yellow jersey as the leader going into the first stage the next day.

Along with another thousand journalists, I followed him on that journey, and it was an absolutely remarkable feat that he won the Tour de France. I remember coming across Greg LeMond on the peak of Alpe d'Huez. Greg LeMond was another American—the only other American to win the Tour de France. He won it three times, twice after coming back, like Lance Armstrong, from a near-death experience. He was shot during a pig-hunting expedition, lost a lot of blood and almost died. He came back and won the tour two more times. I interviewed Greg for the ABC and asked, 'Do you think Lance can do it? The guy nearly died.' He said that those experiences when you put your whole body on the line to fight for your survival take you to another level. Of course, we saw Lance go on and win the Tour de France in 1999, and he won it again in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and, indeed, 2005.

I saw him again in 2003, I think it was, when I was over for the Tour de France, and I saw how huge Lance was over there. He would come out of his caravan each morning, like all the other cyclists, and there were hundreds of thousands of people there to see these heroes of world cycling, but it was a different level for Lance Armstrong. He had a security cordon around him because he had become such a legend and done what other people had not been able to do. By the time he had raced and won his seventh Tour de France, he had to have a security cordon around him.

I was there again in 2006 for the final stage of the Tour de France and saw the finish on the Champs-Élysées, and it was the first tour for seven years that Lance had not competed in and won, and there was something missing. Next year, when Lance is here and makes his comeback on the streets of Adelaide, around Willunga, McLaren Vale and Aldinga (the great area that I represent in this place), I think we will see lots of tourists from interstate and overseas come here.

It is a magnificent coup to have a man of his stature come here. I think in 40 years' time people will be talking about Lance Armstrong's visit to Adelaide in much the same way as people talk about the Beatles coming here back in 1964. To those people who do not know much about

cycling, my advice is to get out there and soak up the atmosphere, because you will get a chance to see an absolute legend in action.

Time expired.

### MURRAY RIVER

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:29):** I rise today to make a few comments about the river, and I acknowledge the campaign by the local paper in Murray Bridge, *The Murray Valley Standard*, in looking for ambassadors for the river, and its initiative to get people to pay \$2 for blue ribbons (one of which I am wearing and which members on this side have been wearing this week) to put money into the Waterfind Environment Fund, which was an initiative of the former Howard federal government in 2004. It is an easy way to help Australia's greatest river system.

I commend the local paper for showing the initiative that other people in the area have had to find to survive in these tough times. The environment fund provides a not-for-profit service to direct water and financial donations to projects that are helping to improve the health of Australia's river systems. The organisation directs donations of water and money to accredited environmental watering projects through a web-base system and allows all communities to assist with the management, survival and restoration of Australian river systems. I fully commend that initiative. As I said, it shows some of the things that people are doing to try to do their little bit for the River Murray.

We have seen the low flows over the past couple of years. We have seen the Narrung Peninsula decimated as a dairy industry. That irrigation industry has been written off. People in that area have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on desalinating lake water to keep going or putting pumps kilometres out into Lake Albert to access water. I still take my hat off to the people who, during winter, have paid \$500 per week for water and who, during summer, have paid up to \$3,000 per week to keep their dairy going. We have major issues in the Lower Murray swamps where \$11 million has been invested in rehabilitation, but, by the end of this debacle, they will need to spend that money again because the swamps are cracking up: motor bikes and cows are falling down holes and, if you are not careful, children can fall down cracks in the swamps.

Five companies around Langhorne Creek put together a private pipeline project because they realised that any help for this next vintage was not going to come and they needed to get some action underway. I take my hat off to those companies. They are also helping to supply some stock and domestic water out of that pipe, but it is a little disheartening to note that it sounds as though they are not eligible for any of the commonwealth money that has been put out recently with the \$610 million plan.

I believe that Riverland irrigators have spent at least \$100 million in the last water season to bring in water. It has just about brought the Riverland to its knees. We saw the federal exit package come out on the weekend, a package that will take out perhaps up to 1,000 growers in the Riverland, so long as they meet the criteria. There is also a state survival package because the government came under pressure to keep people in the industry. It has come out that they may have to spend \$67 million. I think the ministers know full well that that full amount of money will probably never have to be spent. I do acknowledge that the help is badly needed in the Riverland, but people are torn between what to do and what not to do because no paperwork is available. The Riverland office is inundated with calls, but no-one knows what is going on because policy is being drawn up on the run.

