

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 1 December 2011

The **SPEAKER (Hon. L.R. Breuer)** took the chair at 10:31 and read prayers.

The **SPEAKER**: Honourable members, I respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of this land upon which this parliament is assembled and the custodians of the sacred lands of our state.

### SUMMARY OFFENCES (PRESCRIBED MOTOR VEHICLES) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. **J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (10:32)**: I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the sitting of the house to be continued during the conference with the Legislative Council on the bill.

Motion carried.

### VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 19 October 2011.)

**Mr PISONI (Unley) (10:33)**: I indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition on this bill. The opposition is supporting the bill. We will probably raise some questions, particularly about fees, if we have an opportunity to do so during the committee process, or the minister may wish to answer those questions in his response to the second reading.

The Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011 follows on from the 2009 COAG agreement on the establishment of a national regulator with powers to register training organisations and accredited courses. This bill is further to the Training and Skills Development (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill passed in South Australia earlier this year, with the support of the opposition.

The necessity of the earlier bill was queried at the time, as the current bill was in the pipeline and soon to be introduced. As you may recall, the bill itself came through the parliament in a speedy manner after the collapse of the Adelaide Pacific International College (APIC), which was situated in Currie Street. This was despite a number of state-based audits of the organisation. A whistleblower who had worked at the organisation approached the opposition with concerns.

He was not the first, of course, to raise those concerns. Concerns were also raised by the Motor Trade Association about the qualifications being offered. The Motor Trade Association is not just, of course, a training organisation, but a representative organisation of those who actually run businesses in the automotive trades, whether they be service stations, petrol outlets, automotive dealers—new and used—spare parts and other areas in the automotive industry who simply could not see that the college itself could possibly be offering the types of courses that would entice them to employ any of its graduates here in South Australia.

Those concerns were ignored by the then minister, Michael O'Brien, and dismissed by the minister who replaced him (Jack Snelling) as simply being a difference of opinion in the way that the training should be carried out. Of course, the Motor Trade Association was proven to be right when it was, in fact, discovered through the media campaign that was conducted with the ex-employee and the Liberal opposition that it was nothing more than a scam.

It was a scam for Indian migration. Many of the students were not participating at all in the courses; many were driving taxis, and one of the owners of the college owned up to 100 taxi licences here in South Australia. Many of the allegations were that many of the students were forced to drive those taxis, many of them without being paid, in order to retain their student status to remain in South Australia with the hope, of course, of getting permanent residency here in South Australia.

The surprising thing about that was that the APIC organisation did, in actual fact, pass several state-based audit programs. They did not have equipment. Students were sitting on the floor, and I have seen photographs of students sitting on the floor being lectured in an empty

building. Many of them were working on repairing taxis as their hands-on experience through the APIC college. That is now history, of course, and we have seen changes at a federal level and at a state level in order to help deal with that situation. This bill will move the registration of training organisations and the administration to a federal body.

There have certainly been concerns with some other organisations here in South Australia, where we do not have as many VET training courses run by the private sector particularly targeted at international students, such as those you might see in Melbourne or in Sydney. However, we certainly do have a number of them, and I have had people contacting me about such colleges.

I note that, despite all the fanfare made by the previous premier, Mr Mike Rann, announcing from India the arrival in Adelaide of the Indian Business School, after less than two years that school has announced that it is now moving out of South Australia to expand its interests in India. The opportunities they expected were not here and that school has now closed. Ironically, across the road from APIC in Currie Street, you will find that the floors the business school vacated are now empty.

The bill will allow the transfer of South Australian powers through the adoption of the commonwealth National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Transitional Provisions) Act 2011 with the intention for the regulator to operate under a referral of state powers. However, I note from the briefing eventually organised by the minister, that the bill is being marketed as an adoption rather than a referral, this being a result of the process whereby New South Wales passed the bill initially, which allowed the commonwealth legislation that it is hoped the states will now adopt.

The bill refers to the ability to amend to the commonwealth, the proposed referral of power that is appropriate, and that it is limited and revocable by the proclamation of the Governor. Our opinion is that the amendment of the national law within the commonwealth's original or referred jurisdiction is also appropriate, but there is an ability for those states which participate in the national scheme to veto any changes to the bill, so it still enables an inclusive process. There are some concerns that have been raised by a small number of stakeholders regarding fees and charges with the new regulator, but we will cover that a bit later in the debate.

My understanding of the mechanics of the way that this is adopted, or how referred legislation will work in relation to other states going down the same path, is that South Australia can terminate an amendment reference that is unacceptable, but that this will not in effect veto all jurisdictions in relation to the proposed amendment. Victoria and Western Australia, who did not sign up to the original COAG agreement, will be a non-referring power, however in order to ensure consistent application to national standards, I understand, moreover, that it is agreed that any RTO wishing to operate in more than one jurisdiction will still need to be registered through the national regulator. So, in those states we will actually be seeing two regulation processes—state and national.

Funding for the national VET regulator, we are told, will be provided by the commonwealth for the next four years, after which it will be maintained by a cost recovery, and this is where some—particularly Group Training Australia—have concerns about increases in costs. Perhaps the minister might address anticipated costs under the new scheme to providers—registered training organisations—as to what modelling or information he may be able to inform the parliament that his department has done about the changes in the regulatory process, and what impact that may very well have on the cost for either students or, alternatively, registered training organisations themselves.

The cost recovery element of this scenario is something which has been raised as a concern by stakeholders. As I mentioned earlier, Group Training Australia has raised that concern with me, and it is something that the minister may wish to expand upon. I think that the assumption that a reduction in fee revenue being offset by reduced costs in regulatory activity will create a neutral effect on a budget may be a little optimistic.

We had some figures provided to members of the opposition after the briefing by the department that tell us that the savings from the transfer of regulatory services will be captured under the DFEEST restructure budget measure approved in the 2010 budget, and will result in a full year expenditure in the vicinity of \$1.461 million in the 2012-13 budget, indexed in the out years. These savings have been captured under the DFEEST restructure budget measures approved in the 2010-11 budget.

The memo from the minister's office then goes on to tell us that with the transfer of functions to the National VET Regulator, DFEST will no longer receive revenue of \$0.422 million in 2011-12, \$1.123 million in 2012-13, \$1.483 million in 2013-14, and \$1.453 million 2014-15, as this revenue will be received by the commonwealth. We also raised some questions of consultation, and I will cover those a little bit later in my contribution.

There are a couple of issues that I would like to touch on in regard to the consultation on this bill with stakeholders and the training sector and concerns that have been raised. In terms of the consultation, the Liberal opposition makes every effort to consult on legislation as widely as possible, given the very short notice we are often given between bills being tabled and debated in this place. We were left with the impression in our recent briefing that consultation in regard to this bill by the government had been sketchy, at best. Of course, I asked the minister's office for a list of those stakeholders that had been consulted, and I will come back to what came back from the minister's office shortly.

Feedback from stakeholders has unfortunately confirmed that the consultation process was, in fact, very narrow, if conducted at all. The minister's office has told us that extensive consultation with state and territory governments occurred prior to this agreement being reached (we all understand that) and subsequent consultation in South Australia has occurred across several government departments (that is not surprising), the Crown Solicitor's Office and the Training and Skills Commission.

Registered training organisations and relevant peak bodies, such as the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) and TAFE Directors Australia, have also been consulted by both state and commonwealth governments in the development of the national regulatory scheme, the legislation for the national regulator, the fee schedule, the national regulator and the legislative instruments for the standards for regulation.

In fact, the Australian Council for Private Education and Training, the main body that represents private RTOs who will be affected by this bill, were not consulted by the government. I can quote from the response by the executive officer to my letter inviting their views on the legislation. He wrote:

Dear Mr Pisoni,

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011 for comment by the Australian Council for Private Education and Training. This is the only time we have had the opportunity to see or comment on the bill in South Australia so your consideration of the private sector view is very much appreciated.

If you read between the lines of the response from the minister's office, you can see that, whether on purpose or otherwise, they omit to discuss consultation of the bill itself with the Australian Council for Private Education and Training. I find it difficult to understand, if consultation had occurred with that organisation prior to the bill being drafted, why a draft bill was not presented to them for comment prior to it being brought to this place for debate.

Group Training Australia, again, have raised concerns, and they represent a major number of not-for-profit organisations, in particular, such as the MTA and those in the building and hospitality industries—a wide range of industries—who provide apprentices for host employers, and a host employer of course is a business that then contracts with one of the organisations that are member partners of Group Training Australia to hire one of their apprentices while the member of Group Training Australia (for example, the Motor Trades Association or Peer Veet, which is another) take the responsibility of placing that apprentice. The four-year contract or commitment is with them.

It is a very good system. It works particularly well for small businesses that may not be conducting their businesses in a full range within the trade. For example, there may very well be an auto company or a mechanics company that simply services automatic transmissions, and, of course, an apprentice working there would get a very limited understanding of other parts of the motor trade industry in terms of completing their apprenticeship over four years.

What the group training enables them to do, of course, is to move that apprentice to other organisations so that they may then move to a general dealership for 12 months and get some valuable and broader experience in their training. They may move into other areas in the motor trade industry to help broaden their ability to train. It is particularly important for those in hospitality, which is very much a people business. Group training employees can move from a hotel to a fine restaurant to a cafe, for example, to get a broad range of experience in the hospitality industry.

It is a great system. I am very pleased because this is a result of the pressure that was put on by the Liberal Party in the lead-up to the last election when we announced that we would remove the payroll tax requirement for apprentices who are employed under group training. In other words, we released a policy that would exempt the calculation of payroll tax for apprentices in South Australia, and that was immediately copied by the Labor Party.

Ultimately, the Labor Party was successful in winning the election with that policy, but it did try to delay the implementation of that from 1 June last year to a potential—but not confirmed—start date of 1 January this year. We got wind of that, of course; and, if you read it, the memo suggested that, when January came around, it might be time to review that situation again—in other words, not allow for that promise to be delivered.

The former minister, the Hon. Paul Holloway in the other place, was acting treasurer at that time, and I think that his excuse was that he signed it without looking at it. That is how that delay got through, according to the minister, if you believe what the minister said. I think that South Australians understand that the Labor Party are masters of saying one thing at election time and doing something else after, and that was just another example.

Of course, it is important that we keep the costs of training down, and that is why Group Training Australia has raised concerns about what the new regulatory costs may very well be. Employers are put between a rock and a hard place when it comes to employing apprentices. They have substantial training costs they need to meet. It is not just the cost of the salary of the apprentice, it is the cost of the tradesmen who are working with them because they are not working at 100 per cent productivity and they are spending down time training the apprentice.

They may have to redo work that the apprentice has done and not quite got right. They are dealing with customers, of course, and customers demand the very best, as they should and as they are entitled to. It is a chicken-and-egg scenario: if you do not make that investment in training, you do not get the good tradesmen that South Australians have come to enjoy and expect, whether it be in the building industry, in the automotive industry, or whether it be in the hospitality industry.

I remember a company which made some very fine furniture here in Adelaide for approximately 22 years and which trained about 20 apprentices. I know that the customers of that business were very pleased to know that the trades were continuing in those areas, and they were very pleased with the workmanship that was delivered. I have to tell the house that, when an apprentice makes a mistake, it can be pretty costly for an employer.

I particularly recall in my case a customer ordering several king single beds. Anyone that knows about furniture knows that king single beds are not a popular item as a single bed, so you do not sell a lot of them. What is even less popular is what they call a long single, which is six inches narrower than a king single, but the same length. And this was not the apprentice's fault; it was the factory manager's fault.

**Mr Venning:** Name him.

**Mr PISONI:** No, I will not name him; he is a good tradesman, a very good tradesman. They ended up as long singles instead of king singles, so we were stuck with four unusual sized beds, and we had to eventually—

**Ms Chapman:** Could a man sleep in one of those? The member for Stuart?

**Mr PISONI:** Yes, the member for Stuart could have slept in one of those. The mattress was six-foot eight inches long, for a long single. Of course, these things happen and these are all costs that employers take on when they are training staff, so there is a cost pressure for employers. There is also the issue of the fact that apprentice wages are not terribly attractive. In these days, of course, apprentices do tend to start later. When I did my apprenticeship I started at the age of 16. These days, many apprentices are not starting until they are 18, and many of them, as I said, are not finishing their apprenticeships until they are 21, 22 years of age.

Many of them have already moved out of home, a difficult thing to do on apprentice salaries. That is another pressure that apprentices have. In order to deal with that you may argue that apprentice salaries need to be increased. In South Australia we have 96 per cent of our employees employed by small businesses. Those sorts of additional costs make it more difficult for small businesses to do the right thing and take apprentices on.

I have digressed there a little bit, Madam Speaker, and I am not strictly speaking about the bill, but it is a very relevant point about the pressures that employers have in taking on staff and

why it is important that we do have consistency. Although we have many small businesses here in South Australia, we are very good at niche products and niche services. I think that has evolved over the years because South Australia is a pretty difficult market.

Anyone who has been in business here in South Australia would know that it is a difficult market. There is a well-known saying for many people producing consumer products in particular, who say that if it will sell in Adelaide it will sell anywhere, because we are a difficult market here in South Australia.

Before mobile phones you may recall the phone card was trialled in Adelaide. Adelaide was the only city to have a trial for the phone card that went into phone boxes instead of coins. I had no idea that it was a trial. I was travelling regularly to Sydney in those days. I remember going into the post office at Double Bay, or out that way, and asking to purchase a phone card, with the guy behind the counter looking very blank, not knowing what I was talking about.

Of course, I realised then that perhaps South Australia was trialling these, and not long after that they did become a product that was available nationally; but they were in fact trialled in South Australia. The tough market here in South Australia proved that phone cards would, in fact, work. People liked the convenience of them and then, of course, they were superseded not long after that by mobile phones.

Getting back to the consultancy or the consultative process of this bill by the government, it has been an inconsistent approach in this instance as it is with many things that this government introduces. On one hand they say that they want to consult and decide, but we are still seeing situations where it is announce and defend. I think in this instance it is disappointing that when I went out to consultation, as the opposition member, it was the first time a number of key players in the industry were aware that the bill had been drafted and had been presented to parliament.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training generally supports the introduction of the national regulation to ensure consistency and certainty across state boundaries, but it has some concerns with regard to potential processing delays, for example, in requests for accreditation, registration or expansion in the scope of courses if dealing with a national body as opposed to a state body. That is understandable, but then again this state government does not have the best record, if we look at the way it handled the APIC situation.

Even now if you are looking at transferring your responsible persons accreditation from one establishment to another there is a \$17 fee, but no-one tells you that it could take a minimum of a month or even up to three months before that transfer is enacted, which makes it very difficult for people moving from one workplace to another. I have had several calls to my office, concerned about this. I have spoken to the Australian Hotels Association. It is an important issue in the lead-up to Christmas, because we need to have responsible persons behind the bar, but if they are not having their applications processed in a timely manner one would have to ask why does it take so long; why is it such a difficult process? Hopefully we will not see that situation transfer to the federal level.

That reminds me of the situation of a Melbourne training organisation which has opened a branch office here in Adelaide and which took nearly two years to get accreditation in South Australia. I am sure that they would be very pleased to move to a federal system. I was quite involved in dealing with the registering authority here in South Australia, and it was difficult to understand the reason for the delay. As a matter of fact there was nothing wrong with the services that were being provided (they have been provided in Victoria and other states for 20-odd years in the area of health training: nurses, aged care and that type of area), yet for some reason what was satisfactory in other states was not satisfactory here in South Australia.

That it is an example where the national regulatory body will help the industry in South Australia to grow, whether from home-grown businesses that start off here (a husband and wife team, for example, that grows from there) or from an office of an interstate company moving and establishing itself here in South Australia. I would certainly welcome any new private provider starting up in South Australia or expanding to South Australia.

The Australian Council for Private Education and Training has raised other areas of concern about being impacted by regulatory changes, reporting requirements and red tape, which of course seems to be the hallmark of Labor administrations. It is hoped that these busy businesses and employers will be given a reasonable time to digest the new arrangements and conditions. We need to recognise that errors or omissions could happen and it would be nice for it

to be a cooperative process to help those businesses transition, rather than a heavy-handed approach to those who may make a mistake.

Another area of concern raised by RTOs and training organisations was a belief that the fee structures could rise substantially, from the hundreds to the thousands in some cases. For RTOs, for example, fees apply when they add additional qualifications to their scope and they have their five-yearly mandatory audit. They will incur audit fees for the regulator to assess if the RTO has the ability to deliver a new qualification that it has applied for.

It would be of interest to know if South Australia's RTOs will be paying substantially more for these services after the transition than they are now. Other points to pick up on in regard to regulation and compliance are that the private sector is keen for the TAFE colleges to be transitioned from self-assessment and compliance to the same requirements as the RTOs, which is fair and reasonable. Those of us who support the private sector believe that when they are in fact competing with the government sector that they compete on equal grounds, that their competitors are not their regulators.

We saw that with changes to the early childhood and education bill, where we finally saw that the competitor for early childhood services in schools, DECS, was no longer the regulator of that industry or sector, and the regulator is now an independent body which has representation from across the sector. A further point is that staffing levels, training standards, service delivery and other resources are consistent across jurisdictions and meet the needs of South Australia. We would all agree that that is important, and it is of course to be hoped that quality outcomes in regard to compliance are higher than are currently being delivered through DFEEST, otherwise there would hardly seem any point. That is fair and reasonable.

Getting back to the APIC situation, that did pass a number of state regulatory audits, and one has to ask why. Let us hope we will see some higher standards. I believe that would be of interest to the minister to ensure that that be the case. Obviously there will need to be amendments and some changes to the Training Skills Development Act 2008 as a result of the commonwealth powers bill. Stakeholders have flagged that, and, hopefully, they will be fully consulted. Some key differences between South Australia and other jurisdictions will need to be considered, including South Australia's specific requirements for employer registration prior to engaging apprentices and the South Australian right to declare vocations.

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (11:07):** I rise to speak on the Vocational Education and Training (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2011, and I thank the member for Unley for his generous contribution to the parliament on this matter outlining the opposition's indication of support for the same. Perhaps it is the time of the year, as we approach Christmas, that he is being so generous and affable—of course that fits with his nature. He is a strong advocate for quality education for our young people in South Australia, and he also wishes to make sure we have a system which ensures a high standard of quality, and a registration and regulatory process and structure which he has outlined is one that he endorses.

Quite rightly he has outlined some concerns about costs, consultation and other impacts that have not yet been answered, and no doubt he will be efficient in his responsibility during the committee stage to have some indications, undertakings and answers from the minister. I am not feeling quite so generous. Perhaps as the Christmas spirit descends upon us I will improve in that regard, but I think the government has been derelict in its duty to us as a parliament and to the young people of South Australia in making sure they undertake their responsibilities properly and have full disclosure about what this is all about.

We know that the 2009 COAG, the little meeting of the ministers and the federal representative, decided that it would have a national VET regulatory system and that that would be important. The usual reason for this is the significant inclusion and expansion of bodies or companies or entities that work across borders and that the most efficient model is to have a national scheme—it produces harmony and everyone is happy, it is efficient and we save money. We had all of these promises and, really, did they come to fruition? That is what is so disappointing.

I can remember standing here debating the health practitioners national regulation scheme—and what do we have now? Complaint after complaint after complaint about the heavy cost of regulation and the burden on health professionals in this state. Have we improved the protection for patients and consumers in that field? Probably not. Have we adopted a scheme that is beneficial for South Australians? I do not think so. So, I am a little more concerned that we

examine these things more carefully and that we ask the question and have a positive answer about whether the model we introduce to produce this panacea of protection is actually going to be with us.

Of course, the other thing this bill does, in the tranche of legislation, is to formalise the transfer of the regulation of services which our overseas students come under (they are actually brought in under separate legislation) to the federal arena. So, we have the adoption of a federal act, which we are being asked to support today, and a referral of powers in relation to the veterinary regulation powers to support a national scheme.

The situation, I remind members, follows a period of sensational embarrassment for this state government. It follows a period when the entity Australian Pacific International College—APIC, I think it was often called—

**Mr Pisoni:** APIC.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** APIC, the member for Unley reminds me. What a scandal! It was a situation where an institution was established, and there was a huge enrolment of students who did not even go to school. There were rooms where there were no classroom facilities and workshops where there was no equipment. This was a scandalous situation, which was exposed as really a rort on the immigration rules. Post that exposure, it was found that there had been a monumental failure by repeated audits of this organisation and the government closed it down, which it should have done.

I remember former members of the ministry in this very government—the member for Ashford, for example, who, in her time as minister, closed down an organisation that clearly was not meeting the standards, as she should have done—and everyone here, I am sure, in the parliament supported that. Here was a situation where, under the government's own watch, there had been a monumental failure, even with the rules the government had to deal with this. So, what did we do? Of course, we had a report—we had the McCann report. He was trotted in to prepare a report about how we might toughen this up.

So, earlier this year, we were asked to come into the parliament and provide some new rules to strengthen what had been a failure in the state system before we ultimately came to this tranche of legislation. So, we are here now to hand over the whole kit and caboodle to the federal arena. I am never confident that the federal arena is good at doing these things. The AQIS disaster in relation to the horse influenza issue is just a more recent contemporary example of how hopeless and incompetent federal agencies can be. That ought to be one that should remind us that just by transferring something to a federal organisation, we are not going to have something better.

But the thing that concerns me particularly is that there has been a failure in the provision of information which I think is fundamental to our approving this transfer, and that is: what is it going to cost South Australian RTOs? Members of the department very kindly provided a briefing to members of the opposition, including myself, to provide information about how the structure was going to operate. One of the pieces of information which I had sought and which I think is reasonable for us to have before we are asked to approve this legislation is: what is it going to cost the RTOs in South Australia?

Not the few that work nationally and that will have the benefit of being able to have one national registration; I am talking about all the others in South Australia that will need to go through a potentially much more expensive process. I asked for the modelling, I asked for the costings on that, and what did I get back? I got back a summary of what it will save the state government.

I do not give a tink at the moment about what cost savings they want to give themselves; that is not what concerns me. Obviously they do not give a toss about what the poor old taxpayer pays anyway, but they say that this is actually going to be a saving for the state government. It may be for taxpayers, but if it is at the expense of transferring a cost to all the registered training organisations in this state that operate wholly in this state, then that is not acceptable.

We need to see that modelling. I hope the minister has viewed it and had a good read of it; apparently it is available, but we still have not got it. We should know what that information is before we are asked to transfer this power to the commonwealth. They can muck up all sorts of things; we have seen their stuff-ups, so I am not confident they are going to do it properly. I want to know, here, what it is going to cost our people to go through this process.

There is an alternative, and this was canvassed during discussions of information that was provided. It is an alternative that the Western Australian and Victorian governments have taken up, that is, to retain a system for the state-based RTOs and allow a system of regulation for those that are operating in a national field. Of course we need to consider their convenience as well, but it is not all about big business; this is about the little ones as well.

They elected not to sign up to the 2009 COAG, not refer any of their powers under their own legislation. They would maintain their own legislation and would mirror what the other states were doing under the national scheme. So they had an agreement that there would be a special reference, that any RTO wishing to operate in more than one jurisdiction would need to comply with the new national regulator rules. That was fine; that was easy, but they kept responsibility at the state level.

Now, where is the most obvious precedent for that here with our own state government? The most obvious, of course, is when we had the industrial law reform in this state, and ministers in the Rann government came in here to tell us how important it was that we transfer into a national scheme, how fabulous it was—except that public servants should not. For some reason the people who work for the state government should be the only group that is protected and kept in the state arena. They were there to push the national model, to transfer to the national level—except for the public servants, who they wanted to keep control of.

I did notice that minister O'Brien announced last week, I think, that we are now up over 100,000 public servants in this state, full and part-time. Sadly, they are not all doctors and teachers and nurses and policeman. We have over 100,000 in the state, so not surprisingly they wanted to say to the parliament of South Australia, 'We are going to keep them back; we are going to keep them under our watch. We know what we are doing. It is important that we protect them under state law.' But every other poor tosser in South Australia has to be shoved off to be dealt with at the Canberra level. That is the reality.

So for the government to come in here and pretend that it actually cares about what is happening in the RTO arena, for the government to come in here and say that it is going to get tough on these issues, when it stuffed up its own compliance in dealing with the protection and the abuse that was exposed in the APIC case, is not good enough for me. And it should not be good enough for the parliament, until we have those answers before us and we can properly examine this by way of comparison. Otherwise, in my view we should be looking more seriously at the Victorian and Western Australian model and adopt that, until we are convinced that this would be beneficial for the registered training organisations in this state.

While I have the full attention of the Treasurer, who has a lot of financial responsibility in this state and who was previously a minister dealing with higher education and training and so on, I will say this. In this state we have maintained legislation specifically for our universities—state legislation, not commonwealth. In fact, I think the University of Adelaide was the third university in this state. We have very proudly maintained state legislation, under the Education Act, for public schools in this state and for the regulation and registration of independent schools.

We have maintained state legislation on law and order to protect others. We have maintained state housing and planning legislation to protect those who are in student accommodation. We have maintained higher education legislation and regulation. What is wrong with us retaining some responsibility for the vocational education in this state, especially under the regulatory regime under which many of our RTOs operate, just within the borders of this state? What is wrong with that?

If it is good enough for industrial law, and if it is good enough for a myriad of other things like education and law and order, why is it not good enough for us to control it? Why? Because the government does not want to have to deal with overseas students disasters—that is the RTO disaster that was exposed under their watch. They do not want to deal with that. They will send it over to some poor person in Canberra who is going to be expected to pick that up.

Let me finally conclude by saying this: do you think under the new regime, under the act which specifically provides for the referral of powers which will enable a referred VET matter—that is, the issue and cancellation of vocational education and training qualifications—do you think that when somebody else mucks up in South Australia and it is a national RTO, somebody over in Canberra is going to be concerned to close down a national RTO which has operations in a whole lot of other states because of a defect or deficiency in South Australia? I am not confident of that and neither should the rest of this house be. I will await their answers.



**Mr VENNING (Schubert) (11:21):** I rise just briefly to support this bill with some comment. I also note that the Liberal Party supports this and note what the shadow minister had to say earlier. I am always a little concerned when we refer powers to the commonwealth, particularly where I do not think in some instances it is totally imperative that we do so, but in this instance there are arguments on both sides, particularly to ensure consistent application of the national standards that we have.

I have a lot of questions in relation to what will happen to the office here in South Australia. I am not sure how many people are actually employed there; I probably should have asked the shadow minister that before. What will happen to that office; how many people are employed there; and have any of them been offered jobs in the new central national office? I would like those questions addressed in the minister's wind-up speech because I do not want to see people lose their jobs for things we do in this place.

Also, will this proceed if any of the other states do not agree? There are still three states that have not agreed to this; if they do not all agree, do we continue without them, particularly if they do not agree and do not pass the enabling legislation as we are doing here? Also it does mention here that, after four years, things will change and it will move to a full cost recovery system.

If this does not work (and I think the member for Bragg just intimated this) is there a sunset clause in this legislation? Could or should there be a clause as a safeguard that, if this does not go as planned, it could revert back to the state jurisdiction? Nobody has said anything about that. I would like an answer to that question. Referral of power to the commonwealth is one-way traffic nowadays. Under current situations, there are some things that the states do better, so if the quality of service fails the people of South Australia it should revert back, but it never seems to.

Why are we introducing this legislation? I presume it is for uniformity across the country. I have not actually heard what the problem is that we have at the moment and why it is not working. In my time in this place, so often we bring in legislation because it is a feel-good thing, but really when you get out there is this legislation necessary? In this instance, I presume it is, but again, I give the benefit of the doubt. However, we will lose the competitive incentive, I believe, to ensure that we have benchmarks in the service division, and by that I mean that the worst performing state was always continually ranked against the best performing state. When you have not got those individual states doing it, there will not be any other service provider. I bet you London to a brick that your quality of service will probably fall, but I hope I am wrong.

As the member for Unley said, the area of worker training and apprenticeships is very important to us all, whether you be a farmer, a furniture maker, a plumber or an electrician. Apprenticeships have served us very well over many, many years. We all know now of big skills shortages in many of our workplaces, especially in the mining industry. By centralising all these powers in one office, I presume it will assist in targeting the shortages, especially today when we have a very mobile workforce that flies in and flies out. Even flying out of Australia is now common.

We are living in a very changing world and I have to say that it is going to get tougher in the future for all of us. All vocations are affected by the open economies we now have, particularly in Australia, which arguably has the most open economy in the world, and there are a few downsides to that. We have seen what happened with Qantas, and yesterday American Airlines went into insolvency. We are seeing the pressures that overseas economies are going to put on us, particularly as our dollar is able to float. Other countries trade with our currency, particularly China, and controls the level of their own currency. It is going to cause us a great deal of angst.

While the mining industry is booming like it is and our farmers are getting a reasonable price for their product it is all okay, but you wait until the mining industry crashes—and it will; we all know that, it is just a matter of when—and world food prices crash. I think we will be in a bit of bother. I think we need to be smart about this. I was also concerned about the discussions last week about OneSteel in Whyalla. I only hope that is not true, because it will have a devastating effect on regional South Australia if OneSteel stops manufacturing steel in Whyalla.

Our future lies in working smarter, and this could help that, and in marshalling our workers with individual talents into key areas. We must also encourage our people to work harder, I believe. I think we could all work a big harder. People in some other countries, particularly the Chinese, certainly work harder than we do.

We must also encourage our older Australians to stay in the workforce longer, and many of us can. Should 60 year olds do apprenticeships? I cannot see why not, because I think we are

always learning, and it should be encouraged. The question is: why are people expected to retire at the age of 65?

**The Hon. J.J. Snelling:** I entirely agree, Ivo. You resist, mate. You hang in there.

**Mr VENNING:** I heard what the Treasurer said. I have to declare that I am 65—nearly 66, actually, in about four weeks; I can't tell a lie. I have to say that I reckon I have another 10 years in me, and a lot of people say the same thing. If you like doing it, you should continue to do it. However, when you are here for 22 years you have to understand that you may be keeping another person out of the job. You have to consider that, in this particular vocation, but not in all of them.

**The Hon. J.J. Snelling:** Your best years are in front of you, Ivan.

**Mr VENNING:** I hear what the Treasurer said. Honestly, they certainly are in front of me. However, one, you have to be well enough to enjoy it and, two, have a memory to know what you are doing. That is the worry at my age. You are right, whether it is in this place or wherever. I think we have to wake up.

**Mr Pederick:** Is this a formal announcement?

**Mr VENNING:** It's not a formal announcement, no. Looking at apprenticeships, I cannot understand why apprenticeships cannot be offered to people of 60 years of age. I intend to have a change of vocation when I do leave this place. I want to go back into doing something physical, like crash repairs and fixing up my own vintage car. I need skills to do that. I am going to learn them through TAFE or whatever. I believe the day you stop is the day you die. I think while you can you do, whatever it is, in every sphere, both personal and professional. You only have to look at the Hon. John Darley, a man of 73, to see what value he is.

**Mr Pengilly:** And he's standing for another term.

**Mr VENNING:** He is standing for another term, the member for Finniss says. I agree. He is standing again and he is a great asset to this place. The mind, the intelligence and his experience is of real value to this place. So it is time we focus on this area in relation to this legislation. I am looking on the positive side of this. Hopefully this is the right thing to do. With all those questions I have raised, I hope it is the right thing to do and that this legislation will assist people to prepare themselves for the future—it can be bright but, if we are not smart, it will not be.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (11:30):** I will make some brief comments. I support this bill. Some members have expressed concern that we are handing over too many powers to the federal government or the commonwealth to administer. However, we are one nation and we need to remember that we are one country, and it would be good to have some consistency, not only in the area of VET but across the board. At the moment we have a whole lot of varying approaches to all sorts of things once you cross a border. Not only would it make life simpler for citizens but it would assist in productivity and competitiveness if we had a standardised approach to most things across what is meant to be one nation.

I believe that historically South Australian has had a pretty good system in respect of monitoring Vocational Education and Training (VET) standards. That has been shown in recent times when the minister acted in relation to an operation that was not doing what it should, and there have been occasions in the past where ministers have acted on the recommendations of the professionals who keep an eye on what is happening in the VET sector.

I make the point that it is good to have standards, you need standards but you must have them enforced. There is no point in having standards in the vocational area if you do not have enforcement as well. In the case of Victoria, I am told on good authority that it has, as a result of a loosening of the system, people being able to get a diploma in a matter of days. Well, that is just ridiculous.

What we need in this country is an increase in the upskilling of our workforce. Countries like Germany are industry-based and they put in a lot of effort, and it is no wonder that its products are well received and continue to sell against cheap labour opposition. I believe it is largely because of their research, development and training commitment. In Australia today, even with the high cost of labour in Germany (it is not a low-wage state), they are able to sell their products here and people are willing to pay, in some cases a little bit more, because they know that if it is made in Germany it is good quality.

What we need from companies in Australia in particular is a greater commitment to training in-house and not resorting to what is often the case of poaching trained people from other

companies who are committed to upskilling. We have seen over time some abuses with the VET sector where for years people came to Australia ostensibly to become hairdressers or work in the beauty industry or work in hospitality and train as chefs when their real motivation was to become Australian citizens and do anything but those particular occupations. The federal government has restricted some of those abuses, and so it should.

At the university level now we see that there is a not-so-subtle reward for studying here at university level, and that is that you are more likely to obtain citizenship. I am always concerned when we trade off a qualification for, in effect, the promise or the hope of citizenship in Australia. Ultimately, as a nation (and it applies not only in VET but in the university sector, as well) you are judged in terms of the standard you meet and, if you lose that respect, then people overseas will not value your training—the levels and quality—and over time you will suffer.

If you look at the history of Japan, it was not until about 1949 or the early fifties that they brought in a standard, a quality control for all Japanese products, if they were to be exported. That has paid off over time because people can be assured that if it is made in Japan it meets quality standards. If you want to have quality standards, you must have people who are appropriately trained at the level to deliver those quality products and services.

We are talking here particularly about the VET sector, and I am pleased that it will relate to overseas students; as I said earlier, in South Australia we have a pretty good track record of monitoring that. To go beyond the VET sector for a moment, at the university level it is important that proper standards are maintained in the courses and so on that are offered. We know that universities have a different qualifications framework, but there is a temptation for them to water down some of their courses and academic requirements, and I think we are seeing that in a couple of areas, such as so-called 'double degrees', which are not two degrees at all but more like 1½ degrees.

Universities are also into the business of trying to fool people by whittling away standards. We see it in the postgraduate area, where people are playing mickey mouse with some of the postgraduate qualifications. It will come back to bite the universities because, ultimately, they live or die by their reputation, and once they get a name as a mickey mouse provider then the game is over for them. Whilst we are focusing on the VET sector here, the same lessons apply: if you become known as a mickey mouse provider, your days are numbered. Under this new proposal, one would hope that any mickey mouse operator would be thinned out quickly and appropriately.

I do not have any concerns about transferring the powers to the commonwealth. I think it makes sense to have a national system, otherwise you will have a patchwork of different qualification levels and quality assurance throughout the country, and I do not think that is in anyone's interests. We have an increasingly mobile population, and we need to know that if someone qualifies in one state that the standard is the same in any other state or territory.

As we now move increasingly into a competitive world, we have to set the standard in terms of quality training. Part of that challenge will be consequential on the bill that, hopefully, we will finalise today in relation to Roxby Downs. The demand for skilled labour will increase dramatically, but they have to be appropriately skilled, and that means having a body that enforces standards and does not simply allow people to do what they like when it comes to the provision of vocational education and training in this country.

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Recreation and Sport) (11:38):** I will make some brief comments. I thank members for their contributions, which reflect the importance of training in the current economy and also in the future economy of South Australia. Education and training drive productivity. As our population ages, productivity growth and productivity improvements will become more and more important right across the economy.

Part of that is a national system. Part of having an effective training regime is that it has to be a nationally common regime so that right across the country, if you get a qualification in a certain area in one state, it counts in another state. As numerous speakers pointed out in the second reading, Australia is a mobile society: people move from state to state to follow jobs, to be closer to family or for a myriad of reasons, and having a qualification they can take with them is important.

One of the greatest criticisms of the current regime is that it is often difficult to move from state to state with qualifications and that you can have a qualification in one state that is not recognised in another. This is part of that process. If we are going to have a national system, the

appropriate regulator of a national system is the national government, the commonwealth—and that is where we are heading with this bill. Part of that is the referral of powers; that is what we are doing today, and it is an important part of it.

The regulatory jobs currently held under DFEEST will be moving to the commonwealth—largely, most people will transfer. It will be a local office. It will be based in Adelaide. The training provider is based in South Australia and it will deal with the South Australian office and South Australian people. It will know most of them because, in large part, they will be the same people doing the regulation here in South Australia at the moment as part of DFEEST.

The member for Bragg talked about the Victorian model and asked why there could not be a separate South Australian system. Even if there were a separate South Australian system, somewhere between a third and half of all current training providers would need to be part of the national system anyway because it ties in overseas students, who are particularly the people who get caught up in that. In fact, TAFE would need to be part of a national system because TAFE deals with overseas students.

The member for Bragg mentioned the McCann review. That, I am told, fully informed the federal act and was especially around penalties. The big area on which the McCann review had an effect was penalties in the federal act. The member for Bragg also talked briefly about higher education. Higher education is not covered in this bill, obviously, because the feds have taken it over through the Corporations Act. They did not need a referral of powers; that was not required. We did not have to pass a bill because, under corporations law, and constitutionally, that is held under the federal government. They just took that area over.

The member for Bragg also mentioned fees. As part of the 2010-11 budget, the state government decided to increase fees to private training providers to reflect full cost recovery, and that has been the case in many areas of government for a long time. PIRSA led the way in full cost recovery. Where a government provides a regulatory service, it recovers the cost of doing that. The federal government will have a full cost recovery scheme. It will be phasing in its full cost recovery model, as we did, so there will not be a single shock to the system. It will be introduced gradually and work its way up to full cost recovery, so it will not be the shock to the system that the member alluded to.

With that, I thank all members for their contribution. I thank them for their interest in training; it is a very important area. I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clause 1

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

#### **WORKERS REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION (EMPLOYER PAYMENTS) AMENDMENT BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 28 September 2011.)

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (11:45):** I move:

That this order of the day be discharged.

Motion carried; order of the day discharged.

#### **ROXBY DOWNS (INDENTURE RATIFICATION) (AMENDMENT OF INDENTURE) AMENDMENT BILL**

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

#### **PARLIAMENTARY REMUNERATION (BASIC SALARY) AMENDMENT BILL**

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

**WORKERS REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION (EMPLOYER PAYMENTS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (11:47):** I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the introduction forthwith and passage of a bill through all stages without delay.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** An absolute majority not being present, ring the bells.

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

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING:** Just briefly, I realise that it is not normal process of the house to go through a bill through all stages; however, I point out that this bill was in fact introduced to the house roughly a month ago and has been sitting on the table since then. It became apparent that in order to expedite the passage of the bill through the house, it was better that it be also introduced into the other place and its debate has occurred in the other place and made it through the other place. Given that the bill has been sitting on the paper, I think it is reasonable for us to proceed with the debate.

The other reason for the government wishing to expedite the passage of the bill is that it is important to have the new employer payment system in place by 1 July of the next financial year to enable there to be sufficient time for the systems and regulations to be drawn up and for there to be sufficient consultation on those regulations. The government believes it is imperative for the bill to be passed through both houses before the house rises for the year.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (11:50):** The opposition agrees with that.

Motion carried.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (11:47):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

The purpose of this Bill is to enable a new approach to employer payments in the South Australian workers compensation Scheme.

As the House is aware, the WorkCover Scheme is funded by employers to provide fair compensation to injured workers and to support them to remain at work wherever possible or return to work or the community, at a reasonable cost to employers.

In 2008, on the basis of recommendations made by Australia's pre eminent workers compensation experts in the Clayton Walsh Review, the Government implemented fundamental amendments to the Scheme aimed at addressing the poor return to work rates of injured workers in South Australia.

As noted in the independent review of the 2008 amendments conducted by Mr Bill Cossey in early 2011, there has been some trend towards improvement in return to work rates, however it is too early to evaluate the impact of the 2008 changes. The Government acknowledges there is still a way to go before the goals of the 2008 amendments are met.

The proposed new approach to employer payments will provide a financial incentive to employers to achieve the best possible work health and safety practices leading to fewer workplaces injuries.

Where workplace injuries do occur, the system will provide a financial incentive to employers to support injured workers to stay at work wherever possible or to achieve an early and safe return to work.

Improvements in injury prevention, management and return to work practices in the Scheme will result in better outcomes for workers as well as lower the cost of the Scheme.

Registered employers currently pay a levy based on their industry classification and the amount of remuneration paid to employees. The industry levy rate reflects the expected cost of claims for that industry. On average, the total amount collected from registered employers is about 2.75% of the total remuneration paid to employees by registered employers. This is what is known as the average levy rate and is set by the WorkCover Board each year based on actuarial evaluations.

The allocation of how much each employer pays is currently dependent only on the industry they are in and how much they pay their employees. Improved performance of an industry as a whole is required before employers within that industry benefit from a reduced levy rate.

Clearly where the cost of a claim has only a small impact on the amount an employer pays, there is little incentive to reduce the claim costs by helping injured workers to recover and remain at work or return to work as soon as possible.

The new approach to employer payments has been carefully developed and the framework incorporated into this enabling legislation. The full detail of the new approach is not incorporated into the Bill because the system is best served by including the design framework in the Act, with supporting detail contained in the Regulations and various Gazetted documents, as is the case in the similar New South Wales, Victorian and Queensland schemes.

The Regulations and gazettal documents will be developed for consultation with stakeholders subject to the passage of the Amendment Bill through Parliament.

The new approach to employer payments can be summarised as incorporating:

- a mandatory Experience Rating System for medium and large employers registered with the Scheme
- an optional Retro Paid Loss arrangement for large employers registered with the Scheme
- no change to the way in which premiums are calculated for small employers registered with the Scheme
- minimal change to private and Crown self insured arrangements
- changes to terminology, definitions and practices within the Scheme, aimed at achieving cultural change.

Both the Experience Rating System and the Retro Paid Loss arrangements are forms of experience rating. Under an experience rating approach the amount an employer pays in premium is directly impacted by their own claims experience.

Experience rating aims to provide a financial incentive for employers to improve their claims experience through good work health and safety practices and injury and return to work management. The result is that if an employer has high claims costs it is likely that they will pay more in premium in comparison to similar sized employers operating in the same industry who have lower claims costs.

The premium calculation for the Experience Rating System is designed to take into consideration the employer's individual claims experience, as well as their size and the level of risk of their industry. A range of employer protections are built into the system to achieve a balance between 'insurance protection' with 'user pays' principles.

The design of the new approach to employer payments has been based on similar systems in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, independent actuarial modelling of the appropriate scheme framework for the South Australian market and a comprehensive consultation process undertaken by WorkCover and the Government.

WorkCover in fact commenced a comprehensive consultation process on the new approach to employer payments in September 2010. Employers, employer associations and unions have been heavily involved in the design of the new approach and input has also been received from insurance companies and insurance brokers.

The Government believes that there is broad support across WorkCover's stakeholder base for the introduction of a new approach to employer payments in South Australia. The employer community looks forward to the opportunity to influence the amount of premium they pay and unions are fully cognisant of the potential benefits to workers when employers focus on reducing claims costs by assisting the recovery of injured workers and enabling them to remain at work or return to work as soon as possible.

Who will be experience rated?

The Experience Rating System has been designed to be fair and reflective of an employer's risk of a workplace injury, as indicated by the employer's claims experience, relative to their business activity and size.

Independent actuaries have modelled the new approach to determine the threshold at which point employers should be experience rated—this has been based on the likelihood of employers having a claim, relative to their size.

Small employers will be defined in regulation as those with a base premium of less than \$20,000 or annual remuneration paid to their employees of less than \$300,000 and they will continue to pay premium based on their remuneration and relevant industry premium rate.

All employers with base premium equal to or above \$20,000 and annual remuneration equal to or above \$300,000 will meet the threshold criteria for entry into the Experience Rating System.

Large employers will be defined as those employers with base premium of more than \$500,000 and will be experience rated unless they apply for and are accepted into the separate Retro Paid Loss arrangements.

The effect of these categories is that only approximately 10% of registered employers will be above the threshold for entry into the Experience Rating System. While this percentage may seem insignificant, it is important to note that this same group are responsible for approximately 75% of claims costs and 75% of the levy currently paid by registered employers.

Approximately 90% of employers will be categorised as small and these employers will continue to pay premium based on their remuneration and industry rate. This is because the likelihood that small employers will have

a claim is so low – in fact employers who currently pay less than \$20,000 in levy are likely to have one claim approximately every 13 years. Clearly it is difficult to differentiate between 'chance' and 'performance' in understanding claims experience of individual employers in this size category.

Although all employers have the ability to have an impact on the number and costs of their claims through workplace safety, injury, and claims management practices, the objective of the Experience Rating System is to influence employer behaviour so that their performance improves. Therefore it is important that the new system be limited to employers who are of sufficient size so that their individual claims experience is a credible indication of their work health, safety and injury management efforts.

What is Retro Paid Loss?

Under the new employer payments approach, large employers (those with a base premium over \$500,000) will also have the option of applying to enter into Retro Paid Loss arrangements. Retro Paid Loss is a form of experience rating that calculates the premium an employer pays in a manner that closely reflects the actual costs the employer has incurred. It has limited association with industry experience.

Employers within Retro Paid Loss arrangements can experience significant reductions in the amount of premium that they pay if they have good claims experience. However, employers can experience a high premium if they don't manage their claim numbers and costs effectively. For this reason, Retro Paid Loss arrangements are often referred to as 'burning cost'.

In this approach, the premium an employer pays is closely linked to their claims performance (that is, injury prevention and management practices), not only during the policy period but until the claim is closed, or for four years following the expiry date of the policy period, whichever comes first.

Because of the potential for significant volatility in premiums, Retro Paid Loss arrangements will be optional and restricted to large employers with demonstrated capacity and resources to manage the inherent risks of the approach.

Key aspects of the new approach to employer payments

Terminology changes

Within the new approach to employer payments the amount employers pay will be referred to as their premium instead of 'levy'. This terminology is more appropriate for an Experience Rating System and reflects a general insurance concept that implies some degree of influence over how much is paid.

Additionally, the Act currently refers to a physical or mental injury as a disability. Changing the terminology used within the Act to injury will more accurately reflect the contemporary workers rehabilitation and compensation Scheme in which the majority (79% in 2009-10) of injured workers either do not take time off work, or return to work within two weeks of an injury.

Claims estimates

A key part of the premium calculation within the new Experience Rating System is the inclusion of employer claims costs. An employer's experience will take into account actual paid costs and a manual estimate of the outstanding costs for the life of the claim. This will ensure that employers focus more on management of their claims with the aim of reducing the costs and this will directly benefit their injured workers.

Confirmation of registration

The current 'proof of registration' section of the Act is proposed to be replaced with a 'certificate of registration' – a hybrid model between the current proof of registration and the 'certificate of currency' similar to those issued in Victoria and Queensland. It will be used to prove registration to officers of industrial associations and will also need to be produced if requested by someone contracting with the employer to undertake work. This will support principal contractors by providing evidence that a sub contractor is registered with WorkCover

Transfer of business

The transfer of claims experience with the transfer of business is an important element of experience rating. Without this transfer, the opportunity to 'game' the system by selling and establishing new businesses would be increased. Claims experience and remuneration will follow where a transfer of business occurs within the meaning of the Fair Work Act 2009.

Other legislative changes

Consequential changes to other Acts

This Amendment Bill also makes consequential amendments to other Acts, including the Stamp Duties Act 1923, the WorkCover Corporation Act 1994, and the proposed Work Health and Safety Act 2011. These changes are largely substituting the terms 'disability' and 'levy' for 'injury' and 'premium' but also deal with references to the Occupational Health and Safety fee collected by WorkCover on behalf of SafeWork SA under the proposed Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Excess waiver

This Bill proposes that employers who meet their notification and claim lodgement requirements under the Act within five calendar days of a worker reporting an injury will be exempt from paying the first two weeks of income maintenance for that worker. This is an increase from two business days and was based on employer feedback that

circumstances can make it difficult for employers, even with the best intentions, to provide notification of an injury to the claims agent within the two day window.

By expanding the opportunity to be eligible for the excess waiver, those employers who previously missed the two day window and then had no incentive to lodge the claim quickly will focus on always meeting the five day window. This is critical because early notification of an injury can significantly improve claims management outcomes.

#### Death benefits

Where a worker dies as a result of a compensable injury the Act makes provision for compensation in the form of weekly payments to a dependent partner or child. The Act also provides for a lump sum payment to a dependent child, dependent partner, or to a person dependent on the worker's earnings, as determined by the Corporation.

Currently, where the worker does not leave a financial dependent, neither lump sum payment or weekly payments are made. The cost of the claim is negligible. In the new approach this would mean that a workplace death would have minimal impact on an employer's claims experience, and thus premium, which is not an appropriate financial response to the death of a worker.

To address this, the Amendment Bill proposes that where a deceased worker does not leave a financial dependent, the lump sum payment will be paid to the worker's estate. This will ensure that the death has an impact on the employer's claims experience and premium, and the deceased worker's estate receives compensation. This is also consistent with proposed changes being discussed by the SafeWork Australia workers compensation advisory groups.

#### Penalties, fines and supplementary payments

Employers have a range of premium related obligations under the Act. The objective of fines and supplementary payments is to influence employer behaviour and ensure that employer obligations are met.

The current Act provides for WorkCover to impose a supplementary levy on employers who do not meet their obligations. It permits WorkCover to take into account the incidence or cost of claims when imposing the supplementary levy. These provisions have been retained and expanded in this Bill to enable more than one remission to be granted each period, or more than one supplementary payment to be imposed.

It is important to acknowledge that for employers who are experience rated or participating in retro paid loss arrangements, the incidence and cost of claims will directly impact the amount of premium they pay. For this reason, WorkCover will not use the incidence and cost of claims to determine supplementary payments for these employers. An alternative approach will be established by WorkCover in consultation with employer associations and unions.

In addition to existing fines and supplementary payments within the Act a fine has been introduced in the Bill for employers failing to register. Employers may be required to pay both the appropriate premium and an additional fine of up to three times the amount of premium.

WorkCover will implement a program of education for employers on their obligations and support them to achieve effective work health safety and injury management outcomes. A 12 month moratorium will apply to imposition of fines by WorkCover.

Some new penalties have also been included in the Amendment Bill – an employer failing to provide information requested by WorkCover under relevant sections of the Act (relating to calculation of premium) will be able to be subject to a maximum penalty of \$5,000 which will encourage timely and appropriate provision of information.

#### Contributory negligence and WorkCover recoveries from third parties

The workers compensation scheme in South Australia is a no fault system that protects employers from common law liability arising from work related injuries.

Workers can however pursue their common law right to sue a third party or parties whose negligence has caused or contributed to their injury. Where an injured worker brings an action against a negligent third party, the negligent third party can reduce its liability if it can establish that the worker's own negligence caused or contributed to the worker's injury.

WorkCover can bring its own action under the Act against the negligent third party to recover compensation paid and payable to the injured worker.

This Bill removes any doubt that WorkCover recovery actions are limited by a worker's contributory negligence.

This change will not impact on the level of compensation provided to injured workers.

#### Conclusion

In closing, WorkCover's current levy system offers little incentive for employers to focus on work health, safety and claim outcomes. Changes are required to the current arrangements to influence employer behaviour by rewarding good performers and penalising poor performers.



A system that responds to an individual employer's risk and experience is the most effective lever WorkCover can use to influence employer behaviour and improve outcomes for injured workers, employers and the South Australian community. Providing this incentive will increase the likelihood of improvements in return to work rates, reductions in the incidence of workplace injuries and ultimately contribute to reductions in the overall cost of the Scheme.