Another thing which I bring to the attention of the house and which is interesting is that, after almost two years, the Premier has finally acknowledged that the Coorong and Lower Lakes are an important Ramsar site. After almost two years of announcing a potential weir that could destroy communities forever, I think things have changed a lot since events over the past few days and media reports since Saturday. It is nice to see that perhaps the government has recognised that it is a world-listed area, important for migratory birds.

### AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL PEDAL PRIX

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (16:34):** Following on from the member for Mawson's contribution about pedal power, I would like to talk about another sort of cycling event. Each year South Australia holds a fantastic event which I can thoroughly recommend to all MPs as something to support. In schools throughout nearly every electorate, teams work year round for the final stage of the Australian International Pedal Prix, which is the world's largest pedal-powered vehicle race. It is held annually in Murray Bridge—and it was last weekend. Stage 3 is held over three days. Mayor

Arbon and the member for Hammond (and I found out later the Hon. Mark Parnell) were in attendance for almost perfect weather. Luckily for us and the competitors, the wind did die down on Saturday afternoon and, after a very cold night during which teams consolidated their starts, all went uneventfully and very well.

Andrew McLachlan and the entire board and committee of volunteers who make this event happen have my highest admiration for the professional way in which this event is staged and improved each year. There are too many people to name individually. However, I can assure the house that each had little rest over the weekend and worked tirelessly to make sure the thousands of people involved in the competing teams had the best weekend possible.

The estimated number of people visiting Murray Bridge for the event exceeded 25,000. More than 230 teams from schools and groups across the nation were involved. Interstate teams included students from the Good Shepherd School in the Northern Territory who travelled down by bus. The team was making its second appearance. It was started by a teacher who had previous involvement with Pedal Prix but who has now moved on to another school. However, he left such a strong culture in the school that the team continues to travel down.

It is the culture of Pedal Prix that makes it such a special event. One team's bike actually melted en route, but an all-nighter and efforts from other people helped to see the team on the start line in the morning. Bikes are designed and built by teachers, students, family and friends using many skills in engineering, technical expertise and IT modelling. Machines then need to be powered, so fitness becomes a key component for the students who learn team discipline and the skill of not only piloting but also powering their vehicle around the slightly more than two-kilometre track.

There were 247 vehicles on Ponde Straight at the beginning of the race, when Formula 1 Grand Prix treasure Glen Dix waved off the field. Amazing records were set, with the fastest vehicle clocking 2.29—which, I am told, is the equivalent 70 km/h. The most laps completed was 475, just ahead of our second-placed South Australian team TAFE SA's BlueShift, which completed 474 laps. I am told that this equals about 1,021 kilometres for the 24-hour event.

The winner in category 1 was the team Tru Blu from Mount Martha in Victoria. Categories 2 and 3 were won by secondary teams from Flora Hill—again from Victoria. The primary category was won by Aberfoyle Hub Primary School's Flying Hubcaps team, which completed 339 laps or 729 kilometres. They are part of a truly awesome organisation, and I congratulate them.

Schools from the Florey electorate did a fantastic job, both on the weekend and for the entire series. Modbury High School had bikes in categories 2, 3 and 4. In category 2, Lynx was 39<sup>th</sup> on the weekend, 30<sup>th</sup> in its category and 95<sup>th</sup> overall. Old scholars in Eco Rider—for the first time in category 4—finished 19<sup>th</sup> on the weekend, 11<sup>th</sup> in its category and 28<sup>th</sup> overall in the entire series. In category 3, Cheetah was 14<sup>th</sup> on the weekend and overall 12<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. Also, in category 3 the team in Pink Panther was 23<sup>rd</sup> on the weekend, 18<sup>th</sup> in its category and 49<sup>th</sup> overall in the series. Most importantly, Pink Panther was the winning girls' team in the event. I am incredibly proud of them. The girls from Modbury High School comprise the best girls team in Australia. I congratulate Wayne Ferguson and the great team at Modbury High School who have maintained their commitment to the excellence of the team for so many years. They certainly deserve their success.

Also dedicated and committed over many years and my initial connection with Pedal Prix is the team from The Heights school. Although not enjoying the smooth run for which they hoped, they worked hard with Quasar in category 2 finishing 60<sup>th</sup> on the weekend, 42<sup>nd</sup> in its category and 140<sup>th</sup> overall. In category 1, Phoenix finished 71<sup>st</sup> on the weekend, 70<sup>th</sup> and 230<sup>th</sup> overall. I know that Paul Gunner and the gang will be back with bigger and better ideas next year. They also helped country high schools get teams together.