The new approach to employer payments as set out in this Amendment Bill is such a system.

The Government commends the Bill to Members.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### Part 1—Preliminary

###### 1—Short title

This clause is formal.

###### 2—Commencement

The measure will be brought into operation by proclamation.

###### 3—Amendment provisions

This clause is formal.

##### Part 2—Amendment of Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986

###### 4—Amendment of section 3—Interpretation

A number of these amendments relate to a proposal to refer to 'injuries' under the Act rather than 'disabilities'.

Another amendment will continue the ability of the Corporation, if it so determines, to regard 2 or more workplaces in close proximity to each other to be regarded as a single workplace (see section 65(2) of the current Act).

Another amendment will allow the Corporation to designate various forms for the purposes of the Act (rather than the Minister). It will also be possible for the Corporation to specify a form that is different to a written or printed form.

###### 5—Amendment of section 45A—Compensation payable on death—lump sums

This clause will allow the Corporation to pay compensation where a deceased worker only leaves a partially dependent partner or partners. The clause will also insert a new provision to the effect that if a worker who dies as a result of a compensable injury does not leave any person as a dependent (or who is taken to be a dependent) under section 45A, an amount equal to the prescribed sum will be payable to the worker's estate.

###### 6—Amendment of section 46—Incidence of liability

The relevant period for the purposes of section 46(8b) of the Act is to be altered from 2 business days to 5 days.

###### 7—Amendment of section 54—Limitation of employer's liability

A right of recovery under section 54(7) of the Act will now also be subject to the express requirement that the amount to be recovered from the wrongdoer must be adjusted to take into account any contributory negligence on the part of the worker.

###### 8—Amendment of section 62—Applications and changes in details for registration

This amendment will include an express requirement under the Act for an employer to provide appropriate information to the Corporation if there is a change in various details or information relating to the registration of the employer.

###### 9—Amendment of section 64—Compensation Fund

This is a consequential amendment.

###### 10—Substitution of Part 5 Divisions 4 to 7 (inclusive)

The new sections to be enacted under this clause will provide a new scheme for the calculation and collection of premiums, payments and fees by employers under the Act.

New section 65 continues the operation of section 65(1) of the Act as it currently stands.

New section 66 will enable the Corporation to establish a set of terms and conditions that will apply to employers in relation to the calculation, imposition and payment of premiums under the Act. These provisions will be referred to as 'WorkCover premium provisions'. Different sets of provisions will be able to be set in relation to different categories of employers. These provisions will underpin the new arrangements for the purposes of premiums under the Act.

New section 67 will establish the requirement for employers to pay premiums under the Act (rather than levies as currently provided by section 66(1) of the Act). An employer who is a self insured employer, exempt from the requirement to be registered, or exempt under the regulations, will not be required to pay a premium under this

Division. A new provision will allow the Corporation to impose on an employer who is in default of the requirement to be registered under the Act a fine not exceeding 3 times the amount of premium that would have been payable under the Act had the employer been registered.

New section 68 will allow the regulations to divide employers into various categories for the purposes of these new arrangements (subject to the ability of the Corporation to assign a particular employer to a different category if it considers that it is appropriate to do so after applying any criteria or factors prescribed by the regulations).

New section 69 will continue the scheme that allows the Corporation to divide the industries carried on in the State into various categories (see section 66 of the Act as it currently stands).

New section 70 will facilitate the setting of a rate (an 'industry premium rate') that is to be applied in relation to each class of industry (compare section 66(6) of the Act as it currently stands).

The new scheme will be based on orders ('WorkCover premium orders') published by the Corporation by notice in the Gazette under new section 71 (and to the extent that such an order does not apply then an employer will pay premiums according to the base premium determined under section 70). A WorkCover premium order may—

- (a) apply any principle relevant to the claims experience of a particular category or class of employer, or the size of an employer (after applying such principles or assumptions as the Corporation thinks fit); and
- (b) fix and apply various principles, weights, adjustments, caps, assumptions or exclusions according to specified factors; and
- (c) without limiting any other provision, specify any adjustment or assumption relating to the remuneration paid to workers over a particular period (including a period into the future); and
- (d) allow employers who satisfy any specified criteria, on application and at the discretion of the Corporation, to pay a premium determined by the Corporation according to an alternative set of principles—
  - (i) specified in the order; or
  - (ii) specified in another WorkCover premium order that applies in the circumstances; or
  - (iii) agreed between the Corporation and the employer; and
- (e) require that employers of a specified class must provide a deposit, bond or guarantee, or some other form of security, specified in the order; and
- (f) make any other provision or impose any other requirement prescribed by the regulations.

New section 72 will establish various stages for the imposition and payment of premiums. These stages will be as follows (in relation to each relevant period for the payment of a premium):

- (a) an initial premium calculated on the basis of estimates and assumptions made at, or in relation to, the beginning of the period after applying any principles specified by the Corporation in the WorkCover premium provisions or in a WorkCover premium order;
- (b) an adjusted premium payable at any time during the period based on applying any principles or requirements specified by the Corporation in the WorkCover premium provisions or in a WorkCover premium order;
- (c) a hindsight premium calculated on the basis of actual amounts and information known or determined by the Corporation at the end of the period after applying any principles or requirements specified by the Corporation in the WorkCover premium provisions or in a WorkCover premium order.

Each component will be payable by a date specified by the Corporation. The Corporation may agree that an initial premium or an adjusted premium will be paid by instalments. The Corporation will be able to grant discounts or other incentives in order to encourage the payment of a premium in advance.

New section 72A sets out a set of grouping provisions. A group will be determined in the same way as presently applies under section 65(3) of the Act as it currently stands. Where 2 or more employers constitute a group—

- (a) unless the Corporation otherwise determines, each employer in the group will be liable to pay premiums in accordance with a WorkCover premium order (rather than on the basis of aggregate base premiums); and
- (b) the Corporation may apply any claims experience, rating or other principle to all members of the group on a combined basis (rather than on an individual basis) in accordance with the provisions of a WorkCover premium order; and
- (c) the Corporation may aggregate the employers in such manner (in any way or for such other purposes) as the Corporation thinks fit under a WorkCover premium order (including by treating 1 employer within the group as if the employer were the employer of all workers employed by the members of the group or by rating them together or according to a common factor).

In addition, the employers in a group will be jointly and severally liable for the payment of premiums attributable to the group.

New section 72B provides for a fee to be paid by self insured employers (just as a levy is currently payable under section 68 of the Act). The fee will be fixed by the Corporation with a view to raising from self insured employers—

- (a) a fair contribution towards the administrative expenditure of the Corporation; and
- (b) a fair contribution towards the cost of rehabilitation funding; and
- (c) a fair contribution towards the costs of the system of dispute resolution established by the Act; and
- (d) without limiting a preceding paragraph, a fair contribution towards the costs associated with the operation of Part 6C and Part 6D of the Act; and
- (e) a fair contribution towards actual and prospective liabilities of the Corporation arising from the insolvency of employers; and
- (f) a fair contribution towards any other costs of a prescribed kind.

Various elements of the current scheme for self insured employers will also be preserved.

New section 72C will revise the principles relevant to the remission of a premium or fee otherwise payable by an employer or the imposition of supplementary payments. The new section will accordingly replace section 67 of the Act as it currently stands. However, a number of new principles are to be established, including the following:

- (a) the Corporation will be able to establish policies about the circumstances in which (and the extent to which) it will consider—
  - (i) an application to provide a remission of any premium or fee; or
  - (ii) the imposition of a supplementary payment,
 (and the Corporation is not under a duty to consider, or to grant a hearing, in relation to any such application);
- (b) the matters that will be relevant for the purposes of the section, insofar as they relate to a particular employer, will be able to be applied to another employer who is linked to the original employer through a transfer of business;
- (c) the specification of the various matter under the section is not intended to limit the Corporation's discretion as to other matters that may be considered relevant to the operation of the section;
- (d) the Corporation may grant 1 or more remissions, or impose 1 or more supplementary payments (or provide for a combination of both or any), in relation to any period.

New sections 72D to 72R (inclusive) will set out various ancillary or related provisions associated with the operation of the new scheme for the calculation and payment of premiums and other relevant amounts. Many of these provisions are based on provisions appearing in the Act as it currently stands.

#### 11—Amendment of section 73—Separate accounts

These are consequential amendments.

#### 12—Substitution of section 76

This clause will enact a new provision that allows the Corporation to issue a certificate with respect to—

- (a) the registration of an employer under the Act; and
- (b) the compliance of an employer with any requirement to pay premiums under this Part.

#### 13—Repeal of section 76A

The section to be deleted by this clause is to be enacted as new section 72O.

#### 14—Amendment of section 112A—Employer information

It is to be made clear that the information that may be disclosed by the Corporation under this section extends to information about a former employer.

#### 15—Amendment of section 120A—Evidence

This is a consequential amendment.

#### Schedule 1—Further amendments of Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986

These are consequential amendments.

#### Schedule 2—Consequential amendments and transitional provisions

This schedule sets out consequential amendments to other Acts (including the proposed Work Health and Safety Act 2011), and relevant transitional provisions.

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (11:50):** The minister is quite right in saying that this bill has been before the house through another process for at least a month, and we are now dealing with it it having been completed in the upper house. The bill simply replaces what was the old bonus penalty scheme under the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act. The government abolished the workers compensation scheme about two years ago (in round figures) without a plan in place to replace the bonus penalty scheme, and this is their plan to now replace it. So, there has been a two-year gap with no scheme in place.

The bill has been widely consulted with the business community, and they have advised us that they are broadly supportive of this particular measure. The Hon. Rob Lucas in another place put a series of questions to the government during the debate which have all been answered to the satisfaction of the business groups, so we have no intention of going into committee on this bill in this chamber. If the business community is broadly supportive of the change then the opposition will be broadly supportive of the change.

The approach set out in the bill has four components: a mandatory experience rating system for medium and large employers registered with the scheme; an optional retro paid loss arrangement for large employers registered with the scheme; no change to the way in which premiums are calculated for the smaller employers registered with the scheme; and minimal change to private and crown self-insured arrangements.

In the original form of the bill, the self-insured industry (or group) was particularly upset that elements in the bill that was originally tabled were not consulted with the group. The government has withdrawn those elements of the bill that were not consulted and were offensive to the self-insureds. The bill now stands essentially in the form that the industry groups support. The opposition does not intend to hold the house any longer. Small business is outside of the scheme, for all intents and purposes. It really relates to the largest 10 per cent of employers within the scheme. Industry groups think that the change will have some benefit either to the employer group generally or, indeed, to the scheme.

I cannot let a debate on WorkCover go by without saying that WorkCoverSA is still the worst performing scheme by a country mile, on any measure, whether it is the return to work rate, the average industry levy rate or the unfunded liability. At some stage the media will approach the government and ask how many more changes does it have to make before it can claim to have the scheme right. For a party that advocates itself as being the friend of the worker, it is hard to imagine how it has let a scheme that is there to assist the worker get into such a state under its watch. It has been 10 years, and on any performance measure, by the government's own admission, it is the worst performing scheme in Australia.

With the new Premier in place, I have no doubt that there will be more changes to come next year. Look out for the Governor's speech when we prorogue the parliament and come back in February, there will be something in there about yet another round of changes to WorkCover and the government will yet again claim that the change will fix the scheme. In relation to this particular bill, the opposition is supportive and we have no need to go into committee.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If the minister speaks, he closes the debate.

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (11:54):** I would like to thank the opposition, and thank the member for Davenport for his support for and expedition of the bill. In brief reply to what the member has said, I would not pretend for a moment that what is proposed is going to be the answer to all of the problems that beset the WorkCover Scheme.

Yes, I do foreshadow that there will probably be some other changes to the scheme before the end of this term of government. There are a number of things which we need to look at; in particular, matters relating to the decisions of the court regarding the Yaghoubi case, and the status of our medical panel. So, I will happily foreshadow that there is a very good chance that we will be back in the parliament at some stage with more changes to the scheme.

In terms of something that could be done which would be reasonably non controversial, and which would have widespread support from employers, workers and unions, it is this employer payment scheme. It seemed important to me to proceed with the most non controversial elements of any change, get those through, and at least start to do some work which will improve WorkCover's performance.

I thank honourable members for their cooperation in expediting their passage of the bill. I also wish to thank the officers of WorkCover who have worked incredibly hard to prepare the bill and, in particular, to undertake extensive consultation to ensure that any concerns by various interested parties, as well as members of parliament, could be dealt with. I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a second time.

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (11:56):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL**

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4.

**Mr PISONI:** This clause refers to the adoption of the national VET regulation. I just have some questions on the implementation of that. First of all, will those who are registered in South Australia automatically be registered federally? Will there be any fees incurred in doing so? Also, what is the timeframe in which it must happen, and will there be a grace period for RTOs?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** Under the federal act, my advice is the transition will be automatic and they will be transitioned with exactly the same regulatory status as they have in South Australia. So, a South Australian provider accredited to provide certain types of training will then be accredited to provide exactly that type of training under the federal system and it will be automatic. So, it will just be a straight transfer across. There will be no costs associated with that and it will take effect immediately upon the proclamation of the act. So, once it has passed parliament, it can be proclaimed very shortly after that and it will then take full effect at that point.

**Mr PISONI:** Thank you, minister. I just have some queries on the full cost recovery. You mentioned in your response to second reading speeches that the state regime was already moving to full cost recovery. Are you able to advise the house if the cost of providing this regulatory service federally is the same as the state providing it?

I ask that question because we know the terms and conditions of employment for commonwealth public servants. For example, their superannuation is substantially higher and leave benefits, I think, are more generous for federal public servants than they are for state public servants. So, I am asking the minister whether there will be a higher cost to recover because this will be run by a federal department as opposed to a state department.

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** It is a hard question to answer with complete accuracy, because it is, in some ways, a hypothetical question. We will move into a full cost recovery position, which we have outlined to providers, and the commonwealth is moving in the same phased way. So, they are underwriting the cost of it for the next three years as they move towards full cost recovery.

Because we have not reached our full cost recovery cost yet, it is difficult for us to compare what it will be with the commonwealth. So, it is a little bit unknown, but there is certainly the possibility that, for like-for-like services, it would be more expensive under the commonwealth. I cannot give any definitive yes or no because it is a bit unknowable in a way, because we have not been at that point yet.

**Mr PISONI:** The transfer of staff from DFEEST to the commonwealth: first of all, how many staff will there be, and will they come off your TVSP targets announced in the budget? Will they be receiving any additional payments, other than accrued entitlements, on transfer?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** Sorry, can you just ask that second part of the question again?

**Mr PISONI:** Will the staff who transfer from your department to the federal regulatory body receive any entitlements over and above what they have accumulated? In other words, will they be receiving any transition payments or any redundancy payments?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** My advice is that the federal regulatory office will have approximately 16 full-time equivalent staff—it is still to be completely settled—and I am told that

10 of our FTEs will be going across. They need to apply for those positions and most of them will be. Some may choose not to, but that is up to them. They will be counted as part of our savings in terms of the number of staff, so it will be a staff reduction, but they will not be receiving a TVSP; they will just be changing jobs, so there will be no redundancy payments for that.

*Mr Pisoni interjecting:*

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** No, no transition payments. I think there are arrangements with the commonwealth that public servants who transfer from federal to state and state to federal take their leave entitlements with them, so they will take over annual leave entitlements and sick leave entitlements with them. They will just transfer them.

**Mr PISONI:** Is that automatic?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** My understanding is that that is the arrangement.

**Mr PISONI:** Can they cash them out?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** No, I do not think we do. I think they are recognised between them. That is my understanding. I will check that and, if it is any different, I will let you know.

**Mr PISONI:** There are virtually two types of students who attend RTOs: those who fund themselves, who are not in employment, and obviously they will be paying these fees; and then there are students who are apprentices or employed and the training is part of their apprenticeship or their traineeship, for example. What is the intention of the government? Is it intended that the students pay those fees, or that the employer pays those fees for training?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** My advice is that the bill will not have any effect on the way fees are paid.

**Mr PISONI:** I understand that, but I am asking what is the government policy? Is it government policy that when training fees go up—for example when you put TAFE fees up in the budget—and when making those assessments, that employers or employees pay the fees?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** The fees are not affected by this bill but, to answer the question, Skills for All will increase the amount of money that is available to subsidise apprenticeships and training. The government will be paying a much larger part of training courses now than it currently is, but any arrangements that are currently in place in terms of the split between employers and employees providing or paying the fees will still remain. It is not affected by this bill.

My understanding is that there will be a lot more negotiation. The short answer is that no current arrangements will change, so in many ways it is open for negotiation between the employer and the employee about who pays fees. My understanding is that it is the case now that the employer may choose to pay fees on behalf of the student, or a student may have to pay the fees themselves and that will not change. But this bill does not affect that at all because they pay it directly to the service provider and it is an arrangement between the employer and the employee. There is no payment of fees to the commonwealth as part of this bill.

**Mr PISONI:** I understand that. I was using the opportunity to try to get the government's policy, or the government's expectation, on the payment of fees, and I am asking that question because of answers that I have received over the years, as an employer in particular, when querying TAFE fee increases. Just to make it clear: there no policy, or the government is silent on the expectation, as to whether an employer or an employee should pay training fees when they are employed?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** I will go back. Under Skills for All, the amount of training that is subsidised by the government would be heavily increased so the instances where a student is required to pay fees will be reduced. Certificate I and Certificate II will be free, fully subsidised. There will be maximum and minimum fees allowable under the system so that fees should not skyrocket. It is currently the case that there is negotiation between the employer and the employee about who pays TAFE fees, and that will remain. The government policy is that there will be no change to those arrangements, other than the total amount of fees paid by people outside of the government, so for employer and employees the total TAFE fees that need to be paid are going to be reduced.

For those above Certificate IV, diplomas and the like, there will be income-contingent loans so that full cost will not become apparent until, like HECS, the person who undertook the training, the student, is employed and earning a certain amount of money and they start paying it back. In

some instances where there is advanced training over and above Certificate IV, there will be no upfront fees payable as well so, again, that question may, in fact, disappear, because it will come back to the student down the track.

The government's policy is that Skills for All will reduce the amount of money that students and employers have to pay but, as to how they are paid or who pays them, that is a matter for negotiation, and it has always been; and that remains.

**Mr PISONI:** In regard to Skills for All, the payment goes to the employer, is that right, and then the employer pays the training organisation?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** The money goes to the training organisation that is providing the training. They charge a fee, and I will use some numbers that are completely plucked out of the air. The cost of the training may be, say, \$4,000 for a Certificate I course. The entitlement is covered so the government pays the registered training organisation directly the total amount of money of \$4,000, I think I said, and that is it. The student does not pay it. They just sign the forms to say they are studying that course, they enrol in the course and the RTO basically charges the government directly. There is no payment by the student which has to be recouped and there is no money handed over by an employer to the RTO. The money goes straight to the RTO.

**Mr PISONI:** I have a constituent who runs a franchise who engaged some Skills for All money. They received that money and organised a training organisation to train their staff and there was a surplus left for them for taking on the training. The franchisor, the head office, then got wind of the fact that there was a profit and insisted, although the franchise agreement remained silent on training, that they only use a training organisation that the franchisor had done a deal with to get a kickback from the training organisation.

In other words, the training organisation charged inflated fees to the employer who was the franchisee, and of those inflated fees returned a commission back to the franchisor. I am using this opportunity, minister. You may not be able to answer the question immediately, and I would ask that you perhaps bring back an answer as to whether that is, in fact, a legal process or whether that is in breach of terms and conditions in some manner.

It may not be part of your department's responsibility; however, I would be concerned that the employer is not receiving the benefit of training an employee in that instance, other than, obviously, the improved services. But the whole intention of the contestability element of Skills for All is to lift the bar in training so that people can in fact choose who they want to train and not be dictated by franchisors or others who they must engage for the training of their staff.

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** We will chase that up, and we may get in contact with you for more details at a later point. I just make some statements. Skills for All has not started and does not start until 1 July, and payments will not be made to employers: it will be direct to RTOs, so, it will avoid that. I make two points: first, minister Koutsantonis recently debated legislation about a small business commissioner. That would be, I think, something they would be able to take up with the small business commissioner because it is caught up in the franchise agreement. In fact, it is not caught up in the franchise agreement, yet the franchisor is still trying to enforce their will on the franchisee. I suspect that would be an excellent case for the small business commissioner.

Secondly, in this particular case the training organisation insisted upon by the franchisor would have to be an approved training organisation under Skills for All before they could receive any money. An interesting question is the way franchise agreements are tied up and the insistence on certain providers, and things like that. With the indulgence of the committee, we will probably have to come back with some more thinking on that. We will get back to you on that, but it is a good point.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Minister, I was listening with interest to your understanding of what the cost structure is going to be. In particular, I think that you understand that, yes, there will be a cost. You are not quite sure what it is, but you do acknowledge that there may be some increased cost for the RTOs here in South Australia under this regime. Have you actually been provided with the modelling of costs, apart from the \$1.4 million revenue that will be lost and a similar amount of costs that you have provided to us?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** No, I have not seen that modelling, is the short answer. I just make the point that it would not matter whether they were under the current regime or moving to the federal regime; the increasing costs will be the same. I should not say 'exactly the same', but there will certainly be an increase and there would have been a similar increase under the current

state regime or the federal regime that we are moving to because we, the state government, were moving towards full cost recovery, anyway, and that was being phased in over the next three years; and the federal government is also intending to phase it in over the next three years. Even if we retained a separate system there would still be an increase for South Australian providers, regardless.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Notwithstanding your government's decision that you are going to move to a cost recovery on this, the fact is that there is a net cost to the government at present and that is not being paid for by the RTOs. There may be a meritorious argument that supports a cost recovery model, and that would depend on a number of things, including whether your costs as a government are reasonable to be imposed, whether the level of regulation is necessary, and whether the pull of RTOs under this model is going to be diminished as a result of any transfer of national bodies under the new national scheme.

All of those things will need to be considered. It seems to me that, if you have not seen any modelling, have you asked to have identified what the cost will be irrespective of whether you say under your new regime you would have asked them to pay in full anyway? What is it going to cost in two or three years' time at the end of this commonwealth agreement to pick up the tab? What is going to be the new cost relative to what it costs now for an RTO to register and to maintain an annual compliance?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** One of the key things about moving to our Skills for All regime is that it is a much more market-driven system. As soon as you have a market-driven system, you are going to have a high number of unknowables in terms of who is going to be around and who is not to be around, who is going to decide to continue training and who is going to opt out of the training market. That is the whole point of a market-driven system—that there will be a lot more flexibility.

The benefit is that there will be a lot more flexibility, that training adapts to the needs of the people wishing to be trained much more quickly. The competition inherent in a market system should drive down the price of providing that training, increase the flexibility in the way in which the training is provided and make it far more convenient for students looking to understand that.

The cost recovery model is well understood in other markets. Fisheries is a notable example, but right across most of our primary industries and the mining industries they understand cost recovery of the regulation. In my experience, every time the reasonableness of the costings has been questioned the independent bodies that have audited regulatory authorities have concluded that they are not overcharging and that they are, in fact, charging a reasonable rate for the services being offered. That is our experience across government. It is certainly something I will be looking for as part of this.

Only until recently has it not been a problem because we have not had to regulate ourselves. It has always been the government that has provided technical and further education through TAFE. It is only recently, in the last 10 years or so, that private enterprises have entered into this market. It is not unreasonable that we would then charge people for the regulatory services that we provide. Interestingly, it should also be noted by the committee that that will also apply to TAFE. TAFE will also have to pay these regulatory fees because they will be competing in the market, and as much as possible we need to apply the same conditions to TAFE as we will to private providers.

There are some notable exceptions, and I have talked about them before. TAFE is burdened with some costs that other private providers are not. They have a community service obligation, so they need to provide training in some areas, regional areas particularly, where it may not be economical. Also, they tend to be the people who provide the highly capital intensive courses, such as mechanical engineering, where you need a workshop and things like that. Recognising that there are some burdens on TAFE, we have to adapt the system to reflect that, but as much as possible we want it to reflect the market conditions.

Because it is a market-driven system, and because there is so much flexibility in the system, it is not really possible for me to give a precise figure on the total cost of how much regulation we will charge, especially as that is now moving to the federal government. We made estimations on how much we thought it would cost to regulate that, and I have those numbers. They are more savings. If you give me a moment I will get those numbers for you. In financial year 2012-13 the cost of providing the regulatory services would be \$1.461 million. In financial year 2012-13 we budgeted to recover in regulatory cost recovery \$1.123 million for 2012-13, so slightly less. By 2013-14 we should be in sync and it would be costing us as much as we spend.



Having said that, it is hard to outline how individual companies will be affected. We do have some modelling which is new fees compared to old fees so commonwealth fees versus state, so ASQA fees (the federal body) versus state fees at current levels, but we have not done it down to the individual company level. I do not think it is possible to do that because there are such substantial changes under the Skills for All that are coming in that it is going to be very difficult to predict with any great accuracy at all how individual companies will be affected and whether they will remain in training or not.

The experience in Victoria has been that private RTOs have heavily increased their share of the market, which is to be expected because they are allowed into more areas of the market, and they have increased the amount of training that they have done. TAFE's experience was the same: while it lost market share because new entrants were coming into the market, it increased the amount of training that it did by about 16 per cent over that time. So everybody increased the amount of training that they did and they increased their revenues because more training was provided because more money was in the system to provide training. The ultimate goal, of course, is for us to provide more training. That is what we are trying to do: have more people trained and raise the level to which they are trained.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I have no objection to that, minister. It is obviously important to be able to train, and retrain, not just our workforce but the community as a whole. That is an excellent objective. What you have identified is the very point I complained of, though, in my contribution. That is, providing us with what your cost of the current system is and what you expect to receive in revenue over a period of time which is ultimately to avoid the deficit if it stayed here in South Australia, what is the government's cost on this operation? Certainly we are going to be moving to a new set of rules and the expectation is that it would be at a higher cost, not just because of a cost recovery but there is actually going to be more regulation so of course it is going to be more expensive.

We need some assurance that the RTOs that are going to be affected by this legislation have got some capacity not only to pay it, but to compete. Whilst you mentioned that Victoria's experience is that the RTOs have actually enjoyed a growth in the market and a greater market share, of course they are under a different model to us. They are actually going on their own and they do have the opportunity and the obligation to go into the national system if they are across borders, but they also have the option in Victoria to stay on their own. So, they have the benefit of that. That gets into the model issue. But back to the money, as TAFE is now going to be a payer of these regulation fees, what is the estimated cost in, say, the first year of operation that here the state TAFEs will have to pay the federal regulator for their regulation?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** I do not have that information on me, but we will take it on notice and get it to you. I again make the point that one of the criticisms of the Victorian system has been that the quality has not been there in some of the training providers. The federal government is planning to regulate more heavily, and that is a good thing in many ways. This system will rise and fall. The skills for all and market based training will rise and fall on its quality. In the rush to provide more training I do not think it is a good result if more training is provided but the standard is lower.

One of the key lessons out of Victoria is that the focus on the provision of training and the providers of that training are vitally important. The federal government seems to have learned that lesson. As long as the regulation is adequate and it ensures a high quality system, that is a reasonable cost to impose on providers of training who will benefit enormously from the new system because there will be more money in the system and they will be able to train more.

Clause passed.

Clause 5 passed.

Clause 6.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I will refer to clause 6(1)(c), which is the issue of cancellation. Under this scheme all of our TAFE and private RTOs will be regulated by Canberra. Can the minister say that the rules by which TAFE will be judged, both for attainment of registration and for deregistration purposes, will be the same?

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** My advice is very clear that TAFE and private providers are currently held to the same standard now, and that will continue into the federal scheme.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** The other matter relates to whether there is any provision to protect the small RTOs that operate in South Australia, that is, those that operate within the South Australian

borders, and their future, other than by application to the ACCC. Once it is all in the commonwealth arena potentially we could have a Coles Myer situation where the market share is dominated by the public sector, which of course is our TAFE industry—and no-one will want to see that adversely affected for obvious reasons—but equally the smaller RTOs may not be able to survive against the development of the national ones.

This market share issue is a very serious one and, once we go national in the regulation and in the capacity to be able to cancel the right to practise a business of this nature, we enter the real commercial world, and that is currently under the protection of the ACCC. Personally I see the ACCC as either under-resourced (maybe that is its excuse), or ineffective in a number of areas. I want some reassurance that the government has looked at the issue of how it will protect the little RTOs as distinct from the national operating ones.

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** The main tool for us to use to protect smaller RTOs, and TAFE as well, is the imposition of a minimum fee for a course. So, there will be a maximum fee and a minimum fee to provide exactly that protection, and that is under Skills for All, not under this bill. Under the Skills for All arrangement, there will be a minimum fee precisely to stop that sort of loss leading or the undercutting to create market share or to buy market share.

There is also going to be a lot more money available in the system. Small providers, who, inevitably, are more flexible and nimble, with deft management should be able to take advantage of changes much more quickly than large providers in terms of the training market and training demand. Notwithstanding their flexibility, the main defence for them is the minimum fee.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (7 to 10), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Recreation and Sport) (12:38):** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

In moving the third reading, I would very much like to thank my departmental staff, who have been very patient with a new minister and helped me through this particular stage of the bill. I would like to thank the staff in my office as well. Again, trying to get your head around a bill in a very short space of time is not easy, and they have done that.

I would also like to point out the work that has gone into this, and into Skills for All, in particular. This morning, I was reflecting with some of my staff upon the huge changes we are making and the contribution made by the now Treasurer, and previous ministers for further education and training as well—the member for Napier and the current Minister for the Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Paul Caica, the member for—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colton.

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** —the member for Colton; thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker—because Skills for All is a substantial change and a national training system is a big thing. It was one of the most obvious changes that needed to be made, yet, as is often the case with obvious changes, they are not as easy to make as they should be. They required a large amount of national cooperation across the states, territories and the federal government, and that work was carried on under those ministers who preceded me.

It is important work and, while I have been pushing this bill through today and in the last few weeks, it rests, as with all of our work, on the shoulders of others. If it were not for them, it would not be happening. So, I acknowledge their contribution to this reform and congratulate them on their work. I thank members of the house for their contribution in this debate. As I said earlier, the productivity gains through education and training are so critical to this state in particular, and the interest in it shown by members of the parliament is important and gratifying. With those words, I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a third time and passed.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### VALEDICTORIES

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Recreation and Sport) (12:40):** Today is the final day of parliament for the year, and usually on the last day of parliament there is some reflection on the contribution made and work done in the parliament by those around us—the table staff and those who work in the building. It is apt that we do that because, quite simply, the place would not function without them. We would all turn up, but it would be interesting to see what actually got achieved and what did not without their assistance. We would certainly be hungry, we would certainly be caffeine deprived—and possibly a lot more sober—if they were not here, particularly in the evenings, and particularly for country members who, I know, rely on the house more than others. The services of the staff here are exemplary.

*Mr Pengilly interjecting:*

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** Perhaps we will not go there. I first started working in the state system in 2002 when the Labor Party was elected to government, and I was always amazed then by the amount of work that went on in the background by people who did their very best to keep out of the way but who helped us through the system as much as they could. I was quite naive about many things, but also quite naive about the workings of parliament, and it was a great help to me, in those years as an adviser, to come across really professional and dedicated staff who were able to help me do my job as an adviser and then as a member of parliament.

I entered parliament in 2006, and now as a minister my knowledge of what they do increases, and only serves to increase my gratitude for the work they do and their professionalism. I think this year has been a particularly trying year, it has not been the easiest of years, but the staff here have managed to handle it with good humour and professionalism. They have left us to our spats, but have been largely unaffected by that, I think, and have still managed to provide the services to members of parliament that we require to do our job properly, and they have done it well.

To my colleagues, as I said I think it has been an interesting year and a difficult year in many ways. However, anyone who was here for any length of time could look around, not just in question time, and could see that this is a good system that we have. It functions well. Everyone in the parliament comes here with good intentions and with a real and genuine desire to make the state better. We have our disagreements about how we may do that—and we have had those disagreements on numerous occasions over numerous issues—but the intention of this place continues, and they are good intentions. Everyone here is well intentioned and is trying to do the best job they can, and they work hard doing it. That is all we can really ask of members of parliament.

So I thank everyone that I can in the parliament for their contribution to the state and to their electorates. I look forward to working with them all next year, obviously with the exception of two who will not be continuing. To the member for Ramsay, who is behind me now, can I say very simply that I would not be in this place were it not for the member for Ramsay. I was only able to get elected because of the way he governed the state, particularly between 2002 and 2006. Never once when I asked for help did he refuse it.

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON:** I was elected in 2006. It just would not have been possible for me to be elected without his efforts. Basically, there was a giant Mike Rann wave, and I surfed it. I paddled in and surfed it, and that is how I got here. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that being elected here has given me. It is a very enjoyable job and, again, it would not be possible without him.

I think time will prove that his time as premier was good for the state. All we can ask of ourselves, I think—and this was certainly my goal when I was elected to parliament—is that we leave the place better than we found it in our electorates and in the state. When people look back on the member for Ramsay's time as premier, I think history will say that the state is better for his being here, and it is hard to think of any higher praise than that, because that is our job.

It is certainly clear to me that the former premier did his job well and the state is better off because he was here. One thing I regret is not taking photos of the skyline of Adelaide and the

streets of Adelaide and the rest of the state in 2002 so that we could go back and compare them. When you think about some of the changes, they have been quite substantial. In the next year or two, they will be even more so. By the time this term of parliament finishes, the skyline and the city will have been significantly changed. It is hard to imagine King William Street now without trams all the way down it, but it was not that long ago that trams did not go past Victoria Square and that has been good for the city.

There will be a brand-new hospital and a brand-new stadium. There will be the Livestrong Centre down at Flinders, new rebuilt hospitals all over the place, including the Modbury Hospital where we will have a new emergency department and significant new wards. If you set a task for a premier when they are coming into government, it is simply that they improve the state, that the state is better off for their having been there, that they did something over and above what would have happened already. Quite clearly, he did that.

The mining industry is another example, in terms of exploration particularly, but the state's mining industry has grown at a rate faster than in the rest of the country. They have taken market share in exploration and increased dramatically the number of mines, faster than in the rest of the country. While there would have been some improvement in the mining industry in this state had we not undertaken the PACE program, the PACE program has improved it over and above what it would have been like. That is a decision and a policy of the government, and it comes back largely to the premier who was very strongly behind that.

The second member of parliament who is leaving us is the member for Port Adelaide, Kevin Foley. I worked for him when we first came into government. Kevin was an enormous influence in my career, because I was relatively unknown—even in the party—and working for the treasurer suddenly meant that you had a bit of credibility. You obviously have to work so that you reflect the credibility that you have, you fulfil that behind you, but coming into Kevin's office was one of the first professional experiences in my life.

I would just like to thank Kevin for his contribution to the state and his time as treasurer. Particularly in the first few budgets, we made a large number of cuts; we really got the finances in order. It is a very difficult job being treasurer in this state, and it does not matter who the treasurer is, they have the hardest job in government, because they have to deal with every other minister in the government trying to spend money, and their job is to make sure that the limited money we have is spent in the most efficient and beneficial matter possible, and that it is not an easy job.

It can bring you into conflict with a lot of people, and Kevin had to deal with that over nine years and he did it, I think, extraordinarily well. In many ways, I think Kevin was probably the most courageous minister in government while he was the treasurer. Kevin is smart. Despite his protestations, he is smart and he gets across a brief very quickly. He understands what is required of him and then he will make a decision and back it. One thing you can say about Kevin is that he never backs away from a decision that he has made and he backs it with his full force.

I wish him and the member for Ramsay well in their careers. I sincerely hope that they find fulfilling jobs out in the private sector. I thank them for their service and for their contribution to my career as well as for their service to the state. With that, I wish everybody Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you all in February.

#### VISITORS

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I go on, I would like to acknowledge the students in the gallery from the Adelaide Secondary School of English, who are guests of the member for Croydon. Welcome to Parliament House today.

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

##### VALEDICTORIES

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12:50):** I will gladly take a few minutes on the last day of this parliament. I believe that parliament will prorogued, and we will come back all refreshed with a new parliament early next year. I take the opportunity, certainly on behalf of the Liberal opposition, also to say thank you, as the minister just has, to a significant number of people who work in and around this institution to make it operate and who certainly help us with our work.

As the minister said, it would be impossible for us to achieve what we achieve on behalf of the people of South Australia without a fully functioning and operational staff manning the

parliament building and I guess ancillary to that as well, and I will go through those people in a moment or two. Hopefully, I will not leave anybody out, but they all provide essential services to the operation of the parliament and to the members so that we may undertake our duties.

I will start here in the chamber at the top of the tree with the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the table staff and the attendants, all of whom obviously perform a very important duty in making sure the day-to-day running of the house occurs smoothly and efficiently and that we undertake the business of the house in a manner that keeps the state out of the courts. Also very important for the working of the house are staff upstairs, such as Hansard and the staff who turn on the microphones so that when I stand up I can be heard with my diminutive voice.

**The Hon. T.R. Kenyon:** You're such a shy person.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Yes. Outside the chamber, a large number of agencies within the parliament keep us operating. There is the library, obviously, which is an important service to members, and there is also the committees office, which enables our committees to do their very important work. In fact, I think committee work is most rewarding in the sense of not only pure enjoyment but also of achievement. In the time I have been here, I have done work through the committee system, and I think the committees of the parliament do important work. I would like to see them being utilised a little bit more, but by and large I think the committee system works quite well.

Being a country member and spending an inordinate amount of time away from my home—and all country members appreciate this probably even more so than the city-based members—I appreciate the catering staff. Catering is incredibly important. We get a bit of stick every now and again about the catering services that are provided here in Parliament House, but I think some of the people in the media in particular fail to understand that, when we are here during a sitting day, we cannot get our lunch, a cup of coffee or something from the deli down the street or around the corner.

We actually have to be here for the business of the house, which just continues through the day. We have to be here in case there is a vote coming on. I think we would be derelict in our duty if we left the building for the sake of getting a coffee or a meal. Notwithstanding the attitude of the media from time to time, I think it is absolutely necessary that we have the catering facilities in this place, and I for one am very grateful for the services that we get from the catering department.

There are also services such as PNSG, that keep our IT systems operating, and the finance service which obviously keeps us paid, people like the travel clerks and a whole range of other staff in the bills and papers office that enables this place to keep operating. There are also the building services people who keep the building in good fettle. From time to time, a number of people complain about the air-conditioning in the building and in an old building like this it is very difficult to physically keep a building of this age and style operating as we would expect it to keep operating in modern times.

To all the people involved in and around the parliament, on behalf the opposition I offer our very sincere thanks. We wish all the staff the compliments of the season and we hope that they have an enjoyable break from us and the tedium of parliament for a few weeks and are able to spend some quality time with their loved ones over the Christmas break.

I would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the opposition (and I am sure all members)—to thank our hard-working electorate staff. I do not think there is anybody who works more diligently for members of parliament than the staff in our electorate offices. They probably spend more time at the coalface than we do; they are there every day of the week providing the interface between members of parliament and the electorate at large—I thank them, as well.

I have been fortunate enough for a time now to have a driver, and a very important role it is, too—certainly for ministers, some of the committee chairs, myself and my leader Isobel Redmond. We all have the availability of a driver and I am absolutely aware now, certainly in the job that I do, and I am sure all who have drivers available to them, that we would not be able to do the jobs anywhere near the level we do without that service.

As somebody who spends a lot of hours on the road—like yourself, Madam Speaker, and others who spend many hundreds of hours a year on the road—I had often thought about the danger I was putting myself in because of the amount of driving I was doing, so having a driver is a great relief. I thank particularly my driver, Gary, who is incredibly accommodating. I have managed to keep him away from his family on a pretty regular basis.

As the minister said, there are, I believe, at least two members of government who have announced an intention to retire but they have not announced the exact dates at this stage: the member for Ramsey and the member for Port Adelaide (the former premier Mike Rann and the former deputy premier Kevin Foley). Unlike the minister, I am not going to praise their good works; there is obviously a political divide. We do not necessarily share the minister's praiseworthy remarks about them but we do acknowledge their longevity in the parliament as representatives of their respective electorates. Those of us who have had the experience of being a parliamentarian all know that it is a pretty tough gig. It is hard on families.

**Mrs Geraghty:** We are nice people.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** By and large we are all nice people, thank you Robyn. It is a tough gig. It is tough on families. If we go back and look at the record of the people who have been involved in this line of work over the years, it is tough on families. Those who have spent a considerable amount of time in here have probably given up a lot of other things that they might well have been able to enjoy. Without commenting on their respective contributions to the state, I wish both the former premier Mike Rann and the former deputy premier Kevin Foley all the best with their future. I am sure that they will leave this place with at least a sense of relief because the day-to-day grind obviously is wearing and I am sure that they will appreciate the release from that.

To my colleagues in the house, particularly those on this side of the house who I have worked with very closely over the session of this parliament and for a number of years now, I express my personal thanks and I wish all members of the parliament and, as I said, the staff and ancillary personnel who keep this place going the compliments of the season. I hope we will be able to return refreshed and eager in the new year.

Debate adjourned.

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

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MODEL BY-LAWS) AMENDMENT BILL**

His Excellency the Governor's Deputy assented to the bill.

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I draw members' attention to the presence in the gallery today of a group of students from the Adelaide Secondary School of English, who are guests of the member for Croydon. They are here today to observe. Welcome to our parliament. It is very nice to see you here. I know you had a very good tour earlier with the member for Croydon.

#### **HOSPITAL PARKING**

**Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett):** Presented a petition signed by 32 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to immediately reverse its decision to impose car parking fees at our hospitals.

#### **SCHOOL AMALGAMATIONS**

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite):** Presented a petition signed by 53 residents of Mitcham and greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to take immediate action to stop the amalgamation of the Mitcham Junior Primary School with the Mitcham Primary School and maintain each campus at current funding levels.

#### **MARINE PARKS**

**Mr TRELOAR (Flinders):** Presented a petition signed by 51 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to halt the introduction of Marine Park Exclusion Zones until the Select Committee on Marine Parks in South Australia has reported and all other studies are completed.

#### **MADISON PARK SCHOOLS**

**The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Business Services and Consumers):** Presented a petition signed by 259 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to maintain the current funding levels of the Madison Park co-located schools.

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The SPEAKER:** I direct that the following written answer to a question be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

### AMBULANCE STATIONS

**59 Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett)** (1 June 2010). What was the cost of constructing each of the new ambulance stations in Port Adelaide, Prospect and Adelaide CBD?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts):** I am advised of the following:

The Port Adelaide station had a total project cost of \$1.8 million.

The Prospect station has a total project budget of \$2.168 million. Construction will be completed in September 2010.

A new station in the Adelaide CBD is being constructed in Parkside. Construction will commence in the near future, with the total cost anticipated to be \$2.9 million.

### PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Local Government—

City of Prospect Annual Report 2010-11  
City of Victor Harbor Annual Report 2010-11  
District Council of Kimba Annual Report 2010-11  
District Council of Robe Annual Report 2010-11  
Naracoorte Lucindale Council Annual Report 2010-11  
Wattle Range Council Annual Report 2010-11

By the Attorney-General (Hon. J.R. Rau)—

Electoral Commission of South Australia—Annual Report 2010-11  
State Coroner—Annual Report 2010-11  
Regulations made under the following Act—  
Environment, Resources and Development Court—Schedule 1—Fees Variation

By the Minister for Planning (Hon. J.R. Rau)—

West Beach Trust—Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Business Services and Consumers (Hon. J.R. Rau)—

Barring Orders—Annual Report 2010-11  
Gaming Machines Act 1992—Annual Report 2010-11

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

Regulations made under the following Act—  
Road Traffic—Miscellaneous—Substitution Regulation 13

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

Health Advisory Council—  
Millicent and Districts Annual Report 2010-11  
Mount Gambier and Districts Annual Report 2010-11  
Port Broughton Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Correctional Services (Hon. J.M. Rankine)—

Correctional Services Advisory Council—Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for the River Murray (Hon. P. Caica)—

South Australian—Victorian Border—Groundwaters Agreement Review Committee—  
Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade (Hon. A. Koutsantonis)—  
Trade and Economic Development, Department of—Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy (Hon. A. Koutsantonis)—  
Australian Energy Market Commission—Annual Report 2010-11  
Energy Consumers' Council—Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Finance (Hon. M.F. O'Brien)—  
SA Metropolitan Fire Service Superannuation Board—Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Education and Child Development (Hon. G. Portolesi)—  
Education and Children's Services, Department of—Annual Report 2010-11

By the Minister for Transport Services (Hon. C.C. Fox)—  
Adelaide Convention Centre—Annual Report 2010-11  
Adelaide Entertainment Centre—Annual Report 2010-11  
Adelaide Entertainment Corporation—Charter

#### MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)**  
**(14:04):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** On Monday of this week the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan was released. There is possibly no more important document for South Australia's future.

The draft plan proposes to restore 2,750 gigalitres of water to the river system, and proposes that South Australia reduces its take from the river by a minimum of 100 gigalitres. Our preliminary view is that the draft plan does not restore a sufficient amount of water to keep our river healthy, and does not sufficiently recognise our past exemplary use of the river.

We in South Australia understand that this is not a matter of choice between the health of our river and our economy, because a healthy river underpins all of our activities. You cannot irrigate, water stock, or supply drinking water from a salty, degraded river system.

South Australians have always treated the river with respect. We capped our take from the Murray in 1969—over 40 years ago. Now, South Australia uses 7 per cent of the water that is taken from the Murray-Darling Basin; 93 per cent of what is taken is used upstream. Victoria wastes more river water than Adelaide uses.

Because of the importance of the plan to South Australia's future, I have established a basin plan taskforce at the highest level of government. It includes me, a number of senior ministers, senior public servants, and the best scientific advice, including advice from South Australia's chief scientist. The taskforce met yesterday to consider preliminary advice and to outline the critical work streams that it will oversee.

The taskforce will seek to understand the science underpinning the draft plan. We are concerned that the plan is inadequately supported by the science. The volumes of water to be recovered do not accord with the advice we have received from the Goyder Institute as to what is required to maintain a healthy river.

Even the science review that the MDBA relies upon (the CSIRO review) is lukewarm in its assessment of the plan. It appears to conclude that a 2,800 gigalitre reduction—more than the plan, in fact, requires—would only meet 55 per cent of the MDBA's own environmental targets. The CSIRO states that such a reduction, 'is not consistent with the currently stated environmental targets.' We will be undertaking our own scientific analysis of the draft plan, assisted by an independent analysis of our experts' work by the Goyder Institute.



Another focus of the taskforce will be to understand the costs to South Australians of the degradation of the river. In the decades since water use was capped, we have invested in efficient irrigation, while the upstream states have continued to over-allocate water. Because of our respect for the river, our basin communities have accepted a lower rate of economic growth than those upstream, and those same basin communities suffered major losses during the period of the last drought.

During the drought, irrigators either purchased additional water (adding to their cost of production), or reduced watering some crops, thereby reducing profitability. Other sectors, such as fisheries and tourism, also suffered as a result of lower water levels and regular negative media reports about the declining state of the environment.

South Australians more broadly have paid a high price. To provide just one example: expenditure towards the River Murray drought response from 2006-07 to 2010-11 is conservatively estimated at over \$234 million. We need to understand all of the costs we have endured by virtue of upstream over-use of the river. This exercise will be critical to our ability to make our case that the burden of adjustment should not fall unfairly upon us.

Another focus of the taskforce will be our legal position. The government has received preliminary legal advice from eminent practising barristers on the state's constitutional rights. The view I have formed is that there are sound arguments for the proposition that the Australian Constitution assumes that the states are equal, and that this means they are entitled to the mutual benefit of the waters of trans-boundary rivers like the Murray. There are also strong arguments supporting the idea that the states have obligations and potential liabilities when it comes to water and trans-boundary rivers.

The relationship between the commonwealth and the states regarding the River Murray was the single biggest issue in contest when the Australia Constitution was being drafted and debated over 110 years ago, and is one of the few substantial matters upon which the High Court has not yet pronounced an opinion. The legal concepts involved are the same issues that have presented themselves to the European nations dealing with their international rivers, and the United States Supreme Court when dealing with disputes about the Colorado River as far back as 1850.

We are continuing to seek advice from our legal team so that we can be ready, if necessary, to proceed, should the final plan prove inadequate. It is important to understand that our legal position mirrors our fundamental premise about the river. We in South Australia have a right to be treated as equals in respect of its use.

The final focus of the task force is to ensure that, as much as we can, we are establishing a South Australian united position about our response to the plan. There are different perspectives but, if we want to really grasp this historic opportunity, then we should speak with one voice on the river.

That includes those opposite. I was concerned to see that, within hours of the plan being released, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition had conceded that 2,750 gigalitres could be enough. I remain concerned that, without bothering to understand the nature of the possible legal challenge, he was dismissing it as a nonsense. This is an issue of such importance that it demands the Leader of the Opposition—

**Ms Chapman:** Ten years.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will be heard in silence. Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** This is an issue of such importance that it demands that the Leader of the Opposition make clear her party's position.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier will sit down.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Premier, can you sit down for a moment? Order! I want to hear what the Premier is saying, as do a lot of other people. Premier.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** On the other hand, I am grateful for the many people in the community who have indicated a willingness to try to come together on this. Next week, I will be meeting some of the state's—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —some of the best and most—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —influential scientists, community leaders and others closely tied to the river to discuss South Australia's response to the draft plan, and I will continue to meet with people and groups who have a real stake in the future of the river. I want to make our position absolutely clear.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** We will get the facts and the advice needed, we will participate in the consultation process to get a better plan and we will negotiate to get the best outcome for the river and the communities that depend upon it. If necessary, we will pursue the legal options available to us, but at all times we will pursue a healthy river in the state's and the national interest.

### OLYMPIC DAM EXPANSION

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:14):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** The successful passage of the Roxby Downs Indenture Amendment Bill 2011 is a momentous occasion for all South Australians. I know that future generations of this state will look back on this time as the time when South Australia changed forever. It will see 2011 marked in our history as the year we took our rightful place amongst the giants of mining. The Olympic Dam expansion is truly a transformational project. As the world's largest open cut mine, the fourth largest copper resource, fourth largest gold resource, and by far the largest known uranium resource, this project provides an unparalleled opportunity to unlock unprecedented economic prosperity for this state. It will unlock opportunities for all South Australians.

I acknowledge the Premier, the Hon. Jay Weatherill, for his foresight in establishing my new department, the Department for Manufacturing, Innovation, Trade, Resources and Energy, that will focus on value chain development to ensure that the state captures maximum benefits not only from the project but also from all resource developments in our state. My department will work to ensure that South Australia takes advantage of our resources growth by fostering local participation in the sector and expanding our innovation and research capability, positively influencing our economic value creation.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** The indenture provides the basis for the benefits which are expected to accrue to the South Australian economy and our community. This includes royalty payments, increased workforce participation and development, local supplier participation, Aboriginal economic development and, of course, regional development. It is important, however, to note that such an expansion does not happen overnight and the government will still look to the BHP Billiton Board to make a timely decision on the necessary approval. The ball is definitely now in their court.

As we all know, there has been a long and diligent process to get to this point in the expansion. With the passage of this bill through both houses, we have seen the combination of hours of hard work from a large group of talented people. I would like to take the opportunity to thank many of the key people who have provided tireless support to the government and members of this place in realising the passage of the bill. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the former premier, Hon. Mike Rann, for his leadership and, of course, the former minister assisting the premier with the Olympic Dam Expansion Project, the Hon. Kevin Foley, for the many hours that

they have spent together working to deliver this indenture to the people of South Australia. I also take the opportunity to pay tribute—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —to my predecessor the Hon. Paul Holloway, one of the parents of modern day mining in South Australia. His efforts at championing the sector have seen South Australia's mineral resources industry grow into a strong and vibrant sector within a world-class regulatory environment. All of these men embraced this project at an early stage and they fought hard to see it realised, and we thank them.