Ardtornish competed in category 1 and went well to finish the 24 hours in 75<sup>th</sup> place on the weekend. They had only nine riders in their small support set-up. However, the bike was always on the track and did not have any mechanical or crash issues. Spokesperson Elaine said that all the participants had a really good time and had been spreading the word about how good it is being in Pedal Prix. Hopefully, this will see the size of the team expand in 2009.

We also had a team from St Paul's College. My friend Roy Van Poppal and Jim Holmes and the team in COGS competed in category 3, finishing 44<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> overall.

Time expired.

**CRIMINAL LAW (UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS) ACT**

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Croydon—Attorney-General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (16:40):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON:** In April 1995, after the High Court decided an appeal (*Ridgeway v The Queen*) in favour of the accused, the parliament passed the Criminal Law (Undercover Operations) Act 1995 with the support of all sides of politics. The object of the legislation was to place the law of police undercover operations on a legislative footing and to ensure certainty in the law.

The High Court ruling on entrapment by police of drug dealers and other criminals had created uncertainty for the police and the courts. As honourable members may be aware, one of the safeguards which was built into the legislation and which significantly extended police powers was that there should be notification of authorised undercover operations to the Attorney-General and an annual report to parliament.

I am pleased to assure the house that the system is meticulously adhered to, both by police and by my office. The details of these notifications form the basis of the report that the statute requires me to give to parliament. I table that report.

I am in a position to assure honourable members that the legislation is working as it was intended and that no difficulties have appeared in its effective operation. The law in this area appears to be well settled now. There have been no judicial decisions of interest on this subject in the past 12 months.

**GENE TECHNOLOGY (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 11 September 2008. Page 90.)

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:42):** I rise to indicate that the opposition will support the bill. It was introduced only a short time ago, on 11 September, by the Minister for Health. He has requested that this matter be dealt with expeditiously. I indicate that the opposition sought and obtained a telephone briefing on the matter and has expedited its processes to accommodate the request of the government.

My understanding of the history of this matter (and this was generally traversed in the minister's second reading explanation) is that, apart from Western Australia, we are the only state that has not attended to completing a COAG agreement. All other states have either transferred power to the commonwealth and/or passed similar legislation to this bill. Indeed, the commonwealth has attended to its legislation pursuant to an agreement that has been effective since 1 July 2007.

I expect that, because Western Australia had an election, it has a reasonable excuse, but I am not quite sure why it has taken so long for South Australia to deal with this matter. Nevertheless, having viewed and considered the legislation, we are happy to accommodate the government's request to attend to it so that we are not tail-end Charlie.

The first aspect of the bill that merits dealing with this matter expeditiously is the introduction of emergency powers that give the federal minister, after consultation with the Gene Technology Ministerial Council, the ability to expedite the approval for dealing with genetically modified organisms in an emergency.

In the course of the briefing, it was explained to me that we had experienced a circumstance in Australia since the passing of the federal legislation that has vindicated the importance of this legislation. At first blush, I assume that this involves gene technology to deal with vaccines in the event of some imminent health disaster that may affect humans. In fact, the example which was provided to us and which has justified the whole process was the equine flu difficulty faced by a number of states, including South Australia.

This arose out of—I think it is fair on anyone's assessment to say—total ineptitude of the monitoring and carrying out of duties associated with AQIS, an organisation which has been established under commonwealth power to manage and secure Australian borders against germs coming into Australia and to ensure that we have appropriate quarantine procedures supported by



legislation and regulation to protect us and our stock, both domestic and wild. It is an important responsibility and one which fundamentally failed in relation to the equine flu problem. Suffice to say that the horseracing industry, to name but one, was severely affected financially, and significant imposition and loss of opportunity arose out of that event.

I vividly recall this time last year, I think, when ministerial regulation was introduced to prevent the transportation of horses interstate. The prospect of missing out on major events in the racing industry was devastating for those who had put in so much time and effort—trainers, jockeys and others—not to mention the financial contribution made by owners. The loss of opportunity arising from that regulation was devastating, particularly for New South Wales and Victoria.

I also recall reading with some amusement at the time the regulations published in our parliamentary gazette under the authority of the Minister for Health, if I recall correctly, to prevent any—

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** Surely *Government Gazette*, not parliamentary gazette.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Correct, the *Government Gazette*—horses, donkeys, asses and I think some other—

**Dr McFetridge:** Zebras.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Zebras, was it?—from going in or out of South Australia at the time. I am not aware of any major concerns—well, I am sure there are a lot of concerns—with any application of this flu virus in horses that contaminated our horses. Subsequent to the briefing, I was informed that, during this period, some 1,500 horses in South Australia were vaccinated with a vaccine that had been developed under the authority of the new commonwealth legislation under the emergency use permit. We are supporting this legislation to enable that vaccine to be developed in South Australia. I am also informed that all the vaccinations in respect of that event ceased on 30 June 2008.

It was a shining example of the emergency power being used to quickly develop a GMO-based vaccine for that purpose and, as a result, one can only assume that it was able to at least arrest the spread of the horse flu. On that basis, we are pleased to support that. Obviously, it will not be the last of germs or viruses that enter Australia, or South Australia, and we must be in a position to act quickly in order to protect our stock—wild animals and humans—and take advantage of genetically modified technology to provide that extra protection.

The second part of the legislation is fairly much glossed over, if I can say that, in the second reading explanation by the minister. I am not suggesting that it was done in a manner to diminish the importance of the other aspects. There are quite a few others which were described to me as technical amendments but which, on reading more thoroughly, do in fact streamline the process for field trials of crops that are using genetically modified seed.

This is to enable a shortened or abbreviated process which effectively cuts out public consultation in the initial period. There is provision for a subsequent consultation—I think it is after a six-month period—but this allows for that process to be truncated for field trials. That is as distinct from the current process which has applied and, I am assured, will continue to apply, to commercial crops.

My understanding is that, at present, anyone who wishes to deal with a genetically modified organism must apply for a licence from the regulator. Essentially, the regulator carries out a risk assessment. Consideration is given then to submissions that are received under a public consultation process and, if that assessment deems the process to have been acceptable, a licence is issued. My understanding of the briefing that I was given and of information provided is that that whole process takes about a year and, obviously, the truncated process for field trials will significantly reduce that.

I also raise the question of whether the failure to pass the bill here under this sort of agreement arrangement—because different things apply with these agreements—is fatal to the application of other legislation. My understanding is that—using the equine flu example—because the commonwealth legislation had been passed and the GMO vaccine developed, it was able to be applied in South Australia, notwithstanding that this legislation had not been passed here and, indeed, as I have indicated, some 1,500 horses were actually vaccinated.

It raises the question, I suppose, whether we would have faced impediment if we had the only individual entity, that is, an unincorporated entity—and this relates to the whole question of the

commonwealth having corporations power—that had the capacity to produce such a GMO vaccine, whether we would have been able to do it here in those circumstances. This is the whole dilemma that faces us when we deal with pieces of legislation that are supposed to complement each other, and sometimes can be fatal.

I am assured in this case that it has not. Similarly, I recall—and I think we are probably going to be debating it again at some stage—the question of stem cell research. There was similar difficulty with the capacity for South Australia to proceed with stem cell research in the manner that was anticipated by previous legislation in this house in the event of it not signing up, and we are again, I think, the last state to make a positive determination to pass legislation of that nature.

I think there is only one corporate body, which is part of the University of Adelaide (Repromed is another company), that would be able to exercise corporate powers under commonwealth legislation to facilitate that and, whilst there is some doubt around what might happen with others, in practical terms, of course, there is no other unincorporated entity operating in South Australia that would currently have a licence to undertake the work in any event.

One has to look at the legal parameters within which we are working and what the other opportunities and benefits are and, in this case, in relation to the emergency power and truncating of the process, what advantage there is in South Australia joining up. In this instance, the opposition supports the government and the answer is in the affirmative.

*[Sitting extended beyond 17:00 on motion of Hon. J.D. Hill]*

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (16:55):** This debate on the Gene Technology (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill is a very timely debate. At the start, I can say that I support this amendment very strongly. I say it is very timely because, only this morning, there were reports coming out of Sydney about a horse testing positive for equine flu. There has been a lot of media chatter in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Adelaidenow* and other media outlets about this suspected case of equine flu.

This reminds us, once again, just how vulnerable we are in Australia when exotic diseases get out of quarantine and go across the broad populations of horses and animals—in this particular case, horses and horse species. As a member of the Equine Veterinary Association I have just received an urgent message from the Chief Veterinary Officer stating that the borderline equine influenza result at Eastern Creek has retested negative. It was a borderline positive but the horse has now been retested and it is negative.