They were more than ably assisted through this six-year process by Bruce Carter and the conscientious team at the Olympic Dam Taskforce led by Dr Paul Heithersay and his predecessor Mr Paul Case. That taskforce over time comprised specialist public servants seconded from other agencies, all of whom have worked diligently on securing a good deal for this state. I would also like to highlight the work of Gaby Jaksa, Pam Martin and Tom Finlay from the Crown Solicitor's Office in providing legal advice to the negotiating team; Sally Smith from the former department of planning and local government who played a key role in coordinating the assessment report on the final EIS; and the support provided to her by Robert Kleeman.

I further acknowledge the hard work and efforts of Associate Professor Rob Thomas, the Chief Scientific Adviser to the taskforce, Peter Bradshaw, Sam Walker, Helen Thomas, Lachlan Kinnear, Margot Gall, Nicki Crawford, Stacey Dix and Raelene Darwin. I would also like to thank parliamentary counsel, members of the select committee, and the many departmental and ministerial advisers who have supported the passage of this bill, including Peter Dolan, Phil Hazell and Andrew Solomon of the Environment Protection Authority, as well as Ben Bruce and Neil Power of the Department for Water. I would also like to thank my ministerial staff, especially the tireless work of my Chief of Staff, Mr Robert Malinauskas.

It is, of course, important to remember that it takes two to tango, so I would like acknowledge the efforts and good work provided by the team at BHP Billiton, from Chief Executive, Marius Kloppers, to Group Executive and Chief Executive Non-Ferrous, Andrew Mackenzie; and Dean Dalla Valle, the President of the Uranium Group, and his predecessor Graeme Hunt. I also use this opportunity to thank the opposition, the minor parties and Independents for their contributions. In particular, the Leader of the Opposition, Isobel Redmond, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Mitch Williams, as they have worked in an extremely cooperative—

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I am thanking the opposition, and I notice that is the only time they will be quiet. I will start again.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left, I do not know what you been up to but please be quiet. I cannot hear the minister.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** They have all worked in an extremely corporative and collaborative way with the government and provided the bipartisan support a major project such as this needs and warrants. I also acknowledge the Hon. Roger Goldsworthy for his efforts in seeking the passage of the original indenture and—

**Mr Pisoni:** Norm Foster.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —Norman Foster for his decision that made the project possible. To anyone else I have inadvertently overlooked, I extend my thanks to you also. All South Australians, other than the member for Bragg, should feel a great sense of pride—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I'm joking—about how this parliament demonstrated to the world that South Australia is professional, open and accessible to investments of this scale. It is a very proud achievement for this government, and it is a great time to be a South Australian.

#### **POLICE INVESTIGATIONS**

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (14:22):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** Last Thursday, the member for Bragg asked of me, as Minister for Education and Child Development, to:

...confirm whether the chief executive of her department or any officer of her department responsible for child protection is under investigation by the police or Families SA Special Investigations Unit currently...

I advised the house I would need to seek further advice on this matter. I also asked the member Bragg several times to forward to me or the appropriate authorities any information she had in her possession to substantiate the allegations. As far as I am aware no additional information has been provided by the member for Bragg.

Later that evening, I spoke with my chief executive and asked him if he was aware if he was under investigation or if he was aware of any circumstances that would cause him or any of his executives to be under investigation. The chief executive responded no to both questions. I suggested to him, given the gravity of the allegations made, that he should speak with Mr Jim Hallion, Chief Executive of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and/or Mr Warren McCann, the Commissioner for Public Employment.

The Commissioner for Public Employment made enquiries with both SAPOL and Families SA's Special Investigations Unit. I have been advised by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment that the Families SA Special Investigations Unit is not currently investigating the chief executive nor any of his executives.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** The Commissioner for Public Employment also received the following advice from the Commissioner for Police, and I quote:

I can report there are currently no investigations recorded against the SAPOL Case Management System for the Chief Executive or his senior executive group of the Department of Education and Child Development.

**The Hon. M.J. Atkinson:** She's like the Franca Arena of the South Australian parliament.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, the member for Bragg, you are warned!

**Mr Pisoni:** Others pay.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister.

*Mr Pengilly interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Finniss, you are warned also.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** This information was again confirmed as late as this morning. It is now important that the member for Bragg either provide further information to the relevant authorities to support her allegations or make an unreserved apology—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will sit down until we have some quiet.

*Mr Pengilly interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Finniss, you are warned for the second time.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —or make an unreserved apology to the chief executive and his senior staff. We in this place—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Schubert!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —occupy positions of enormous privilege and we have to recognise that apparently unfounded allegations such as these cause significant embarrassment to—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is not question time. Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —and may damage the reputations of those about whom they are made. I again ask the member for Bragg to apologise or provide information to me or the appropriate authorities.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Point of order, member for Bragg.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I seek to give notice of making a personal explanation. I appreciate from the previous rulings that it will be at the end of question time.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

#### LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

**Mr SIBBONS (Mitchell) (14:27):** I bring up the 37<sup>th</sup> report of the committee entitled Subordinate Legislation.

Report received and ordered to be published.

#### SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

Private Members Business, Committees & Subordinate Legislation, No. 20: Mr Sibbons to move:

That Regulations made under the Liquor Licensing Act 1997 entitled Dry Areas Long Term, made on 8 September 2011 and laid on the Table of this House on 13 September, be disallowed.

**Mr SIBBONS (Mitchell) (14:27):** In accordance with the 37<sup>th</sup> report of the Legislative Review Committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation, I advise that I no longer wish to proceed with Private Members Business, Committees & Subordinate Legislation, Notice of Motion No. 20.

Notice of motion withdrawn.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (14:28):** I bring up the 60<sup>th</sup> report of the committee entitled Upper South East Dryland Salinity and Flood Management Act 2002, July 2010—June 2011, which is subtitled: 'Whether 'tis Nobler in the mind to suffer The Floods and Barrens of outrageous Fortune Or to take Arms against a Sea of troubles'.

Report received and ordered to be published.

#### PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

**Mr ODENWALDER (Little Para) (14:29):** I bring up the 428<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Kadina Memorial High School Redevelopment Stage 1.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I bring up the 429<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Klemzig Primary School Redevelopment.

Report received and ordered to be published.

**QUESTION TIME****MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN**

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:30):** My question is to the Premier. Has the government done any modelling on the likely impact on local food production and on the state economy of the Premier's plan to increase the environmental flows in the Murray-Darling Basin from 2,750 to 4,000 gegalitres?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:30):** I thank the honourable member for her question. It carries within it a number of difficulties, that is, that I have not promoted a sum of that sort. What I have suggested is that our response to the basin-wide plan will be predicated on the best science that we have available, and the best science we have available at the moment is the Goyder Institute report which says that between 3,500 and 4,000 gegalitres of water will be necessary to return the river to life. It might be worth—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is answering the question. We don't need interjections from the other side.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** Madam Speaker, it is worth remembering the basis on which we entered into this arrangement. We entered into this arrangement so that the series of very poor compromises that have been occurring over decades and decades in relation to the river—compromises which have been forced upon us by parties on both sides of this parliament over decades—would come to an end and we would put the health of the river front and centre in our consideration. That is the promise of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan.

That is the political compact we entered into when we cooperated with those federal arrangements, and that is the arrangement that South Australia will assert. In this matter, the state's interests and the national interests coincide. In fighting for the health of the river, South Australia is also fighting for the health of the river for the whole nation. If there is ever—

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** Can I say before the honourable member gets too excited that I congratulate her on the bipartisan approach that she took in relation to the Olympic Dam expansion legislation. That was a good decision in the state's interests and has yielded obvious benefits for the state. What I would ask her to do is carry forward that spirit of cooperation in relation to this issue. There is no doubt that my position and the state's position will be strengthened if we speak with one voice. If we speak with one voice, the state's position will be strengthened.

I have invited those opposite to participate in that consensus. I have travelled the length and breadth of the river. I have had good meetings with the member for Chaffey and the member for Hammond, at which we have tried to build a consensus up and down the river, making sure that the old debates of the past of irrigators versus environmentalists, country versus city and upstream versus downstream are put aside in the state's—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is a point of order.

**Mrs REDMOND:** It is a question of relevance. The question was simply: has he done any modelling on what the economic impact is or what the impact is on food production in this state? That was the question.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, I don't uphold that point of order. The Premier is answering the question as he chooses.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** In fashioning that consensus, and it will become apparent that the Leader of the Opposition has completely misconceived the nature of the position that I have sought to fashion—

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** In fashioning that consensus, I made two points extremely clear: that is, that South Australia has borne the burden of taking a low and sustainable take from the river since 1969. We pegged the amount of water that we have taken from this river at the level

of 1969 while, during that whole period (between 1969 and now), we have seen the massive over-allocation of the waters of the River Murray. South Australia has accepted a lower level of economic growth, has lived sustainably within its means and used taxpayers' and irrigators' dollars to ensure we have the most efficient irrigation system in the nation. Despite all of that—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —when one comes to analyse the nature of the problem—which is this over-allocation which has occurred over the last 40 years—and when it comes to divining what the solution should be, clearly, South Australia should not bear the burden of adjustment. So, when we call for a healthy river, Madam Speaker, it is not at the expense of our irrigators, it should be at the expense of those who have over-allocated over the last four decades.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** It is that consensus—

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for MacKillop, you are warned; and the member for Hammond.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —that we need to fashion in this state, and that will permit me to speak on behalf of all South Australians. I believe that those opposite are out of step with the overwhelming majority of South Australians who want—

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —a healthy river, and they do not believe that we should unfairly accept the burden of adjustment in this state. I once again call on the Leader of the Opposition to make clear what her position is in relation to this river, and I ask her to stand with me in the state's interests.

*Members interjecting:*

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

### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens) (14:36):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house about the critical role of government in supporting investment in major developments across South Australia?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:36):** Madam Speaker, I had the great pleasure this morning to speak at the South Australian Investment Symposium where I launched the latest edition of the South Australian Major Developments Directory, and it is a very good read from the perspective of South Australia. It lists over \$109 billion of major developments across the state, and these projects are an incredible list of opportunities which lie ahead for South Australian businesses and workers over the coming months, years and decades.

As everyone in this chamber would be aware, the most significant of those opportunities is the Olympic Dam expansion that we have just dealt with this week. The parliament has taken the transformational step of passing the indenture, which will give BHP the security to make the most significant investment the state has ever seen.

I want to join with minister Koutsantonis in acknowledging the role of the former premier (the member for Ramsay) and the former deputy leader (the member for Port Adelaide) for the role that they have played in bringing this project to fruition. As minister Koutsantonis said earlier today, this expansion will be a game changer for the state. It will underpin thousands of jobs for decades ahead—jobs not only in Roxby Downs but good, secure, high-skill, high-wage jobs in Adelaide, the Upper Spencer Gulf and across the state.

And through the commitment that the government has secured from BHP to use local suppliers, these jobs will be in an array of sectors, including services and advanced manufacturing.

The prospect for this expansion and all of the \$65.3 billion of opportunities in the minerals and energy sector listed in the directory did not come about because of good luck.

I want today to acknowledge someone who has not been routinely acknowledged in these matters, and that is a former deputy premier from this party, the Hon. Frank Blevins. Frank Blevins in 1992 took an incredibly far-reaching decision to electromagnetically map the Far North of this state, which provided the raw material for the steps that we took when we returned to government. The most—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** I mean, they are the facts. It is a matter of historical record, Madam Speaker. The investments—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —in programs like the PACE scheme accelerated the discovery of new mineral resources under the ground, and that built on the raw material that was put in place—

*Mr Williams interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for MacKillop, you are warned for the second time.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —by the Hon. Frank Blevins.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Premier.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** While our state is strongly positioned for the future, strong support from the government remains absolutely essential to ensure that we take advantage of these opportunities. It will not just fall in our lap. There is an enormous amount of work to be done. We have to make sure that we have a manufacturing sector which is positioned to solve the problems that the mining industry will face as it extracts these extraordinary amounts of ore from the north of our state. South Australian workers will need to have the skills to ensure that they can take advantage of the benefits of this new prosperity.

The quality of our roads, rails and ports that support our economic growth will be the thing that will ensure that we are able to take real advantage of these opportunities. The investment pipeline shows that the state's future is very bright, and our challenge now is to ensure that all South Australians enjoy this prosperity.

#### MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:39):** My question is again to the Premier. How can South Australians be expected to work together responding to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan when South Australian federal Labor MPs are not in support of a High Court challenge on the plan as proposed by the Premier and when the Premier is clearly not in support of the plan as proposed by federal Labor?

The Premier told the media on Monday, 'There is a strong basis for a united SA position on the plan' yet, immediately upon the release of the draft plan, he flagged challenging the federal Labor government in the High Court and insisted that a minimum of 4,000 gegalitres was the only acceptable amount.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:40):** There are so many of the recited facts there that are inaccurate, but can I just perhaps—

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** No, I didn't. What I said is that I would not rule out a challenge to the High Court. If you read the ministerial statement, we assert our rights assertively. If we do not have a plan which is adequate, we will pursue our legal rights. I have set out in the—

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Bragg, you are warned for the second time.



**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —ministerial statement the basis—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —for our claim, the basis for our constitutional claim, that is, that we as a state are one of a series of equals—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** —and we have rights in relation to inter-boundary rivers. That is the nature of the claim that we will be making, and it fits precisely with what we have always said about the nature of our rights in relation to other states, not merely in relation to the commonwealth, but in relation to other states. We believe that the commonwealth has an obligation in relation to protecting those rights and we believe that other states have an obligation to respect our rights. That is the nature of our claim. Can I say this fundamentally: while I am a member of the Labor Party, the Premier of South Australia, I will always put South Australia first.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

### VULNERABLE WITNESSES

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (14:42):** Can the Attorney-General inform the house about the government's proposed measures to improve the interaction of vulnerable witnesses with the justice system?

**The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:42):** As members of the house would be aware, the government has recently introduced into the parliament amendments to section 34CA of the Evidence Act; however, it has become apparent that those amendments in and of themselves may not be sufficient to deal with some of the problems that have been exposed in the case of people with disabilities and/or very young children being involved in the justice system.

There is, quite rightly, considerable community concern about these vulnerable witnesses and how they might be catered for by the system. Here again, as I said, I am talking particularly about young children or people with intellectual disabilities.

This week I announced that the government will be seeking the community's views on a number of measures designed to improve the way these witnesses are treated in the justice system. The government will be consulting with a broad range of groups, including disability and children's advocates, victims of crime representatives and others. This consultation will inform a final package of amendments to the Evidence Act, which I hope to bring before the house in the new year.

Under the changes we are presently proposing, the Evidence Act would be amended to allow the admission of audiovisual records of interviews as the evidence-in-chief of witnesses to sexual or violent offences who are young children or people with intellectual disabilities; provide for the taking of evidence from young children or people with intellectual disabilities before trial in an informal manner and surroundings; and regulate how young people and people with intellectual disabilities are interviewed as witnesses in the investigation of these sorts of offences and how the interviews in general are recorded.

The government also intends to seek the priority listing of these trials to ensure that, particularly where the alleged victim has an intellectual disability, the interval between the event and the trial is reduced to the greatest extent possible. These trials involving children are already priority listed to ensure the shortest time elapses between the offence and the court proceedings.

I believe that changes of this nature will go at least part of the way to addressing the difficulties in prosecuting many of these cases. However, we cannot estimate how many difficulties are confronted, and we will not be able to solve these problems in every single case. The changes will minimise the number of times these witnesses are needed to recount their experiences to authorities and ensure that trials, as I said, occur as early as possible.

The overall aim of these changes is to balance the legitimate interests of these vulnerable witnesses with the equally legitimate and important need for an accused to receive a fair trial. I

acknowledge that this is a very difficult area and there is no complete solution to the issues that often emerge in these prosecutions. However, the processes announced this week are an important start. I am keen to hear the views of interested groups and individuals so we can make new gains in improving the justice system for the most vulnerable people in our community.

#### ROYAL ADELAIDE HOSPITAL

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:45):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Will the minister confirm that the cost of the robots—that is, the much-trumpeted robotic delivery system—at the new Royal Adelaide Hospital is in addition to the PPP; that is, it is an extra cost to be paid by government, not covered by the PPP?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (14:46):** That is certainly not my understanding. The arrangement that we have in place with the private consortium is to supply a whole range of services, including the robotic services. I will certainly check, but that is not my understanding.

#### PUBLIC HOSPITAL STATISTICS

**The Hon. M.J. ATKINSON (Croydon) (14:46):** My question is also to the Minister for Health and Ageing. How have South Australian public hospitals performed in the latest Australian hospital statistics on emergency department care and elective surgery waiting times?

**The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (14:46):** I thank the member for his timely and well-articulated question to me, showing his great interest in this issue. Can I also say to the Leader of the Opposition that I have just checked with my office. My statements are correct; the robots are part of the contract. Spotless is a contracting party.

In relation to the question asked by the member for Croydon, the South Australian public hospitals have performed very strongly according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's national data collection on emergency department care and elective surgery waiting times. Those results were published today. This is a reflection of the outstanding performance of our doctors, nurses and other health workers who work in our public system, who work very hard to make sure that our patients receive quicker treatment in the emergency departments.

I would like to thank all of them for the very hard work they do, under often pressured circumstances. They have lifted their game year on year in our state. The report shows that South Australians presenting to hospital emergency departments are waiting for less time to be seen. The median waiting time—that is the time at which 50 per cent of people are seen—of 20 minutes in 2010-11, which is the year just gone, was three minutes below the national average, down from 29 minutes in 2007-08. We were only pipped at the post by one other jurisdiction, and that was New South Wales, which was marginally ahead on 19 minutes.

That is the best performance we have ever had in our state since national reports have been published. South Australia's 90<sup>th</sup> percentile waiting time, which is the number of minutes at which 90 per cent of patients were seen by a doctor or nurse in our emergency departments, was 104 minutes. That is 10 minutes below the national average and the very best result in Australia—the very best result in Australia. Our emergency departments saw 90 per cent of patients within 104 minutes, better than anywhere else in Australia, in 2010-11.

I am delighted to report that a greater percentage of patients in our EDs are being seen within the nationally agreed times. These are clinical times that are agreed upon. So South Australia's result in 2010-11 was 71 per cent of our patients in the emergency department were seen within the clinically recommended times. That is equal second nationally, again just behind New South Wales, but above the national average of 70 per cent, and we have steadily improved from 2007-08, when we were at 61 per cent.

That is year on year improvement in our emergency departments, even though sometimes the departments are pressured and there are more people there than obviously can be dealt with quickly. Sometimes, when we have had building works going on, that has caused pressure but, despite all of these things happening over the last year, we have performed pretty well—best in Australia, and second-best in a couple of areas.

This is the first time that this state has received such a high national ranking for this performance indicator, and it is the first time that the state has exceeded the national average, so I

am very proud of the performance of our department and the people who work within it. Of course, I also need to acknowledge the great support from my colleagues in cabinet, and the Treasurer in particular, who funded this remarkable achievement.

We have also reported the second-lowest percentage of potentially avoidable GP-type presentations. It was 35 per cent, so there is still a lot of room to reduce the amount of GP-type presentations, but we are now 4 per cent below the national average, which shows our GP Plus strategies are working to improve access to health services outside of our emergency departments.

In elective surgery, the median wait time of 38 days was two days higher than the national average, but since 2010-11 that has improved as well. In October this year, we have now fallen down to 34 days. That is the median time at which 50 per cent of people were seen. So, over half the people are seen in about a month, which I think is a pretty remarkable achievement.

The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile time was 208 days. That is, 90 per cent of people who need elective surgery, from the time they have been told they need elective surgery they receive that elective surgery within 208 days, which I think is a remarkable achievement; it is just over seven months, or around seven months, and that is 17.5 per cent below the national average.

Only 2 per cent of patients in our state admitted from waiting lists waited for more than a year—only 2 per cent waited for more than a year—and that is the third-lowest in the nation. Our \$88.6 million investment over four years to fund 260,000 elective surgery procedures has led to this increased activity.

These results are on top of a report earlier this year which showed that our state has more hospital beds per population in both city and rural areas and more doctors and nurses working in public hospitals per head of population than any other mainland state. Our health system is one of the nation's—or, in fact, the nation's—most efficiently run.

From time to time there will be problems in our emergency departments, and there will be problems in our hospitals. With any system that deals with over one million people a year, there are going to be issues from time to time. You cannot highlight one of those issues and make a generalisation about the whole system; you have to go to the reports. You have to look at the real evidence, and the real evidence shows we have the best performing hospitals in Australia.

#### DESALINATION PLANT

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:52):** My question is to the Minister for Water Resources. By how much will household water bills increase in South Australia to cover the \$46 million paid to AdelaideAqua to deliver first water by December 2010—a target not met—and to also cover the additional \$43 million of contracts let by SA directly related to the Adelaide Desalination Plant, in addition to the \$1.84 billion contract with AdelaideAqua to design, build and operate the desalination plant?

**The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (14:53):** Of course, as has been seen on previous occasions, questions that are asked with statistics and figures that are provided are not always based in fact.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Point of order.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Point of order, Madam Speaker: I am sure the minister is impugning improper motive here. He is suggesting that I am using figures that aren't accurate; I can tell him the figures come straight off the government's tenders and contracts website.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Davenport, behave.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister.

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I can see why they are under—particularly the two up here—a bit of pressure, Madam Speaker, but—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** Look, I think I have said previously that the costs that have been incurred through a fixed contractual arrangement with respect to the desalination plant (\$1.83 billion) are the total costs that are involved with respect to the completion of the desalination plant. Another component, of course, was the money that was required to make sure that there was a connectedness between the northern section and the southern section of our distribution system, and we have been very transparent about that.

We have also said previously that the costs for this important piece of infrastructure that is going to supply water security to South Australia—a climatically independent water supply—were going to be recovered through price increases in line with NWI principles, but also, quite simply, to be able to—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I do know this: we have been very transparent about what the increases will be for the next year, notwithstanding the fact that I do know that the member for MacKillop is very good with his numbers—he can turn three votes into 11 votes without any problem whatsoever.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will get back to the substance of the question. Order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I have previously answered this question and I will have—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** I will have a look at what the deputy leader has said and, if there are things that he has said that I haven't answered properly, I will certainly get back to the house like I always do.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Supplementary, member for MacKillop.

#### DESALINATION PLANT

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:56):** Is the minister telling the house that he is unaware that SA Water has entered into another \$43 million worth of contracts directly associated with the desalination plant, in addition to the head contract of \$1.84 billion?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I think that was a question. I will count that as a question. Minister.

**The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (14:56):** No.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Florey.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

#### FIRE DANGER SEASON

**Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (14:57):** My question is to Minister for Emergency Services. Can the minister provide details of South Australia's preparation for the bushfire season?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety, Minister for**

**Multicultural Affairs) (14:57):** This morning, I attended the launch of the fire danger season at Belair National Park, marking the start of fire bans across the entire state. Importantly, the event championed the message that, over the next five months, all South Australians need to be bushfire ready because, with the good rains this season, the bush is ready for fire. Already, we have been reminded of the realities bushfires pose to lives and properties with fires at Gladstone, Nairne and Port Augusta, where 125 homes and a school were evacuated.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** And Gawler Ranges, but these—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** These fires posed threat to property and lives. Today, I urged every person living in a bushfire-prone area to prepare themselves. What they do now, how they prepare now, can save their lives, the lives of their loved ones and the lives of those who volunteer to protect our communities. People are deluded if they think it can't happen to them. The reality is their luck will run out—it is not if, but when.

As part of the preparation this season, \$7.3 million has been allocated to the CFS to have access to seven fixed-wing bombing aircraft, a high-volume bombing helicopter—that is, an Erickson Aircrane—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Sorry?

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Seventy per cent? The member for Bragg consistently interjects throughout question time.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** She was running on average at one every 58 seconds there for a while. One day—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** —on 8 June, she hit an all-time record—one every 33 seconds.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Point of order, member for Finniss.

**Mr PENGILLY:** The member for Bragg's interjections are entirely irrelevant to the question the minister was asked. She's a dill.

**The SPEAKER:** I'm not sure what your point of order was, but I would ask the minister to get back to the question.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I agree her interjections are irrelevant—but they are very constant.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker; she was running at one every 27 seconds today. But, anyway, moving on, they will also have—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Perhaps one every 25 seconds.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left will stop interjecting with the minister.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Norwood, behave!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Well, if you didn't say anything this time, you did before.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Father Christmas won't come with your behaviour.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Last week 91 interjections in question time, and a warning in the first four minutes. They will also have two medium volume bombing helicopters, three fixed-wing surveillance aircraft, one surveillance helicopter, as well as access to the state rescue helicopter. The CFS website and the bushfire information hotline are useful ways to gain advice on how to be ready, and, as I told the house last week, the CFS is also taking the lead with social media to get its message across through iPhone applications, Facebook and Twitter.

Operation Nomad is relaunched each year in conjunction with the fire danger season. Preventing and tackling deliberately lit fires is a SAPOL focus 365 days of the year. Police monitor those with a history or likelihood of lighting fires by visiting them at home and using automated number plate recognition to tell when they are driving through high risk areas. Operation Nomad is both a prevention and a cure strategy and has been recognised as a national leader in policing response to bushfires.

South Australia has the toughest penalties for bushfire arson with up to 20 years imprisonment for anyone convicted of this crime. Police will show zero tolerance for anyone involved in lighting fires and placing people and property at risk. Regardless of how long people get in prison, there is no automatic parole for people convicted of arson. No matter the capability of our fire agencies or the penalties, there can be no escaping that preparation falls on the individual. At this stage there is still time to be prepared.

**Mr Gardner:** Why don't you put up the Athelstone fire siren before fire season?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morialta, order!

**Mr Gardner:** You promised us a fire siren in Athelstone; it's fire season today; where is it?

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It's done and dusted.

**Mr Gardner:** No it's not.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It's been funded. I've signed off on it.