There are 70 horses in quarantine at Eastern Creek. All of these horses initially tested negative but will now be retested as a precaution. That is good news because we can all remember the devastation that was caused across Australia by the outbreak of equine flu. We need to have this sort of legislation in place so that if there is an emergency situation, where there are human or animal health concerns—medical or veterinary health—we need to bring in control measures as quickly as possible.

In the case of equine flu the best control measure was quarantine, backing that up with vaccination of horses in buffer zones, and then strategic vaccinations. The problem was that the most efficacious range of vaccines were made by a company called Merial (which I think is a French company). They are PROTEQFLU vaccines which are made of a recombinant virus, a canary pox virus. The vital parts of the equine flu virus are combined with the canary pox virus and then it is attenuated so that not even canaries will be affected by this virus. However, it enables the virus to be used as a vaccine against equine flu.

We needed the legislation to be able to use this genetically-modified vaccine. Making these vaccines is a very valuable piece of scientific progress and there is nothing to be afraid of. Having the ability to use them to cope with serious outbreaks of exotic diseases in Australia is something that we need to be able to do. We cannot always predict what diseases are coming next. We have a very proud history of quarantine in this country but the outbreak of equine flu, obviously, gave us all a real wake-up call.

With those few words I do support the bill. The other part of the bill, to allow for the streamlining of processing for field crop trials is one that I strongly support. I wish this legislation a swift passage through both houses because, although it was a false alarm in Sydney this morning

about another suspected case of horse flu, it reinforces the fact that we need to act, and act very swiftly if we are going to maintain Australia's quarantine status and disease-free status.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert) (16:59):** I want to speak briefly on a matter which I think is very important to the house. I support the shadow minister in relation to supporting the government's bill. There are several issues in relation to this matter, but we support anything that expedites a process which enables our farmers (and anybody else) to, first of all, produce food economically and cleanly but also to be able to handle emergencies. This is what this does, particularly in the area where emergency powers are introduced that give the federal minister, in consultation with the Gene Technology Ministerial Council, the ability to expedite the approval to deal with a GMO in an emergency. The shadow minister told us about the equine flu outbreak; you have to be able to breed these things up very quickly, which you can do under GMO technology.

There are also the amendments to streamline the process of trial field crops. I can understand if you want to grow something commercially, but when you just want to trial it, it is a nonsense to have to go through all of this red tape just to put down maybe one or two acres of a trial crop, when it is just for testing purposes. To go through all the rigmarole, which takes over a year, is just a lot of nonsense and it is just too hard. We are expediting processes, and I welcome that.

In relation to that field crop, I will comment on our position. I know it is on the same topic, but it is not what this bill is about. It is in relation to GMOs on canola. I note that over the two weeks' break the minister is going to Canada. I have just come back from Canada.

*The Hon. J.D. Hill interjecting:*

**Mr VENNING:** Not this one. No; the minister for primary industries is going to Canada to look at this issue of GM food, and particularly genetically modified canola. We in South Australia do maintain a moratorium against the growing, harvesting and storing of GM canola. I went over to Canada to look at that issue. I went to Winnipeg, which is a long way away, and it is cold, because this is where it all started. To see what is happening there, in consideration of where we are, it makes a real nonsense of the position we have taken, because all the Canadian research is now done with GM canola—everything.

I am fully supportive of our changing the laws, because it is a nonsense. GM canola can be grown in Victoria and New South Wales, and the only border we have is a line on a map. It is a nonsense to consider that we are going to be able to keep it to the South-East, where the member for MacKillop lives. It is going to come over the border anyway. It is a nonsense to think it will not.

**The Hon. J.D. Hill:** What's his view?

**Mr VENNING:** The same as many who over this side support the production of GM canola. But one has to be very careful in relation to what you do then with GM wheat. I want to see a lot more work done with GM wheat, but not in the chemical resistance side of it. I think we need GM wheat that is drought tolerant, because I will tell you what is happening out there, as I said earlier today, with the lack of rain. We will reap barley because it is pushing up, but it will be skinny, low grade feed barley.

Wheat does not have the same tolerance to drought. We need to breed that into it so that, with weather like this, we can at least get a crop and have some food to feed our people and animals. So, that is an area to look into, but I would put on the record that I would be very careful about breeding the chemical intolerance into wheat, because you would have trouble having both canola and wheat resistant to Roundup. That would not be smart.

So, the minister is going to Canada. He says he is going over there to repair the damage that I did. He always says that. I have briefed the people over there for when he does get there, and he is going to walk into some information. I was very impressed with the presentations made to me in relation to the issue of GM canola. GM canola is selling very well all over the world; it is improving in sales and all the new technologies are done only with GM canola. When you crush the GM canola the oil extract does not carry the transgenic gene; it is only in the pulp. So, it is a nonsense to consider that using this stuff is detrimental to anybody's health. Yes, the pulp is; if fed to animals it can carry over, but there is no proof of detriment there anyway.

The Japanese, who were originally resistant to buying this product, are now buying it. Even the Europeans, who have had the biggest opposition to GM canola, are buying it, because there is no choice, because 75 per cent of the world's canola is now GM modified. We are out there with the old product, and it is costing our growers. People have to understand that when you have GM

canola you can use the safest chemical there is on it. The canola that we grow has some of the most dangerous chemicals used on it, because the old canola would be killed by Roundup, which is glyphosate, but it is a very safe chemical. So, you are eating canola here that has been sprayed with some of the most toxic chemicals, whereas the GM canola has been sprayed with the least toxic. That, to me, sounds like common sense.

I support this bill and commend it to the house. I also commend the shadow minister for the work she has done on this measure. It is great that we can agree on something that I think will be for the overall good of everyone.

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health, Minister for the Southern Suburbs, Minister Assisting the Premier in the Arts) (17:05):** I thank the opposition for supporting these measures and agreeing to deal with the bill expeditiously. As the deputy leader said, we asked that it be dealt with expeditiously, and we appreciate the opposition's agreement to that. I think all the matters have been covered and there are no questions left outstanding. At this stage, I thank the officers in my department who worked on this legislation (Fay Jenkins and Elena Anear) and also our parliamentary counsel, Shirley Fisher.

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

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Hon. J.D. HILL:** I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

### THUMM, MR H.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert) (17:06):** I want to raise an important matter. Members do not have to sit and listen—they can go home if they wish—but I want to put this on the record. I would like to highlight an ideas man in my electorate, a man I admire and respect. Mr Hermann Thumm was the former owner of Chateau Yaldara and is the current owner and creator of Chateau Barrosa (note the difference in spelling).

In 1999, more than 50 years after forming Chateau Yaldara Pty Ltd, Hermann Thumm sold the famous Barossa Valley chateau and the winery that bears its name. He then turned his attention to developing the nearby Barossa Park Motel into Chateau Barrosa, incorporating a baroque-style chateau surrounded by 30,000 roses and filled with one of the world's great collections of Meissen porcelain, antique furniture, tapestries and paintings. Some members have seen this collection, which is a world-famous one. For those who have seen it, it takes their breath away. Indeed, I cannot believe that we have a collection such as this in Australia. They are some of the finest pieces in the world. The question is: where has Hermann had them all these years?

Developing all this was part of Hermann's plan to enjoy an 'active retirement'. I do not think 'retired' is the word I would use to describe Hermann—he has achieved so much since creating Chateau Barrosa. Incidentally, Hermann chose to use the originally intended spelling and pronunciation of the Barossa—with two 'Rs' and one 'S' so that it is B-A-R-R-O-S-A, pronounced Bar-roza. It is the original name but misspelt. Hence, the rose garden is most appropriate.

Hermann did all this in his very senior years—at 95 years of age. I have kept close to him and was very proud of his achievements. When it came to officially open the Chateau Barrosa and the rose garden, he did lean on me a bit. He had some opposition to it from his family, and it was not all sweet. He asked whether I could get the Prime Minister to open the rose garden, and I said, 'I reckon we can do better than that.' He looked at me and said, 'You've been drinking the vino again.' I said, 'No, I have been in negotiations with somebody.' Indeed, the Queen opened this vineyard and the rose garden. I said to Hermann, 'We will get the Queen,' and Hermann looked at me, and very seldom was he speechless. But I had been negotiating with then premier Olsen, because the Queen's visit was being planned; and she went to the Barossa and opened the rose garden, and also the Lutheran aged care centre in Tanunda. It was a double header for me, and I was very pleased about that. What a great day it was.