**Mr Gardner:** Excellent!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** It's all under control. It's done.

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Bragg you are warned for the third time.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Well done, Madam Speaker.

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Norwood!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, members on my left! We still have another 28 minutes of question time and you will behave. Minister.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. All they need to do is put the member for Bragg up at Athelstone. We don't need to invest in a fire siren. My call today is to every person living in a fire danger area to ensure they are prepared and they have a bushfire survival plan, and to get onto neighbours and friends to do the same.

**DESALINATION PLANT**

**Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (15:03):** My question again is to the Minister for Water. At what point does SA Water start to pay AdelaideAqua under the operational maintenance contract for the Adelaide Desalination Plant? Under a contract beginning in March 2010, the government is to pay AdelaideAqua between \$30 million and \$130 million a year for the operation and maintenance of the desalination plant, depending on how much water is produced.

**The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (15:03):** I will take that question on notice, but I will say this: I am presuming that the maintenance contract that the member for MacKillop refers to is an operating maintenance contract that—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** —will come into effect when the desalination plant is operating in its capacity.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** We are on schedule for—

**Mr Williams:** Which schedule?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P. CAICA:** —the 100 gigalitre completion of the plant by December 2012, and we are still on track to do that. I am a bit confused by the manner in which the member for MacKillop poses his questions, and he should get more across his shadow portfolio responsibilities so that I can make some sense of what he says.

**ROSEWORTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:05):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Child Development. Can the minister please advise what investment has been made by the state government in the newly redeveloped Roseworthy Primary School to assist the outstanding support that parents and the community give this school?

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (15:05):** I would like to thank the member for Light for this really important question. Again, I need to repeat this: there is no question in his local community about his commitment and his advocacy for his schools and for so many organisations that he represents. I just want to say that in this place.

I was very pleased today to officially open the redeveloped Roseworthy Primary School. This is a school whose history goes right back to 1863. There is no question that this is a school built for the future, not the past. We have brand-new classrooms; a new administrative area; flexible and outdoor learning areas; and new technology that is integrated with the classrooms and other areas in this great school.

It is also a 21st-century school that has been designed to be environmentally sustainable. There is renewable energy available throughout, solar panels and rainwater tanks to capture and use water and upgraded landscaping in playing areas. In fact, when I was having a look at the rainwater tanks, the principal of the school, Matt Saunders, pointed out to me a new feature of the school. He advised me that this is the first time we have done this in the state—ensuites. This is a school that now has ensuites onto its classrooms, which is a fantastic idea, because it means you can always keep an eye on the kids and you lose less class time. Anyway, I thought that was an interesting point.

There has been significant investment by both the state government and the federal government. Our contribution is about \$2.6 million, which brings it to a total of nearly \$5 million. However, there is also a real and lasting investment—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left, I do not know what you are laughing at but can you please keep the noise down.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —being made in the children of Roseworthy by parents and other community members. I want to acknowledge the 70 community volunteers who regularly support our leaders and our teachers in that school community, reading to them, assisting with excursions, etc.

Although I was not able to stay for the morning tea, would like to thank the school for welcoming me so warmly and, in particular, the children, who behaved beautifully and showed outstanding manners at all times. This is a great school in a great community. It is more than just a school. Small schools are super schools, and this is a great example of one.

### FORESTRYSA

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (15:09):** My question is to the Treasurer. Does the Treasurer now admit that local businesses in the South-East of the state will be affected by the forestry sale, and can he advise how much has been budgeted for compensation to those businesses which are disadvantaged by the sale? A Department of Treasury and Finance briefing entitled 'Divestment of ForestrySA Forward Rotation', which has been leaked to the opposition, states, and I quote:

The government will offer targeted structural adjustment measures in those instances where, as a result of the sale for forward rotations, firms can demonstrate disadvantage.

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (15:09):** No I don't; no I haven't.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Pederick interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Hammond, you are warned for the second time.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Pisoni interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Unley!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my right also will stop responding.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Little Para.

### URANIUM SALES, INDIA

**Mr ODENWALDER (Little Para) (15:10):** My question is to the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy. Will the minister inform the house of the effect that selling uranium to India will have on the future prosperity of our state?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (15:10):** I thank the honourable member for his question. The Australian Labor Party is holding its national conference this weekend and I am a delegate. I will be attending and supporting our Prime Minister and our Premier to see that the ban on selling uranium to India is lifted.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members on my left!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Australia is in the right place at the right time and South Australia is in the right place at the right time. It is this generation that will rise to the challenge and



meet the growing demand in India. India is a growing economic powerhouse. Selling uranium to India will help open up new markets for South Australia and, indeed, encourage further trade with India. India is experiencing massive industrial expansion and, undoubtedly, nuclear energy will play a key role in providing an efficient and clean energy future in a carbon-constrained world.

The truth is that there are those who doubt selling uranium to India. This government is not one of those doubters. We want to fully engage with India to make sure that we can provide them with a guaranteed supply of safe, accessible uranium. South Australia has a natural advantage when it comes to uranium. We have three of Australia's four uranium mines, and Olympic Dam itself has 40 per cent of the world's known low-cost uranium reserves. We have world-class deposits, world-class operations and world-class opportunities. The future of uranium mining is strong, and the decision by the Australian government to export uranium to India will only make it stronger.

The South Australian government is unashamedly pro-uranium mining. This government supports our Prime Minister, and this move will create thousands of jobs and further secure the future prosperity for the state and our economy. It is this generation that is unlocking untold wealth for South Australians. It is this generation that will lead the nation in terms of exports to India. This government is forging ahead. We are going to create new partnerships with India and we are going to sell them uranium.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Pisoni:** You blocked it 30 years ago, remember?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Unley, you are warned for the second time.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The Member for Unley will stop interjecting across the floor.

**An honourable member:** You will be thrown out for the rest of the year!

**Mr Pisoni:** Yes, I know; tough!

**The SPEAKER:** And the first two days of the next session.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Davenport.

#### STATE FINANCES

**The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (15:12):** My question is to the Treasurer. How does the Treasurer claim the cost to the budget of losing the AAA credit rating would be between \$2 million and \$4 million a year when former treasurer Foley told the estimates committee in June 2009 that it would cost \$6 million to \$7 million a year on what was then a much smaller debt?

In 2008-09 the general government debt was \$475 million and the whole-of-government debt was just \$2.9 billion. The then treasurer Foley told parliament the annual cost of losing the AAA credit rating at that point was \$6 million to \$7 million a year. This year the general government debt is \$3.8 billion, not \$475 million, and the whole-of-government debt is \$7.9 billion, not \$2.9 billion, yet the Treasurer is telling the public that the annual cost of losing the AAA credit rating is only \$2 million to \$4 million.

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Treasurer, Minister for Workers Rehabilitation, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (15:13):** Simply because the difference between the way the markets will price the AAA and the AA+ credit rating changes all the time. In fact, different jurisdictions may have the same credit rating but they may pay a very different interest rate on the debt which they have issued.

There is a range of states with AAA credit ratings. A state like Western Australia is a AAA-rated state and along with the commonwealth it has around the lowest interest that it has to pay on its borrowings in the country. Other states with AAA credit ratings, such as South Australia, for example—even though Western Australia and South Australia are both rated AAA we still—

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING:** Well, just because the member for Norwood doesn't understand words of more than one syllable—

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Norwood!

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING:** Just because he doesn't understand words of more than one syllable doesn't mean—

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING:** —he needs to scream out and try to interject and disrupt.

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Norwood, you are warned!

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING:** I know the member for Norwood is preparing himself for his ascension to great office on the other side of the chamber—

**Mr PENGILLY:** Point of order, ma'am.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Point of order. Member for Finniss.

**Mr PENGILLY:** Relevance, I think.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Thank you. The minister will get back to the question.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I have a further point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Point of order.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I understand the reason the Treasurer was led into that minor sin was the interjections from the member for Norwood, which were totally out of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Yes, I uphold that also.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Treasurer.

**The Hon. J.J. SNELLING:** So the advice that I gave to the chamber last week about the \$2 million to \$4 million was as I was advised by Treasury, or by SAFA, at that time; but it does change from time to time and I presume that former treasurer Foley, when he gave that advice to the estimates committee, or wherever it was, would have done that based upon what was current at the time.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT TICKETING

**Mrs VLAHOS (Taylor) (15:16):** My question is to the Minister for Transport Services. Can the minister inform the house about the trial of the smart card equipment in the Adelaide Hills buses?

**The Hon. C.C. FOX (Bright—Minister for Transport Services) (15:16):** In February last year, the state government announced we would be replacing our 24-year old—

*The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** It is quite interesting, and this is part of my answer, that, every single time my title is referred to, the leader says, 'minister for bus timetables'.

**Mr PENGILLY:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! What is your point of order, member for Finniss?

**Mr PENGILLY:** I suggest, once again, relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I do not uphold that point of order because I think she is answering the question as she chooses. Minister, can you get back to the question?

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** Every single time this particular portfolio is referred to by the leader, it seems to be in a way that shows utter contempt for every single commuter in this state.

**Mr PENGILLY:** Point of order, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Point of order.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr PENGILLY:** Perhaps I will try debate this time.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister, can you get back to the substance of the question? I will uphold that point of order.

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** Of course. The new smart card that I was discussing before I discussed the other thing will be called metrocard, which will be introduced from next year—

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** She's at it again—will be introduced from next year in time for the electrification—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** Madam Speaker!

**The SPEAKER:** Could the members on my left stop being rude to the Minister for Transport and listen quietly? Your behaviour is disgraceful today. I don't know whether you had too much brandy in your Christmas pudding, but you will behave.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister for Transport Services, I will try to hear you now.

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The metrocard will be used on all buses, trams and trains by simply touching the pre-paid card to a validator as passengers board. It makes an excellent noise. It goes 'bing'.

*The Hon. T.R. Kenyon interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** It does. It is a machine that goes 'bing', Madam Speaker. It can be topped up or recharged with credit at selected retail outlets, vending machines on trains and trams, and online. As the metrocards are introduced, multitrrips will gradually be phased out. Single and day trip tickets will remain. I am very pleased to announce that we have now installed smart card ticketing equipment on all Adelaide Hills buses following the successful trial on 11 of those buses. The new dual validators, which can validate current magnetic tickets and metrocards, have now been rolled out to all 65 buses operating in Mount Barker and surrounding areas. The new machines allow passengers to validate their normal tickets until the metrocards are introduced from 2012.

The trial will assist in a smooth transition. The trial is part of an ongoing intense testing program to make sure the equipment works perfectly. The Hills buses will continue to be monitored into the New Year, at which point we will start installing the metrocard ticketing system onto other buses, trams and trains. We will spend \$42 million on the system, which has been developed by the Xerox company, Affiliated Computer Services. The technology has already proven to be successful in Europe, Great Britain, Canada and the United States.

#### CHILD'S DEATH

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (15:20):** My question is to the Minister for Education and Child Development. Will the minister now confirm what action her department took when a child abuse notification was made by the Women's and Children's Hospital to Families SA in respect of the four-month old baby who died at Brooklyn Park last month?

Previously (in fact, on 23 November 2011), the minister refused to answer a number of questions about her department's involvement with the four month old who had died, citing that the matter was under investigation and that she would not compromise the case. However, in response to questioning on radio earlier this week about the bashing of a young boy at a public school last

week, the minister said, 'Schools understand they need to call the police. Well, it didn't occur in this case.' Notwithstanding that, at that time that boy had been charged with assault prior to the minister going on radio and therefore the matter was already under investigation.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. I think that explanation was somewhat long-winded to that question.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (15:21):** It didn't actually make any sense, Madam Speaker. I maintain—

*Ms Chapman interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —my position that I made clear in this place when we met last, and that is that I am acting on advice in relation to the tragedy that has occurred in relation to the four-month old child who died. I will not do anything that impedes that investigation. In relation to the other matter, a very separate matter, yes, of course, I have been very clear from the beginning that the school should have called the police. There are a number of explanations as to why that did not occur. I am very clear about this. They should have called the police.

#### CHILD'S DEATH

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (15:22):** Supplementary. Given your answer, minister, did you obtain legal advice before you went on radio to discuss the boy who has currently been charged in relation to that case?

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (15:22):** Madam Speaker, they are two separate issues.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** Let us be very clear about a couple of things in relation to how—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** Let us be clear about the position of this side of the house in relation to the way in which we treat bullying and violence in our school communities. The former minister commissioned Bill Cossey (an outstanding South Australian public servant) to undertake a review on these matters.

**Mr Pisoni:** How's that working for you?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Norwood, you are warned for the second time.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** As a result of his recommendations—there were 14 recommendations—we have accepted every one of those recommendations, and we are absolutely on track in relation to the implementation of those recommendations. However, we have been very clear for many months now what we expect, certainly in the case of violent incidents—and we should be very clear about what has occurred at Hamilton. This was an act of violence. It is absolutely unacceptable.

I have to say that the first thing I expect the schools to do is to secure the health and safety—

*Mr Marshall interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Norwood, you are warned for the third time. You will go out for three days if I throw you out. I would sit there and be quiet if I were you, or you will miss the first two days in the parliament next year. Minister.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** It has been clear for many months now that we expect schools to notify the police. That did not occur. That was a mistake; I have been very clear about that. The other thing I did on that weekend—I think it was last weekend—is I also spoke to the mother of the boy. I and officers of my agency will continue to work with the families in question. We need to remember that bullying and violence are not bred in our schools: they are brought into our school communities. They are brought in—

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Point of order, Madam Speaker. My point of order is one of relevance. The question was about the minister using the excuse that a matter was before the courts so she could not address the matter in the house; yet this matter is before the courts, I believe, and she is speaking on it at length.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I do not uphold that point of order.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** In fact, research conducted by Professor Donna Cross from the Edith Cowan University shows that South Australia has the lowest rate of all forms of bullying across Australia and the lowest rate of covert bullying in state schools in the nation. The matters to which the member refers are two separate issues. I am very happy to keep answering questions.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

### ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (15:26):** Can the Minister for Education and Child Development advise the house on how the government is supporting Aboriginal students?

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (15:26):** I would like to thank the member for Ashford for this very important question. Right across this great state I am very pleased to say that we have made substantial gains in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We have record school retention figures. More Aboriginal students than ever before are completing their SACE, and we have increased the number of Aboriginal teachers who work in our schools by more than 50 per cent in the past five years, and this is something that we should all be incredibly proud of.

We have put substantial resources into education, and I can give you that information. Programs like Wiltja in Woodville, which support students from the APY lands to study at school in Adelaide, have produced outstanding results. We have schools like Warriappendi, which offer specialist curriculum for students who have performed extremely well in terms of their NAPLAN results. We also have programs to provide mentoring to assist students improve their study habits and we have programs to support schools improve the academic outcomes for their Aboriginal students.

The department has recently commenced a partnership with Chris Sarra's (from Queensland) Stronger, Smarter Institute. In fact, I caught up with him a few days ago to look at ways we can better support Aboriginal students in our community. In terms of the APY lands, we have made—and continue to make—substantial resource commitments, as we should, to ensure that our students are well supported.

On recent trips to the lands, I was told by communities that remarkable progress has been made in recent years, and I know that the Premier—when he was minister for education—had a similar feeling about the progress we were making on the lands. Even taking this into account, attendance rates today are higher than when Labor came to government in 2002. There is no question that we still have work to do in relation to school attendance, but we have made significant progress.

For instance, over the past five years, there have been substantial increases in the number of children attending school, particularly at senior secondary level, where a massive two and a half times as many children are staying in school. Notwithstanding these gains, we recognise that, although we are coming off a low base, we are making significant inroads.

In South Australia, we have maintained a 100 per cent enrolment rate of Aboriginal students in preschool, and this is a very good sign. Aboriginal children have been some of the first in the state to receive the increased entitlement from 11 hours of preschool a week to 15 hours. Aboriginal children are also eligible for early enrolment in preschool from three years of age to give them the best start in life, which, of course, is exactly what this new agency is about; it is about ensuring that we give every child in our community the best start in life.

**ITALIAN CONSULATE**

**Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (15:30):** My question is also for the Minister for Education and Child Development—

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** Point of order. Question time has expired.

**The SPEAKER:** I have just realised that.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I had given the call before I realised that question time had finished. The member for Morialta.

**Mr GARDNER:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Education and Child Development. When the minister returned from Italy in September and announced that she had been responsible for saving the future of the Italian consulate until the end of next year, was she aware that Under Secretary Mantica, whom she met with, was also at the same time announcing that the consulate would close in June next year?

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (15:30):** The Italian government—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! You will listen to the answer. I allowed the question.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** In about 2009 the Italian government announced that it would close Brisbane and Adelaide. Since that time this government, because we value the massive contribution made by the Italian community, the most significant ethnic community in the state—in fact, we value all our ethnic communities—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** They announced they were going to do this, and the government, then led by premier Mike Rann, was very clear in our opposition to this. The government, and now minister Rankine as the new Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Premier, and I as the local member for the consulate, in fact, remain committed to doing everything we can to keep this open. I was advised earlier this year in conversation with a number of people in the community that I should do my very best—in fact, the member for Bragg on Italian radio urged me to do more. She said, 'You must do more,' to which I responded that I would—and I did. I was advised—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —to get myself to Rome as soon as I could, because their information was that the then Italian government would be making a decision very soon about the future of the consulate. When I got there I raised a number of issues with the Italian government—the consulate was one of them and the other issue was in relation to the payment of Italian pensions—and the Under Secretary, Senator Mantica, listened when I explained very clearly our position in relation to this matter and he said to me that the consulate would remain open until the end of 2012—brand new news to me.

Upon my return I, of course, announced that. Why until the end of 2012? He said to me, 'That would give us time to consider and have a discussion—a discussion that has now been set for next year—'about the future needs of the Italian community, not only in South Australia, but in Australia.' So for the Italian government—which has always wanted to shut the consulate, and for us it has been a case of campaigning every day to keep it open—the issue was about contextualising the discussion around the consulate in terms of the needs of the Italian community. This information was received very well by the Italian community, but—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** And it was new information. It was new information, certainly to me. But, don't listen to me—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** Don't listen to me—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** This is what Orietta Borgia, who is the acting consul here in Adelaide, said in relation to my trip to Italy:

We believe that the trip was very useful, and we were very happy that she had undertaken it. Minister Portolesi comes from an Italian background and she is very close to our community. Her trip to Italy has been very valuable, because it shows that South Australian representatives have a strong interest in the Italian-Australian community and their welfare. I wish to stress again that the Italian consulate and the Italian community are very appreciative of the assistance and support we have received.

I also want to mention our new Premier's statements in relation to this matter, where he said, the day before yesterday, that we will be advocating our position very strongly with Italian diplomatic representatives.

I understand that the new minister for multicultural affairs has sought meetings with the Italian ambassador. I have sought to make phone contact, and the Premier has signed a letter to the new Foreign Minister. That is the fact that is forgotten in all of this; we actually now have a new government. Yes, there was a deal, as it has been reported—

*Mrs Redmond interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition, you are warned.

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** Yes there was a deal, as has been reported by *InDaily*, with the previous government. We now have a new government, and we remain—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** We remain as committed as ever—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** That's right; someone tell them Berlusconi is no longer there. We remain—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** In fact, it is with some irony that the member for Morialta asked this question, because I recall—I think it was the day before I left, or two days before I left—being with the member for Morialta at a function in the member for Norwood's electorate (which he wasn't actually present at), where the member for Morialta came up to me and said, 'All the best with your trip.'

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** 'All the best with your trip with the consulate,' Madam Speaker. I ask the member—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.C. Fox:** Outed!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** Outed, that's correct. I ask the member for Morialta, and all members, to work with this government—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G. PORTOLESI:** —in ensuring that we keep our consulate open for as long as we can.

**Mr GARDNER:** Supplementary question, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! No, I'll take no supplementary questions at this stage; you can save it until the next question time.

#### MINISTER'S REMARKS

**Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (15:38):** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Today, the Minister for Education and Child Development made a ministerial statement to the parliament in which, on no less than three occasions, she alleged that I, as the member for Bragg, had made allegations against the chief executive and members of, in her description, 'his senior staff', within her department.

Can I say, Madam Speaker, that, on those three occasions, which were followed by a request for an unreserved apology on the same, not only had I never made an allegation against the chief executive or senior members or the staff, but it—wait around, Grace; this is not about you and me, this is about children. You sit down! Come back here!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Not only did I not say that—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Point of order, Minister for Transport Services.

**The Hon. C.C. FOX:** Point of order: I believe that it is unparliamentary to (a) refer to a member by their first name, and to (b) reflect on whether a person is in the chamber or not.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I will uphold that. Be careful, member for Bragg. You are very aware that we do not refer to people by name.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I apologise if that's certainly recorded as your being referred to as Grace, because you could be nothing further from it.

*Members interjecting:*

**Ms CHAPMAN:** So may I say, Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Bragg!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** —not only had I not made that allegation, but indeed, it was the minister herself, on 23 November 2011, who made that assertion. I refer to the seven questions that were asked last week, most of them on 23 November 2011. The question for the minister, firstly—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** —on the child death in question, was specifically to—

**The SPEAKER:** Point of order. Minister for Transport.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The capacity to make a personal explanation exists to make a short, factual statement of why you have been misrepresented. It is not—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** It is also out of order to interject, but that is what we expect from these people. It is not an opportunity for the member for Bragg to engage in a lengthy debate about the merits of her position on this, which is what she is seeking to do.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister for Transport, I was coming to that conclusion myself. I think you need to wind up very quickly. You have strayed past the personal explanation.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** I am going to refer to the statements that I made to make it absolutely clear that I had made no such allegation in the questions asked. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I asked this question, which says, 'My question is about the process her department undertook in relation to an alleged case of child abuse', etc. In response, the minister said, 'I have said publicly, and I am going to say



it again in this place, that this matter is currently before the police...' That is on the question of her own department.

**Mrs Geraghty:** No, you are now debating.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes. Member for Bragg, you have strayed into debate now. I think you have gone too far. You were to just respond to the comment.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** The second matter of personal explanation is, again, during this presentation by the minister to the parliament. She asserted that she was going to answer the question that she had been asked on the previous occasion about the department. I point out that she did not, and the reason—

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Bragg. I am going to ask you to sit down. You have strayed far beyond the personal explanation. You are now well and truly into debate.

**Ms CHAPMAN:** Well, I will ask you, Madam Speaker, to have a consideration of the very first question the Leader of the Opposition asked the minister in this place on 23 November—

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bragg!

**Ms CHAPMAN:** —on which she said she would bring back an answer, and we still don't have an answer.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bragg, you will sit down!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Point of order. The member for Fisher.

**The Hon. R.B. SUCH:** It is 108. The member is allowed, according to 108, five minutes, but that can be extended by leave of the house for personal explanation. I do not believe the member has gone for five minutes.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I point out to the member for Bragg, as she makes unnecessary reflections upon me—

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Sit down. We already have one point of order. Sit down, member for MacKillop, until I hear this.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Excuse me, Madam Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** Member for MacKillop, you will sit down until I hear what the Minister for Transport has to say, then I will get you to get on your feet.

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** I point out that reflections were made—

**Mr PISONI:** Point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** Sit down, member for Unley. We have a point of order. Member for Unley, you will sit down!

**The Hon. P.F. CONLON:** The member for Bragg reflected on my motivations in saying she had no chance in making a statement. Can I point out to the member for Bragg that she makes that statement by the leave of the house, which I could have withdrawn at any time and did not do.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you. Now, member for MacKillop.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr WILLIAMS:** I was about to inquire on what authority the minister was speaking. He had not sought leave of the house to make an explanation.

**The SPEAKER:** I am sorry, member for MacKillop. I took it as a point of order and that was the authority he was speaking on. I am not quite sure whether it was a point of order, after hearing him; however, I have now heard your point of order, thank you. Member for Unley, did you have a point of order? Thank you.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It is the last day of the year. We should be full of Christmas cheer; however, we certainly are not.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

## GRIEVANCE DEBATE

### STATE ECONOMIC REFORM

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (15:44):** I rise to speak about state economic reform, but I do so at the end of an unseemly squabble in the last question time of the year, and reflect back on a year in this parliament that I think has been beset with personal invective, point-scoring and an endless focus on personalities, and the politics of politics, instead of meaningful policy debate on matters of substance and relevance to the families, the workers and the businesses of South Australia.

So, I get to the point of state economic reform as the shadow minister for industry and trade, and I point to five key challenges that I think the state faces—five key issues that I think we should have been debating this year instead of spending endless time squabbling and bickering.

The first is the need for this state to optimise its competitive advantages against other states and, in particular, to work out the basis upon which it intends to compete economically, whether it will be on costs, on niche markets, on innovation and skills as a competitive advantage, or on some other basis, because our manufacturers and our businesses are facing dark times. In fact, the entire world economy is facing a dark time. This state needs some structural rearrangement if our manufacturers are to survive, so we need to sit down and have a meaningful debate about how this state is going to compete.

Second, we need to work out one of the biggest challenges we face, that is, how we spread the benefits of mining across the broader state economy. That has to do with tax and mining taxes, but it also has to do with jobs and whether or not those mining jobs will be local or fly-in, fly-out from other places. It has to do with contracts, whether or not they will be let to South Australian companies or to overseas or interstate companies, and it has to do with whether or not we will use mining as an opportunity to grow our population and our investment, not only in infrastructure but in science.

Certainly I have some doubts about whether the arrangement we have entered into with BHP in regard to the Roxby Downs expansion will deliver on the opportunities we all hope it will. I hope it happens but we need to monitor this process and any other mining developments to ensure that it does.

Thirdly, we need to work out how this state and its businesses will move up the value chain. I remind the house about the observations of the government's own Thinker in Residence, Goran Roos, who recently observed that South Australian industries have become a little lazy and have lost their innovative edge, and who urged our businesses to move up the value chain and look towards the high value-added end of manufacturing and production based on research development, science and innovation as a way to break clear, and to better compete with emerging economies and other states.