The Queen visited the rose garden in the Chateau Barrosa during her 2002 visit to South Australia, planting a Queen Elizabeth rose and unveiling a plaque to formally open the rose garden, before attending a lunch with 70 guests in the chateau. We have lots of memories in this job and I have a great vision of seeing Hermann, this lovely bloke, this statesman for whom I have so much time in deep conversation with Her Majesty. They were strolling along like old mates, not a nerve in his body. She was obviously quite taken by him. The Queen also enjoyed some of Hermann's

famous old Yaldara whites with him. I think it was an aged chardonnay. Hermann always did it the proper way and the old way.

As a Centenary Medal recipient, Hermann was recognised for his contribution to the success of Australia's first 100 years as a federal nation. He has even had a street in the Barossa named after him in honour of his service to business—Hermann Thumm Drive in Lyndoch. He continues to contribute to Australia's success to this day. In the last couple of years, he has turned his talents to organic food and beverages from grapes. As I said, he is an ideas man and he is not content to just sit out his senior years.

A few years ago Hermann saw the problem that an oversupply of wine grapes was causing and set about finding a solution to the problem. The solution he came up with is to make another product with wine grapes, and that is exactly what Hermann did: he created grape beer. It is great too—great grape beer. Yes, beer made entirely from wine grapes. Such a product could be sold in the domestic Australian market, a market where a strong Australian dollar would not have any impact on exports. I have tried the prototype of his product firsthand, and I have to say that I was most impressed with the beer. I think grape beer is a viable option to go hand in hand with and complement our current wine industry—and it is good for you and it is great in hot weather, with a very low glycaemic index.

During periods when the wine industry is experiencing difficulties (as it is at the moment) for whatever reason, grape beer would be able to supplement the wine industry and get it through the tough times. There has been no government support for this development. Ninety-five year old Hermann Thumm, a graduate of a German viticultural college, worked for over 12 months with no wages and put a few million dollars into the development of this beer. He has succeeded in turning white table wine grapes into organic beer. His beer is non-fattening and contains many vitamins and minerals. A specially designed vacuum still, operating at low enough temperatures, retains the nutritious value of the grape. The alcohol component undergoes a further fermentation with the addition of yeast—an elegant medium, malty beer called Grapien.

I have to say that, at 95 years of age, I think Hermann Thumm may be on to something. What a marvellous man. It is just an inspiration to be with him—and he has not stopped. He has his off days, but up he gets and he is into it again. Every time I go there, he has a new idea. The drought may have temporarily relieved the problem caused by an oversupply of grapes, but only temporarily.

However, the unsteadiness of the Australian dollar, along with the mass over planting which is still taking place, present new problems: difficulty exporting wine overseas and difficulty for grape growers to be able to sell their grapes. I firmly believe that the production of grape beer could ease the wine industry's problems. He also has a range of grape spreads of various flavours, and they are good. I do use those. They are popular and they can be bought at several shops. Also grape liqueurs which have been in this parliament under test in our refreshment room.

But the story does not end there. Believe it or not, Hermann has an even bigger plan, and that is to help save our water supplies through the use of grapes. He is suggesting that we can do it with surplus grapes and surplus white wine. He is really thinking outside the square. The wine is 90 per cent water and 10 per cent alcohol, and can be separated using the vacuum still he has developed.

The water resulting from the separation process is evidently beautiful and lovely, crystal clear water containing different vitamins, nutritional trace elements and tastes like what we are used to. Already this special water is being used in the production of Hermann's grape food and drink products, including an energy beer alternative, but he sees it as a stepping stone to getting water from grapes to solve our water shortage problems, particularly in the human consumption area. Hermann is even thinking that the 10 per cent alcohol separated via the vacuum still could then be used as an energy source and to power our cars.

In these changing times, we have to be prepared to consider alternative proposals for water creation seriously. I hope that some serious investigation can be done into Hermann's ideas. He has worked hard to promote his revolutionary vision for a viticultural industry that could also provide solutions for our water and environmental needs. I can imagine that members are thinking that the grapes would need to be irrigated in the first place and, therefore, use water. Hermann's plan appears to be that the vines would become virtually self-sustaining, particularly varieties such as doradillo and sultana. He claims that these types of grapes yield more water and thrive on non-irrigated land and empty paddocks.

I congratulate Hermann Thumm, his wife Inga and their family on their innovative ideas, and I hope that their vision comes to fruition. Hermann believes that we can double our viticulture in Australia. Indeed, instead of struggling and paddocks lying bare, farmers could grow grapes for beer and make clean water from the wine. After all, what is the Barossa without vines? What is South Australia without vines? What is Australia without vines?

Finally, I thank Hermann Thumm very much for being part of the reason that the Barossa is what it is today. He has been in the region for over 80 years. He has made the place famous. We talk about Barossa wine and food but, more importantly, we have Barossa people. We have some fantastic personalities, including Peter Lehmann. Hermann Thumm is not as well known as Peter Lehmann but he is just as supportive. Hermann has done a lot for our community. He makes donations for all sorts of activities. He is a very generous man and it is a great opportunity for me to make this speech. Hermann will get a copy of the *Hansard* and I am sure he will get a lot of satisfaction from it. He has given me a lot of inspiration and many good times. I hope he has many more years left in him.

#### DE FELICE, MS A.

**Mr PICCOLO (Light) (17:16):** I echo the comments of the member for Schubert and congratulate Hermann Thumm on his great contribution to the Barossa region. I rise to speak about a visit to South Australia by Alfonsina De Felice, the regional minister for equal opportunity, youth affairs, immigration and migration, and welfare in the regional government of Campania.

I come from the Campania region. It is a region of approximately 5.8 million people and it is the second most populous region in Italy. It is also the most densely populated region of the country. The capital city of the Campania region is Naples. I was born and grew up in Naples. The Campania region is made up of five provinces: Avellino, Benevento, Caserta, Naples and Salerno. A few MPs from that region are members of this house, including the member for Norwood, the Hon. Carmel Zollo and me; so the region is well represented in this parliament. There must be something in the water or the wine over there because it is also well known for its wines.

It is no accident that this state has a sister-state relationship with the Campania region. The regional minister is coming to South Australia to further the objectives of that agreement and the relationship between the state of South Australia and the Campania region. The Campania region has a very colourful and long history. The President of the Republic is President Napolitano who is also from the Campania region. He is also former member of the Italian Communist Party (now known as the PD).

The regional government is presided over by a president for a five-year term and also a group of 10 ministers. The current Regional President—which is equivalent to our Premier—is Antonio Bassolino, a member of PD. He won a second term in 2005.

I return to the visit to this state by the minister. A number of events and functions will be held for her to meet with the Italian-Australian community in South Australia and also to strengthen the relationship between this state and the Campania region.

On Saturday I will be attending a forum sponsored by the Campania Sports and Social Club. The forum is about 'Il Gemellaggio', or the sister state relationship, and there will be discussion about the relevance of the relationship today and whether it still meets the objectives that were set when it was established in the 1980s. The forum will discuss not only what the sister state relationship means to those who migrated to Australia—and, in particular, South Australia—in the 1950s and 1960s, like my own family, but also, more importantly, what it means to the children and grandchildren of migrants to this state. It will also look at, in particular, how well the sister state relationship helps the new commercial, educational and cultural relationship we have with that region.

Italy has changed, and we also need to recognise that the relationship will change, so we will need to perhaps focus on what it can achieve for the state. At the forum, Mark Quaglia, the President of the Campania Club, will speak, as will Antonio Bamonte, OAM, who is the regional consultore for Australia. Other speakers include Cavalier John Di Fede, OAM, who is well-known to the people of the eastern suburbs, Karen Pocock, the Interim President of IT.SA, the Italian-Australian youth organisation, and other members. The Hon. Carmel Zollo, obviously, will speak on this topic, as will the Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission. In addition, Tony Zappia and I have been invited to this forum as guest speakers, as has Marco Fedi, the Italian MP who looks after Australia and Asia, and also the Italian Consul to South Australia, Tommaso Coniglio.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the visit to this state by the regional minister. I wish her a very productive meeting with people and I also want to let her know that she is warmly welcomed in this state, as there are many people here who come from that region. I look forward to catching up with her on Saturday. I hope that the visit by the minister will do two things: first, that it will indicate the strength of the relationship between the region and this state and, secondly, hopefully, she will go back with renewed vigour to further enhance the relationship.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY WHIPS**

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (17:22):** I would like to make a few comments in relation to the fact that this is my last day as deputy whip. I would like to thank the government, and especially the member for Torrens, for the working relationship we have had. I would certainly like to thank the Opposition Whip, the member for Schubert, for the work that we have done together: I think we have made a great team. I again acknowledge the way we have worked together with the member for Torrens, as the Government Whip, and all her assistance and support as I was learning the ropes. I have certainly appreciated her help along the way. Thank you very much, Robyn, and we will continue on in our new role.

Motion carried.

At 17:24 the house adjourned until Tuesday 14 October 2008 at 11:00.