Fourthly, we need—and I think it is a great challenge—to modernise federalism. I think that there are a number of things going on at the moment that are worrying. Under the guise of harmonisation or standardisation, and national policies and approaches, a number of things have been brought into the parliament that I think are putting this state on its backside. We are debating at the moment the occupational health and safety arrangements that will be adhered to, arrangements that risk pushing up the cost of doing business in this state.

I do not want to canvass a bill before the other place but I think we must ask ourselves whether there is a whole stack of red tape in that proposal, as there was with the childcare legislation that we recently debated which is now past, that pushes up the number of staff to the point where childcare will almost become unaffordable. I think red tape and costly expenses are being driven into business structures and that will slow this country and this state down.

Finally, the fifth challenge we face is a simple one and it is about productivity. We are slipping and, unless we have a meaningful discussion about micro-economic reform, about tax reform, about further industrial relations reform and planning reforms, we are not going to lift our

productivity. These five things: our competitive advantage; spreading the benefits of mining; moving up the value chain; modernising federalism; and improving our productivity, are the key to what this state needs to address if it is to go forward.

Time expired.

### INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS DAY

**Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:50):** Today I would like to speak about volunteers. I know I speak about volunteers a lot; however, next Monday is International Volunteers Day. It is also particularly important because it is International Year for Volunteers + 10, so it is 10 years since we celebrated volunteering right across the globe. On Monday there will be a lot to be discussed about the future of volunteering at the volunteer congress, which will be attended by the Premier.

In the past I have spoken about service clubs and other community groups and the volunteer contribution made by our community. What I would like to do today is talk about some of the individuals who volunteer in our communities without any fuss or fanfare, who are often behind the scenes making an important contribution to our communities. Recently I wrote to the local paper seeking stories from readers of local papers about volunteers in the community who perhaps do not get much mention elsewhere and who do a valuable job.

I was amazed by the quality and quantity of responses I received about people who support our community. I would like to talk about a few of them today. I confess I cannot do it justice, but I think in the time I have available I can at least highlight some of the things which occur in my community because of these wonderful volunteers.

First, I would like to mention Bruce Parsons. Bruce is a retired teacher and is a tutor at Gawler Community House. In conjunction with the Lutheran Community Care at Tanunda, Bruce helps adult participants gain practical skills that help them in their everyday life. From literacy to numeracy to everyday life skills such as self-esteem, Bruce plays an important role in helping adults get on with their life.

Craig Haskard has an interest in ballroom dancing. For 20 years he has been helping the seniors in our community to dance. At the age of 89 he was more concerned about letting the team down when he decided to retire as a ballroom dancing teacher. Again, Craig has done a wonderful job in supporting our seniors in this activity.

Then we have Peter Webb. Peter is 81 years of age. Peter has the skill to make his audience drift into another place and another time. Peter is making regular appearances at the Wheatfields Nursing Home in Freeling where his performances are said to woo the staff and residents. He maintains a hectic schedule of singing in nursing homes and local churches. Peter states that it is all about—

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**Mr PICCOLO:** He is, that's right. He does it in your electorate, but he lives in mine. Peter has done a wonderful job in supporting our elderly in the various nursing homes. Then there is the Make a Wish team and volunteers from the Barossa branch. They have 20 members—

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**Mr PICCOLO:** I cannot help it if they want to communicate with me and tell me their stories. I do not know why they do not tell you, member for Schubert. It is Christmas; we won't go there. For over a decade this small group of volunteers has been actively fundraising to give young local people wishes to overcome hardship.

Ann McGonigal teaches basic skating skills right through to artistic skating. She conducts family orientation sessions every Saturday morning at the Gawler Sports and Community Centre. Ann was a state finalist in the Every Generation Physical Activity Award in recognition of her contribution to the community. Ann has been donating her time and skills for many years.

Some could describe the next volunteer as the king of volunteers. Norman Knispel, who sadly passed away on 8 September 2011, will be missed by the service club community of Gawler and beyond. Norman began his service club career when he helped establish the Apex Cub in Gawler in 1952. Norman had a very eminent career in both Apex and Lions. Our communities are better for his contribution of over 55 years.

I would also like to mention the Rotary Youth Exchange of Gawler, which also supports students who come from other countries and spend time in our local schools. That program assists

many young people to see the world. Also, the community radio station Triple B FM is a station with a difference. The entire staff of 70 is made up of volunteers; 35 of them are presenters.

**Mr Venning:** Is this a push for Schubert? Are you going to stand for Schubert?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr PICCOLO:** This is but a small example of the volunteers in our community.

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (15:55):** I would like to follow in a similar vein to the member for Light and thank some volunteers. I would also like to highlight that I did appreciate some of the comments from the Minister for Emergency Services when she talked about the first day of bushfire season, but it was very unfortunate that in her extensive answer to a question here today she did not thank the thousands of emergency services volunteers when she stood to speak.

I would like to personally thank the thousands of emergency services workers—volunteers and professionals—who support our state. In South Australia we have approximately 15,000 CFS volunteers working at over 423 operational stations; approximately 1,700 SES volunteers working at approximately 67 stations; and 1,500 South Australian Ambulance Service volunteers working at 70 stations. We also have 580 volunteers working in marine rescue or coast guard across 14 different flotillas.

That is 19,000 volunteers of which I am proudly one, in the CFS, and the CFS represents approximately 80 per cent of those people. I would like to personally thank every single one of those people, plus the paid staff who work in those agencies and others. There is the Metropolitan Fire Service, the police, and others—including, interestingly, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and ForestrySA. People who work in those departments also volunteer their time to support our state emergency services. They should all be recognised, particularly the volunteers.

The CFS makes up about 80 per cent of the total volunteer emergency service force that we have in our state. Fires are front of mind at the moment, on 1 December at the beginning of the fire season across our entire state, and I commend the minister for mentioning that today. Already this year in Queensland, the Northern Territory and north-east South Australia some very, very devastating fires have burnt out in excess of the same geographical area as the whole state of Tasmania.

Very, very sadly in the last couple of weeks we have also seen devastating fires in Western Australia that I think actually burnt out 32 homes. That would be tragic anywhere, and it highlights the fact that this is a remote (as in faraway pastoral country), rural and urban issue. Urban fringes are exceptionally at risk as we know in South Australia from unfortunate experience in the Adelaide Hills.

In the last few days (and it is still currently burning in one of these places) we have been very, very forcefully reminded of the risks that we face. Port Augusta, Gladstone and the north-west pastoral area near Bulgunnia have all fought fires lately. I was at the fire at Port Augusta, not in a CFS volunteer capacity because I was actually at work in Port Augusta at the time and my kit was at Wilmington, but I did go to the scene and talk to some of the volunteers there. They think they were within minutes of stopping that fire at Port Augusta from actually reaching houses.

I drove through and had a good look at the Gladstone fire ground when I was driving down to parliament yesterday evening just before dark. I spoke with some truck drivers who work carting grain during harvest, and there are actually burnt tarps and bunkers. One bunker nearly caught on fire at the Gladstone silos and grain receival area, and there is a fire still burning at Bulgunnia which is one of the McLachlan properties in the north-west of South Australia.

People think of emergency services workers (like we saw on the front page of *The Advertiser* yesterday) as people actively engaged in fighting fires. I would like to highlight that there are an enormous number of ways that people contribute, whether as radio operators back at the base; or catering; and also, very importantly, on strike teams. People leave their homes and their families for days at a time to go and fight fires in other parts of the state, and I think that is a tremendous sacrifice.

In the CFS, interestingly, motor vehicle accidents account for the majority of callouts. In fact, CFS crews attend motor vehicle accidents more often than they attend fires, and that is an

important service that they provide as well. It would be remiss of people just to think of the CFS as a firefighting organisation, although it does that exceptionally well.

I would just like to say we need to be particularly aware this season. We have had reminders, but this will be a very risky, very dangerous fire season for South Australia, and I hope all people will be prepared for it. Thank you again to the volunteers.

Time expired.

### **INTERNATIONAL BARCODE OF LIFE CONFERENCE**

**Mr ODENWALDER (Little Para) (16:00):** Yesterday, I was privileged to represent the Minister for Science and Information Economy at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Barcode of Life Conference at Adelaide University. Having a layman's interest in these sorts of things, I jumped at the opportunity. This conference, which ends tomorrow, has attracted about 450 of the world's experts in DNA barcoding technology, and this is the first time it has been held in the southern hemisphere, so it is a great opportunity for Adelaide University and our city generally to have these people here. I explained to the delegates how proud we are that they had chosen our city and encouraged them to see as much of our great state as they could.

The conference is being convened by Professor Andrew Lowe, Professor of Plant Conservation Biology and Director of the Australian Centre for Evolutionary Biology and Biodiversity. The conference is addressing a range of DNA barcoding applications and developments, including the illegal wildlife and timber trade, pest and disease diagnostics, forensics, quarantine identifications, environmental monitoring and assessment, and animal, plant and microbial systems.

One of the conference's aims is to allow participants and sponsoring organisations (and several were represented) to promote partnerships to better enable the international scientific community to better manage biodiversity with DNA bar codes. One example of this work being carried out in our own state in the area of DNA barcoding is the work of Professor Andy Austin from the University of Adelaide and Dr Steve Cooper from the South Australian Museum. These two gentlemen have been DNA barcoding unique life forms which have been trapped for millions of years in aquifers used by mining companies in the Australian desert. The survey results show there are up to 850 different species of aquatic groundwater invertebrates identified there and, as a result of this work, mining companies have changed their water usage habits and are working closely with the researchers to ensure these unique life forms are preserved.

Among the distinguished guests and speakers at the conference are Professor James McWha, the Vice Chancellor; Scott Miller, the Director of the Consortium for the Barcode of Life; David Schindel, its secretary; Jesse Ausubel, from the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States; and also Peter Freeman, the Executive Director of the International Barcode of Life project.

The South Australian government has a longstanding commitment to science technology and innovation in this state, and I know that the former premier, who had the carriage of this sort of thing in previous times, retains a strong interest in this field. Since 2004, this government has invested more than \$200 million in science, technology and innovation initiatives. In South Australia we need increasing numbers of people with skills, not only in science but also technology, engineering and mathematics (which are referred to in policy documents as STEM) to meet the needs of our industry and growing economy. Having highly skilled people who can work in the jobs of today and in the future is critical for our state, and will become even more critical as the mining boom takes hold.

To grow the number of South Australians with skills in STEM, the state government has its Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Skills Strategy. This strategy aims to bring together industry and government to direct our STEM programs and activities. Through these connections with industry, we will create greater community awareness of the career opportunities available in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. While the demand for STEM skills is a global challenge, South Australia is determined to lead the way.

The STEM Skill Strategy recognises that, while there has been substantial government investment in improving the supply of people with STEM skills into the workforce, a more strategic approach is required in order for the supply of these skills to match forecast industry demand over the next decade. The strategy brings together many government initiatives to support increased participation, both in schools and in higher education, along with training providers.

In addition, South Australia's Strategic Plan (which provides the 100 key targets important to the future of our state) also identifies the growing importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Importantly, it aims to increase the number of South Australians with these undergraduate qualifications by 15 per cent by 2020. I wish the conference in its last days every success, and I do congratulate the Adelaide University on securing this prestigious event for our city.

I was a speaker at the Fremont High School awards night on Monday night and I met, again, Professor Gordon Howarth who is very active in the northern suburbs in terms of science education. He was educated in the northern suburbs, he moved out, gained his qualifications and moved back simply because he wanted to help encourage just this sort of thing—investment in the future in our kids in terms of science, mathematics and engineering.

### FLINDERS ELECTORATE

**Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (16:05):** It is my pleasure to deliver the last grievance for the year from the opposition side, at least; and, rather than speak about any issue in particular, I might just take the opportunity to summarise the year from my perspective and on behalf of those people who live in the seat of Flinders. Many of us here—most of us here, in fact—develop an incredible affinity with our electorates, and, as a result, we become very parochial.

I am not ashamed or embarrassed to admit that I am one of those members who love my electorate and my part of the world very much; and I notice in the gallery today a former member for Flinders, Mr Peter Blacker. He is often a visitor here, and he will know only too well the privilege of representing a seat like Flinders.

The thing about the Eyre Peninsula that I keep coming back to is the incredible richness and diversity of its natural landscape, its natural resources, the land that produces so much, the sea that produces so much and the primary products that come from that natural landscape. Our beaches and our national parks are beyond description, but the thing that really makes it a special part of the world, I believe, are the people themselves.

The people who live on the Eyre Peninsula in the seat of Flinders are capable; they are resilient people. They have inherent qualities that see them prosper despite any adversity they may come across. They have a can-do attitude, and a lot of them just get on with life and just do it. One of the issues that has been a constant for me, not just this year but in the whole time that I have been the member for Flinders, is the marine parks implementation process.

It continues to confound and confuse many of us who have been close to it and who have been involved with it. Commercial fishing, recreational fishing and, indeed, coastal communities, along with the tourism sector, all have concerns about where we are going to land on this one. To their credit, the communities on Eyre Peninsula have stayed involved with the process, and I have encouraged them to do that; and, to their credit, they have had incredible input into the discussion and the debate. I just hope that the minister responsible takes on board their proposals.

Many of our coastal communities are growing. I heard the other day that the township of Cowell is in fact the fastest growing coastal township in South Australia, and to drive into Cowell now you can sense that air of prosperity and busyness, which you also see in other towns. Streaky Bay, for example, is developing. Certainly, Ceduna is a busy place. Ceduna is thriving for a whole number of reasons: three reasonable to good grain harvests in a row; of course, the gypsum and salt mines continue to export out of the port; and, of course, Iluka, with its mineral sands operation north-west of the town, is also shipping out of the port of Thevenard.

The port of Thevenard remains constrained, and we are working hard towards gaining some investment to expand and deepen that port to make it adequate for the demands that are being made on it. While we are on things maritime, it was good news a couple of months ago for the tuna fishers in Port Lincoln to have an increase in their quota—some 32 per cent over the next three years. This is good news for Port Lincoln. It is good news not just for the tuna industry, which of course is the king of fishing in Port Lincoln, but for the pilchard industry, which feeds directly into the tuna industry. It is good news for Port Lincoln generally, because it means jobs and an opportunity to look forward and be confident about the investments you make in your business.

Mining exploration continues, albeit slowly. I get the sense that, sometime soon at least, one of the mining companies will begin to dig and export product. Port Spencer looks like it will go ahead, possibly by 2013, and we look forward to that as a multipurpose port.

Harvest is about halfway through, and it looks like being the third good harvest in a row for Eyre Peninsula. It will not be the bin-buster that it was last year, but it is certainly well above average in a lot of places. I wish all members in this place well over the Christmas break, and I know that they will continue to work for a bit longer yet. I also wish staff—both here and in the electorate offices—well.

Time expired.

**RANN, HON. M.D.**

**The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (16:10):** First, I would like to acknowledge that today is World AIDS Day, and it is very important that we acknowledge the work that needs to be done in that area. I would also like to acknowledge that today is the last day we will see the former premier, Mike Rann (the member for Ramsay), sitting in this chamber. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his support over the years.

First of all I knew him as a friend when he was working in the Department of Labour, in the Industrial Democracy Unit. When I first met him, he was fresh from New Zealand. In and around March 1997, he basically conned me into taking over as the Labor candidate for Hanson (now called Ashford) from Mark Butler.

As such a late starter in the election campaign of 1997, he did not think I would win the seat, but he really wanted somebody—particularly a woman—with, as he called it, good Labor credentials. As I said, he conned me into taking over that position as a candidate. Although I worked hard, I really do have to acknowledge the fact that Mark Butler had been an excellent candidate before me. He had worked hard.

With the help of many volunteers—particularly my family and friends—the then senator Nick Bolkus and my fellow Labor candidate, Pat Conlon, who was running for the seat of Elder, I won the seat. I particularly have to acknowledge Mike Rann's work, because not only did he talk me into being a candidate, he also spent a lot of time with me, making sure that the campaign was going well and doing a lot of work in the electorate of Hanson, as it was then.

I would also like to extend my best wishes to Kevin Foley. As a fellow kid growing up in Port Adelaide, I have always felt quite a strong connection to him. Despite the fact that Le Fevre was a boys' school, I also attended that school and did chemistry.

**Mrs Redmond:** I bet that was fun.

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:** It was, yes. I was very popular. There were only five young women at Le Fevre Boys Technical School. I came from Port Adelaide Girls Technical School; they did not offer chemistry at our school.

**Mr Sibbons:** Is that the reason you chose chemistry?

**The Hon. S.W. KEY:** No, I am very interested in chemistry. The other interest that I think Kevin and I share is the love of Port Power, although I must say that he is much more enthusiastic about it than I am. However, I certainly have an allegiance to Port Power as well.

Although Kevin and I did not agree on many political issues—and I certainly had an interesting time as the minister for social justice in the budget negotiations with him as treasurer—the thing I have always found about Kevin is that he is progressive. He has always given me support in the various private members' bills that I have had in this house and has said that, when it comes to the vote, he would vote for those bills. So, I must say that that means a lot to me because, as anyone in here knows, private members' bills are very difficult to actually get up, and to have that sort of support from Kevin is very much appreciated.

Mike Rann has done a number of things behind the scenes that people probably do not know about. I would like to give a couple of examples. One of them is his support for Three D Radio. There is an ongoing campaign that we need to maintain for that radio to continue as a community radio. I think part of the attraction, though, was that I very deliberately got him on to Three D Radio, probably nearly 15 years ago now, and made sure that he could play his music in an hour that was dedicated to Mike Rann and his music. I think he was hooked after that.

I must say I do share a number of Mike Rann's musical choices, but very few people have the same appreciation for the Cream or the Doors as Mike Rann does. I am probably selling him short, because he does have quite an extensive taste in music, which is probably unknown to most

members in this place. He certainly helped that project, and most recently he has been at the backbone of the Kym Adey education program for women in Catherine House.

### SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

**The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Recreation and Sport) (16:16):** I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 14 February 2012 at 11am.

Motion carried.

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

#### VALEDICTORIES

**Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (16:17):** I do in this season of goodwill to all want to place on record my thanks to a number of people who make our lives in this place so much easier and better than if we were just left to squabble amongst ourselves without their help and guidance.

I begin by thanking my family, whom I do not see very often and who often feel that they have to make an appointment to see me these days. They are very understanding and accepting. My kids do get a bit frustrated when they go to the doctor and the first question the doctor asks them if they are sick is, 'How's your mum?' They find that a little frustrating. They do not see me very often and they tolerate it with good grace and good humour and I do thank them.

I also thank my colleagues, in particular, of course, my deputy, Mitch Williams, and the rest of the leadership group, especially David Ridgway MLC in the Legislative Council and the deputy leader up there, Michelle Lensink. I thank our wonderful whip, Adrian Pederick, and deputy whip, Peter Treloar, and also the opposition whip in the Legislative Council, John Dawkins, and his deputy, Jing Lee, as well as all my shadow cabinet and other colleagues within this place and their families, who, like my family, have to put up with a fair bit of not having family members available to do the usual things that some people might be able to do, because we have taken on this role as members of parliament. I also give my best to the new premier, Jay Weatherill, and the ministers and government members on the opposite side.

I also make mention of the staff of the Liberal Party in South Australia, the South Australian Division. Of course, my former chief of staff, Bev Barber, is now the director of the Liberal Party, and former Senator Grant Chapman is the president of the South Australian Division. I also thank all my staff in Parliament House, especially my chief of staff, Andrew Coombe.

I also make special mention of the former media director, Therese Kenny, who left us recently, and who was an excellent member of staff, but for personal reasons sadly had to resign from the job. I am sure she is still enthusiastically taping all the news programs and watching them at home. She certainly was a few weeks after she left, and I began to think that she might have had some sort of illness, to be doing that after leaving this place; but she is still so keen that she is doing that.

I would also like to thank my electorate staff in the Heysen electorate office—and I am sure the same applies to every electorate office, Madam Speaker. I am sure your staff up in Whyalla and those of all of us would be the same; they do work very hard. They often have to do that work when we are not there, and they have to deal with a diverse range of people from the public who come in.

I remember that, when I first came into this place, I was told that there was a member opposite who actually closed her office on days when there was a full moon. I remember thinking that was really odd, but then as we got through the cycle and discovered that, on a full moon, there really was a certain tendency for certain people to turn up in an electorate office, we thought maybe there was some sense in doing that. Although they do not do it, my electorate staff do a wonderful job.

Gaynor (my PA up there) has been with me now for more than 18 years. She was with me for the entire time I ran my legal practice in Stirling and came on the journey with me into parliament. So, it was like losing my right arm when I was suddenly based down here instead of up in Stirling, and I think we suffered separation anxiety for a while. Nick has also been with me since my year in this place, and Alicia, our new trainee, is doing a wonderful job.



Can I also make special mention of the drivers and, in particular, my driver Warren, who does a magnificent job and is always an absolute gentleman. I think he is the best driver in the fleet—I am sure all the other people who have drivers think that that is the case with their drivers, but I am sure that Warren is the best driver in the fleet. All of those electoral and parliamentary staff do a wonderful job.

Most of all, Madam Speaker, can I express the compliments of the season and the goodwill of those on this side of the house to the various House of Assembly chamber attendants: Malcolm Lehman, the Clerk; Rick Crump, the Deputy Clerk; Paul Collett, Serjeant-at-Arms; and also to Jan Davis and Chris Schwarz in the Legislative Council, and all the attendants in both houses.

I would like to make special mention of John Moylan, who always fills my glass as soon as it looks like it is getting anywhere near empty; I drink more water in this chamber than I drink in all the rest of the time, because he is so attentive in filling those glasses of water.

**The Hon. T.R. Kenyon:** That's no bad thing.

**Mrs REDMOND:** It is no bad thing at all; it is a good thing. I do drink a fair bit of water anyway, being a teetotaler, so I only drink black tea, green tea and water. If I get on the hard stuff, it is sparkling water, but—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mrs REDMOND:** I would also like to mention David Woolman (Building Services Manager), the committee members and staff, the table staff, and the library staff, who do a magnificent job—I love showing off the library of this place when we have visitors through. I love doing tours, when I have visitors in this place, through the Dining Room, and I love to bring them into the chamber, and—

**Ms Bedford:** Show them Muriel Matters?

**Mrs REDMOND:** And show them Muriel Matters, and tell them all sorts of tales about this place, which they find fascinating. I love showing off—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mrs REDMOND:** I love showing off our library. Not only is it a beautiful looking library, it is staffed with people who do a wonderful job. I remember one time asking them to find something that had been in a now-defunct Sydney newspaper more than 25 years ago—I was able to give them an approximate date, and certainly, the topic and so on—and they found the details. They actually found the details within about 24 hours, which I thought was quite magnificent. So, they do a fantastic job.

Can I also mention Creon and James and all the catering and Blue Room staff, and make special mention of Nikki, who I think must still be off on her honeymoon. They are always friendly, and give us service with a smile, and the food is mostly really good.

**Mr Piccolo:** You're in trouble now.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I said it is really good.

**Mr Piccolo:** You took a while to get there, though.

**Mr Pederick:** She was digesting her words.

**Mrs REDMOND:** I was being careful about it. I have only had one meal, in all the time that I have been in this place, that I thought was just inedible—it was fairly recent, admittedly—but mostly the meals here have been pretty good, and I am sure that I have made more disasters at home than I have ever had served to me here.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

Can I also compliment Hansard up there who do such a wonderful job of making us all sound much more eloquent than we ever are in person. They deserve gold medals. Every time I think of them sitting up there I think they must see people come and go over the years. They see people coming here with their chest puffed up thinking, 'I am a member of parliament', then they are gone and someone else comes to replace them. They must see that happen time after time. They are always unfailingly polite and, as I say, they make us sound much better than we really are.

I also compliment the Procedures Office, the cleaning, the switchboard, the maintenance and, not to forget, finance and PNSG—my favourite people in the world. I just love technology so much.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mrs REDMOND:** I don't know why people on this side are laughing so much. It is always a wonderful time of year when we finally, in the last few minutes of our sittings for the entire year, show some goodwill towards each other. I know that the new Premier regrets that the house does not behave with a great deal of goodwill towards each other the rest of the time, but the nature of parliamentary democracy is that we are here as an opposition to test and question the government; that is our job.

So, it is a pleasure at the end of the year, at least for a brief moment, to be able to say that, on behalf of the opposition, I do wish all those who make their livings in and about this place the very best for Christmas and the coming year, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much for the indulgence.

**Mr PICCOLO (Light) (16:26):** I would just like to make a few brief remarks. I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the various people around the parliament who make life bearable for all of us, particularly, obviously the chamber staff, the attendants, Hansard—who put up with me going slightly faster than I should sometimes with the way I speak—and the committee staff who supported me when I was a committee chairperson.

The catering people are really great when I am always trying to change my bookings around. They are very patient with me. I thank the building maintenance people and the people in finance and travel, who always do things very quickly and very efficiently. The library staff are great at researching and, without their help at times, I would be at a loss. I thank the PNSG staff—because I basically have no idea how to use the network and I call on them many times—the security staff and the switchboard people who all provide excellent support and service. I would like to put that on the record.

I would also like to thank the ministers and their staff who put up with my countless requests for information, assistance and support and, in the main, do deliver, which is great. I would like to thank my parliamentary colleagues and the members of the caucus for their support and guidance throughout the year. In particular, I would like to thank the Whip and her staff who put up with my regular requests for all sorts of things and are very patient with me. So, I thank the Whip and her staff.

I would also like to thank the local federal member. He and I work very well and closely together. It is great to work with Nick. We work well together for our constituents and I would like to thank him and his staff. I would like to thank my personal staff in the electorate office who put up with my demands on a regular basis. I would also like to thank my community who have supported me, but who I also work with on a day-to-day basis to make the world a better place. Not lastly, I would like to thank my family who, a bit like the Leader of the Opposition, see me from time to time and provide support.

Before I sit down, it would be remiss of me not to make some mention and also put on the record my thanks to the current member for Ramsay and previous premier. I for one can say that both myself personally and my electorate have enjoyed great support from the member for Ramsay. He has supported a number of projects which I have put to him and he never hesitated to come out to my electorate to support me whenever I required it. He was a regular visitor to my electorate and my electorate has done very well from his support but also the support of the cabinet generally.

So, certainly, my electorate is a better place for him being the premier of this state and that also goes for the member for Port Adelaide who, again, in his own way, has supported my electorate through funding in a number of projects. I thank them for that support.

I would also like to congratulate the new Premier, the member for Cheltenham. I am certain that he will be very successful. With those few comments, I would like to wish all members of this house the best for Christmas and the new year.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:29):** I would like to make a few comments as the Opposition Whip and acknowledge the working relationship that I have with the Government Whip and the Deputy Government Whip. I think that 99% of the time we are on song, and we have the occasional disagreement. It is probably a bit like a marriage really!

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr PEDERICK:** No, I am not going any further because this is going down on *Hansard* so I am going to leave it right there. I must say that there are things that the whips have to do to make this place run (and I do not like talking about myself) but, in working with the member for Torrens and the member for Mitchell, we have a pretty good working relationship and most of the time it works out pretty well.

I certainly appreciate that, and a lot of people would not understand half the things that go on behind the scenes that have to be done, especially in regard to the Government Whip. I do not like speaking about myself, but it does help to make this place run, and I certainly appreciate all the work we do together to make this place work.

I appreciated Manny who worked out of Pat Conlon's office, and Mel who is there now, although I believe she is in a better place today for the moment. I want to acknowledge all the clerks; the Speaker's efforts these last 12 months; and everyone who works in this place, because it is a big job to keep the chamber going; and the *Hansard* staff trying to work out everything we have said.

I want to make note of a couple of people who have worked either in or to do with this place: Rachel Stone, a clerk who has moved on, I believe, to the Minister for Transport Services office. I had a lot to do with Rachel, not only in this house but also in regard to the Select Committee on the Grain Handling Industry, and she was a great staffer to have on board.

*Mr Venning interjecting:*

**Mr PEDERICK:** And, as the member for Schubert rightly says, the bowls club. Probably someone who not everyone has agreed with at some time is Sharon Matthews from Treasury and Finance. I understand that she is one of those staffers who has kept us on the straight and narrow. She is moving on, so I wish her all the best wherever she is going. I would like to thank all the different people who work in different functions running parliament who have been mentioned, and I would like to make my appreciation known for everything that everyone does in making this place work. I would like to wish all members and staff a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

**Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens) (16:33):** I, too, want to thank all the staff in parliament house, and everyone who looks after us so very well—our officers of the chamber, the table staff, *Hansard*—as I said, everyone. I know that we can be trying from time to time but we are very well served. I also want to acknowledge the Opposition Whip and his deputy, the member for Flinders. It is true that we have a very good working relationship, and sometimes it can be a bit difficult when we have matters that we have to manage.

However, I think one of the really important aspects of the role is confidence in some matters, and that does make managing sometimes difficult situations much easier. So, I think that that is something people ought to acknowledge—that we do keep matters in confidence when they are given to us, which happens from time to time.

I want to pay tribute to the member for Ramsay. He has been an extraordinary fellow, and I have enjoyed working with him over all the years that I have been here, particularly over the last few years. He has really been outstanding in this place, and I think that we should all acknowledge that he has served this parliament incredibly well, particularly recently when things have been a bit difficult for him—and I'm not just reflecting on the changes that have occurred. I wish him and Sasha all the very best for the future. I want them to know that they are often in our thoughts.

The member for Port Adelaide, the former treasurer, has been outstanding as treasurer. He has done an amazing job under very difficult circumstances. I cannot imagine the pressure that he has been under for quite a number of years. It must have been absolutely extraordinary, but he does have an amazing sense of humour; for those of us who are lucky enough to see it, it is quite extraordinary. In fact, I do remember one time (and I still have the note), I wrote him a note asking for some money for the parliamentary bowls club to host a function. He wrote on the note back to me saying, 'Learn to play marbles.' I have kept that because that always reminds me of his sense of humour.

To my parliamentary colleagues, I think this year has been one of those years where there have been a number of trials that we have all had to get through, but it has been full of all sorts of challenges but lots of camaraderie and a great deal of warmth. I have to say that I think we are a really good, cohesive team. I can certainly say that people are exceptionally obliging, and I am most grateful to my colleagues for that.

I think Wendy and Carol serve us exceptionally well in the Whip's office. It is a great credit to the times when we rush at them demanding all sorts of things five minutes ago and they put up with that. They are very helpful, so we are exceptionally grateful to them and we recognise the contribution that they play.

To yourself, Madam Speaker, can I say that you have been an extraordinary support to me. I think we have a great friendship. Certainly, when the time comes that I am gone from here (heaven knows when), I am sure it is a friendship that will endure long past that time. I do wish everyone a very Merry Christmas. I hope I have not forgotten to thank anyone.

My electorate staff are wonderful people. When I rush off with a traumatic problem, or what have you, they sit there and very calmly just get on with the job, so I do really appreciate them. I think we are very lucky: we have our Premier, Jay Weatherill, who has taken to the helm remarkably well. His calmness flows across all of us. He certainly listens to people and he is always willing to have a chat. I certainly know that he is going to forge his way forward.

To all my colleagues and to everyone in here who is so good to us, to the opposition, a number of whom I consider friends, Merry Christmas. I remember a wonderful trip away with the member for Waite—

**The Hon. T.R. Kenyon:** Very good travelling company.

**Mrs GERAGHTY:** Very good travelling company, and I might say it was an extraordinary event at times. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year. Spend time with families. That is a very important thing to do. I look forward to seeing all of us back here next year somewhat invigorated, I hope.

**Mr VENNING (Schubert) (16:40):** I will not speak long. I want to very briefly send Christmas greetings to all the members and staff in this place and best wishes for 2012 and thank them very much for their efforts on our behalf. I want to particularly, Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I have appreciated very much your efforts because the choice of you as Speaker in the first place I think was a good choice because of your mature attitude, and you are always cool under pressure and you can express yourself very well. You have never been shy in that department, we appreciate that.

To the Clerk and table staff, thank you very much for your assistance. I often have questions and even though I have been here for so long. I often question some of the answers. Also, thanks to Hansard for trying to write down all the things that I say. I have tried to slow down, but when I am always in a hurry it does get out of control.

Thank you to my leader. We have had a great year with Isobel. Certainly in all my time here it has been quite different operating under a female leader. The attention to detail, thoroughness, and quite strong personality have certainly been enlightening for all of us.

Thank you to the deputy. His hands are well and truly full. I do not always agree with Mitch. We are old mates and even this last week we had cause to be at odds, but I took it like a man and that is what deputy leaders are for. Never buck the system; that is what you are there for. We should never forget our roles in this place. Deputy leader, you did a good job there. All the best to you, Mitch.

To my whip, Adrian, thanks very much. You are very understanding and I do appreciate it. It is not an easy job, because you know I had it before him. I did have a fair bit to do with the choice of Adrian doing this job; and, Adrian, you certainly have backed that decision well and you have done well. Also to the Government Whip, Robyn, a special lady: I still appreciate what you do. You have had a tough year, I know, but you are getting on with life and you are rebuilding it. I have many friends over that side of the place, and she is one and there are some others over there as well.

I also note the retirement of one of our very valuable house attendants, Ms Rachel Stone. She was very much appreciated by me and others on this side of the house, and I was sad to hear that she was leaving. I think we need to look after our valued staff much better than this. Thanks very much and good luck to you, Rachel and also thanks for your assistance with the bowls club.

Thanks to my staff at Tanunda; Helena Dawkins has been with me for over 15 years, and I do thank her very much. Susie Reichstein does my media and everything else. Most of you would know her. She is a young fireball and takes a bit of keeping up with but certainly gives a young attitude to our house. Sue Young fills in very well on two days per week.

Our precious trainee, Sam Mitchell, left us in early 2011. Every now and then you get one of these, Madam Speaker. This was a young lady who came in just as a volunteer, basically. She became a trainee for a period with me and ends up the Youth Governor of South Australia and Young Citizen of the Year in Light Council—not bad for a person who came in there and really did not have much expectation but thought she might be interested. She did well.

Young Candice Hage, a delightful young lady, is really making the most of the opportunities we are able to give her. It is certainly wonderful to have her. I would also very briefly like to thank the people who keep our secretariat, particularly, Bev Barber, our director, the president and all the staff at headquarters. Thank you very much.

I will not go through the whole list in this place except to mention the house attendants, the house caretakers, because I am often here late at night and I always have a problem with somebody's door or some tap or whatever. As country members, we get excellent service from the catering staff, because we are the people without family down here and these people, after a while, become family. I say to them how much I appreciate that very, very much. All the others, I cannot name you all because we have not got time here now, but to all those others, thank you very much for what you do for us.

As president of the wine club I want to thank very much for his cooperation our wine club secretary, James Nicholas, and the catering manager Creon Grantham. Without them we could not do what we do. Also thanks to Biddy who gives us very valued service. As president of the bowls club, thanks and congratulations to David Pegram, our secretary. Thanks to the house for providing his services to us—a wonderful secretary, the best we have ever had.

Madam Speaker, to you and the President, thank you very much for your support, because we have the carnival here in January, and I will invite you all to attend and to come and meet all our guests, because it is certainly going to be very interesting.

Finally, I want very much to say how last days are always fairly important. I add my personal best wishes to departing colleagues ex-premier Mike Rann and ex-deputy Kevin Foley. To both of them: I have not often agreed with a lot that you said or did but, nevertheless, I congratulate you both on leading this government in South Australia for nine years. That is no mean feat, whether you agree with them or not. They won three elections, and led.

I was a bit concerned at the way they finished their careers here—I hope I finish mine a bit better than that. Can I say that we will not forget you. Thank you very much from the state. Thank you very much to the ex premier for coming to the Barossa as regularly as you did. We saw you much more than we saw your minister for tourism at the time. We could get you but we could not get Jane Lomax-Smith up there. I remember those times. I kept a lot of photographs and took a lot of notes. I say to you that I hope you have a good retirement.

To Kevin I say this. We did not always agree but I never meant any malice towards Kevin. In the stoush we had I never meant any malice whatsoever, because I had known Kevin for a long time prior to his coming into this place, and we knew each other well—a lot of that will remain unsaid—but there was nothing malicious in any of that. Anyway, to both gentlemen, congratulations, and I hope you will have fond memories of us, because we will remember the good times and forget our political differences.

**The Hon. M.D. RANN (Ramsay) (16:45):** Can I, first, thank honourable members on both sides for their very kind words. One of the great things about being a member of parliament—and next week is the 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my being elected on 7 December 1985—is the camaraderie. The public does not see it. The public only sees what is portrayed on television. We did an analysis once of how many times the opposition supported the government on bills and I think it was around about the 90 per cent mark, so we agree about more than we disagree. Of course, the theatre of parliament is question time, which is something unique to the British commonwealth system but one I think that makes us all better in government and, indeed, in opposition.

When I talk about that camaraderie, I guess I was heavily influenced when I first entered this building in 1977 and saw the great relationships that occurred across the house between people like Ted Chapman, Des Corcoran and Jack Wright, who had friends on either side of the house, and that is the way it should be. We do not live in the Middle East. We are all patriots and want our state to do well and better. We all want to come into this place, achieve government and, when we leave government, leave our state in better shape than when we found it.

It is interesting that over the years I have found that there is a degree of camaraderie and, indeed, care and support on both sides of the house. Those very few who have carried on acrimony into the bar or outside of parliament, those who do not acknowledge you in the lift, and so on, are the ones who never make it because, ultimately, being a leader, a member of parliament or a minister is about character; and it is people with character who endure, whereas those who try to carry forth their animosity outside of debate, basically, have a fundamental character flaw which means they will not make it.

I want to thank all the staff of parliament for their great work. I am obviously going to be considering my future over the Christmas break. I thank all of the staff of the parliament—Hansard, the library, catering, the people who make this place run, the air conditioning and electrical people, the staff and attendants. There are so many staff in so many areas. We could not do our jobs without them.

The same is true of our personal staff and our staff in our electorate offices. I have had the privilege of working with some outstanding people in my electorate office and, of course, the Minister for Police is one of them. They are our vital ears and eyes in our electorates. Of course, our personal staff, whether we are a minister, Leader of the Opposition or premier, are people to whom we owe an enormous debt. So does the state.

There are people over the years who have worked in my office who sometimes, and it is unfortunately a growing tendency, have been vilified personally, either in the parliament or in the press. They make an outstanding contribution to public life in this state and to making our state a better place for our kids and their kids.

Obviously, parliamentary life has its ups and downs. There is a basic rule: you're in, you're out, you're in and you're out. Very few people can determine their exits, but I think that it has been a great privilege to be not only a member of parliament for the Labor Party in this state just a few years after I arrived as a migrant (that says something about our state and nation), but it is an even greater privilege to have the honour of leading our state.

When you go out and about, whether it is the kids that I have met through the Premier's Reading Challenge over the years or in so many other areas of life, whether it is through multicultural events, business events or going out to the factory floor, South Australians are a terrific people. The vast majority of them are of good will, of decency, and all they want is for their kids to have an even better chance to make the most of their God-given potential compared to themselves.

As I say, I am considering a different life. I want particularly to thank my family for their support over many, many years; and also, of course, particularly my wife, Sasha, whose support to me has been something extraordinary, and we are looking forward to spending more time together in the years ahead.

Thank you to all members, thank you to the staff and thank you to the people of Salisbury for giving me the honour of representing them in this place for 26 years—thank you to them for their patience as well as their very, very strong support. I hope that all of us when we leave this place can all say to ourselves that we have done our best—that is the most that people can ask of us—and that we always regard this place as the people's parliament, not ours. Thank you and au revoir.

*[Sitting extended beyond 17:00 on motion of Hon. T.R. Kenyon]*

**Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (16:52):** At this particular time of the year, I also want to thank all members of Parliament House staff, including not only Hansard and the catering divisions but also PNSG, and particularly can I thank Tasoula. I think that everyone here has probably had a few sessions of training on the computer with Tasoula. I thank everyone from cleaners and runners, through to drivers and personal staff.

Madam Speaker, to you, have a good Christmas. You have had a good year, and thank you for your service; and to the two whips, as well. Having been a deputy whip, I understand the pressures the two whips are under, and I commend them for the work they have done.

I want to thank my electorate office staff—Jane Johnston, Ben Page, Nicolle Flint, Cheryl Rollson and trainee Kathryn Hall. I have not had them all at once but on and off over the last few

years, and without them I would achieve nothing—they are absolutely fantastic. It has been a very interesting year, Madam Speaker. I think that the parliament has achieved some goals.

I am absolutely delighted to see new life in the City of Adelaide with the Adelaide Oval proposal proceeding, and the government under its new Premier now talking the language of reinvigoration of the City of Adelaide. That was not the language the government was using three years ago—in fact, quite the reverse. It was dragged kicking and screaming to that agenda, but I am delighted now that that has become the mantra, because it is so important to this city that new life is breathed into it.

I am pleased that we have seen a commitment to the creation of an independent commission against corruption. I think that is a wonderful milestone for this parliament. I am delighted that the Roxby Downs indenture has gone ahead, and I hope that the benefits of that will spread across the economy.

Of course, in the year that has passed, we have also faced some challenges that have not yet been answered. One is the River Murray. However, I am sure that, in the year ahead, we will have an opportunity to work on those issues, because it is an uncertain time, both internationally, nationally and at the state level. I do have fears for the new year in terms of the global economy and the impacts that might have on the state. I think that will affect all of us in this place one way or the other. So, we step forward beyond Christmas into the New Year with some trepidation.

I am delighted that the parliament is talking in an open way about lifting the standards. I actually welcome that debate offered by the Premier. I hope it is genuine because, as has been pointed out by the opposition, it also requires the government to answer questions and to enter into that in an open and honest way. To lift the standards of the parliament will require both sides of the house to respond; however, I must say that I do have considerable sympathy for that argument.

I recall coming in here in 1997 and being appalled—literally appalled—at the behaviour. Having come from the business community and after 24 years as an officer in the army, to see the way in which the then opposition behaved—but I must lamentably say some on my own side as well, when we were in government—was appalling. In many ways, it still is. I think we all need to look at ourselves and ask whether or not we can better serve the people of the state by lifting that standard.

I note that the media has a role to play in that. Ask any parent: if you reward bad behaviour, it will be repeated. I think too often the media has rewarded the so-called attack dogs and the so-called head-kickers, and that has become the story instead of the substance. As a result, that behaviour has been repeated. Unless we all—government, opposition and media—get that right, we will not improve the standards. So, let us hope that we can do so.

I add my comments to those made by some others and wish the member for Ramsay and the member for Port Adelaide well. Politics aside, the number of years of service that has been given to the people of South Australia by the member for Ramsay warrants recognition, and I think it behoves us all to say: thank you for your service; well done.

I have disagreed with a lot of what the member for Ramsay has done over the years, and no doubt he has disagreed with some of the things I have done, but that is the nature of politics. What I do recognise is his years of endeavour in the best interests of the people of the state. To have served as premier and leader of his party for that period of time is a commendable achievement, and he should feel proud of his service to the people of South Australia.

Also to the member for Port Adelaide, I hope he finds a more comfortable place, wherever he goes. Again, he has put a lot of years into this place and has, I am sure, done his best for the people he represents. Their service deserves recognition.

Finally, I just want to thank everybody on the staff for the support they give us. Without them, we would achieve absolutely nothing here. I wish everyone a happy Christmas and a great New Year.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (16:58):** I add my remarks to those of honourable members and thank all those who make our lives here so much easier and facilitate the smooth operation of the business. For those of us who have been here for some period, some of the processes still remain a mystery to me.

We are ably assisted by the clerks, attendants and officers. I accidentally pressed the duress button the other day and I have never seen the attendant move so quickly. He was a very

fearsome sight when he careened down the corridor into my office to save me from what he expected to be imminent harm; in fact, I had just stuck my foot in the wrong place under my desk. So, thank you very much for that very alert response. I felt very safe after that.

I thank all my colleagues on this side of the house for all their support. I particularly thank those opposite. I know we talk a lot about the points of difference between us, but the truth is that much of the work in this place is resolved by agreement. Indeed, I think the Olympic Dam expansion bill was a great example of bipartisanship which allowed an important piece of legislation to proceed in a timely fashion. I think it gave great confidence to BHP to think that, despite a transition in leadership, despite the fact that there were two political parties on either side of the chamber, it was a very smooth debate. It was handled very effectively and efficiently by both the major parties. I want to thank members opposite for the role they played there.

I have already said some things about the member for Port Adelaide and the member for Ramsay, but I want to repeat that their contributions to public affairs in this state have been prodigious. I think they are entitled to the gratitude of the South Australian community. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that they have not only transformed the economic and financial affairs of our state, but also made a massive contribution to all spheres of public endeavour.

I want to thank them for their work, and wish them and their families all the best. In fact, I just passed the former premier in the corridor and he looked like he had lost 10 years. Obviously it can be a good thing, sometimes, leaving this place. I wish him and Kevin and their families all the best in the future and wish all members and staff here a merry Christmas. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for presiding over what can sometimes be an unruly house.

**The SPEAKER (17:01):** Thank you, members. Before closing, I certainly want to wish all members here in this place a wonderful Christmas and a wonderful break. To the opposition members on my left, I am sorry if I have yelled at you, but I can assure you that, if I have yelled at you, you have deserved it. I say to my colleagues on my right, sometimes it has been a good year, sometimes it has been a difficult year.

I also want to wish all our wonderful staff in this place a very merry Christmas, particularly our clerks, Malcolm and Rick, who have been a great support and help to me, and also my Sergeant Schultz, Paul Collett, Serjeant-at-Arms. They have been a great support for me during this year also.

Many people have said many good things about all our other staff. It is all meant and it is all deserved. We have wonderful catering staff, Hansard staff, building services, library staff, corporate services, committee staff, and chamber staff, who are fantastic—a special thank you to John and Kane up there, and to Nicole, wherever she is today. PNSG, of course, and our security people, are often forgotten, but they are here at all times looking after us.

We really do appreciate all that you do for members. It must be really difficult having to work with 69 different personalities in this building—some good, some bad—but we do all thank you very much for your support, for your service to us, your advice to us and all your hard work. It is very much appreciated by members, and it is a shame that we wait until Christmas to tell you how much you are appreciated. To everyone who works here, thank you.

Special thanks to my staff in Whyalla, but also I think I need to give a special thanks to Josie in the Speaker's office, who keeps people at bay for me, keeps the place going, and does an excellent job. I know she is extremely fair to people, wherever they come from, whatever side they are from. I also give special thanks to the media and to all those camera people that I have told off over the year, and that I have singled out. You do get the message out for us. It is rarely the same message that we put out that we wanted to go out, but the message does go out from there.

We have made mention of the member for Port Adelaide and the member for Ramsay, and of course, I add my best wishes to both of them. We will certainly miss them very much. Our special thoughts are with the member for Ramsay, because I know he and Sasha are going through a very difficult time at present, but I hope that they have a wonderful life ahead of them.

Mike and Kevin have been two of the best performers I have ever seen in this place. They have been brilliant. How formidable they must have been for opposition members, or government members when we were in opposition—particularly when we were in opposition. They were incredible performers. You would see members quiver when they got up and attacked. They were just brilliant performers. We will certainly miss Kevin's sense of humour, too. Some of his



comments have been some of the funniest comments I have ever heard in this place. All my best wishes to them; it will be a different place without them, certainly.

I wish everyone a merry Christmas. I want to thank you all for your support for me as Speaker this year. I hope that next year we can have a very prosperous year in this place, and I hope that we have question times that are calm, polite and pleasant. I look forward to them in the next year. So, again, I wish everybody a very merry Christmas and look forward to working with our new Premier next year.

I am very confident that we will have a very good year next year, and I would like to wish everyone a happy new year, and remind you all to please drive safely. I also see the President of the Upper House up there in the gallery, and I wish you and your family a very special merry Christmas; it has been good to work with you this year, and we look forward to next year also. So, best wishes to everyone, and merry Christmas—

**Mr Venning:** And the police officer.

**The SPEAKER:** I mentioned security before, and that they play an important role, so merry Christmas to the police officer sitting up there with his head buried. He is obviously reading a very good book—

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**The SPEAKER:** —and who can blame him? But he will see himself immortalised in *Hansard* forever after today.

### **CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL**

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

No. 1. Clause 14, page 6, line 21 [clause 14(2), inserted subsection (4)(b)]—After 'suspected' insert:  
on reasonable grounds

No. 2. Clause 22, page 10, line 32 [clause 22, inserted section 35A(3)(a)]—Delete 'who represents the prisoner' and substitute:  
acting in his or her professional capacity

No. 3. Clause 40, page 15, lines 6 and 7 [clause 40, inserted paragraph (aa)]—Delete '(the prisoner having been released on parole following application by the prisoner to the Board)'

No. 4. Clause 40, page 15, after line 7—After its present contents (now to be designated as subclause (1)) insert:

(2) Section 66(2)—after paragraph (ac) insert:

(ad) a prisoner who has been returned to prison under section 74 for breach of a parole condition; or

No. 5. Clause 41, page 15, after line 13—After subclause (2) insert:

(3) Section 67—after subsection (7) insert:

(7a) The Governor must, not more than 30 days after refusing to order that a prisoner be released from prison on parole, notify the prisoner in writing of—

(a) the refusal; and

(b) the reasons for the refusal; and

(c) any matters that might assist the prisoner in making any further application for parole.

(7b) Despite subsection (7a)(b) and (c), the Governor is not required to disclose to the prisoner any reason or matter if any such disclosure is likely to give rise to a significant risk to public safety.

No. 6. Clause 49, page 19, line 1 to page 20, line 5 [clause 49, inserted sections 76A and 76B]—Delete sections 76A and 76B and substitute:

76A—Apprehension etc of parolees on application of CE or police officer

(1) If the CE or a police officer suspects on reasonable grounds that a person who has been released on parole may have breached a condition of parole, the CE or police officer may apply to—

- (a) the presiding member or deputy presiding member of the Board; or
  - (b) if, after making reasonable efforts to contact the presiding member and deputy presiding member, neither is available—to a magistrate,
- for the issue of a warrant for the arrest of the person.
- (2) A warrant issued under this section authorises the detention of the person in custody pending appearance before the Board.
  - (3) A magistrate must, on application under this section, issue a warrant for the arrest of a person or for the arrest and return to prison of a person (as the case may require) unless it is apparent, on the face of the application, that no reasonable grounds exist for the issue of the warrant.
  - (4) If a warrant is issued by a magistrate under this section—
    - (a) the CE or police officer (as the case requires) must, within 1 working day of the warrant being issued, provide the Board with a written report on the matter; and
    - (b) the warrant will expire at the end of the period of 2 working days after the day on which the report is provided to the Board; and
    - (c) the presiding member or deputy presiding member of the Board must consider the report within 2 working days after receipt and—
      - (i) issue a fresh warrant for the continued detention of the person pending appearance before the Board; or
      - (ii) cancel the warrant, order that the person be released from custody and, if appearance before the Board is required, issue a summons for the person to appear before the Board.
  - (5) If a warrant expires under subsection (4)(b) or a fresh warrant is not issued under subsection (4)(c)(i), the person must be released from detention.
  - (6) The Board may, if it thinks there is good reason to do so, by order, cancel a warrant issued under this section that has not been executed.

#### **ROAD TRAFFIC (RED LIGHT OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL**

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

After clause 4, page 2—Insert:

5—Insertion of section 79D

After section 79C insert:

79D—Report on Community Road Safety Fund

- (1) The administrative unit of the Public Service that is, under the Minister, responsible for the administration of this Act must, on or before 30 September in each year, present a report to the Minister on the operation of the Community Road Safety Fund during the previous financial year.
- (2) The report must include details of the following:
  - (a) each source of any monies paid into the Fund and the amount paid into the Fund from each source;
  - (b) the manner in which any money expended from the Fund was applied;
  - (c) any matter required by this Act or another law to be included in the report.
- (3) A report under this section may be incorporated into the annual report of the relevant administrative unit.
- (4) The Minister must cause a copy of the report to be laid before both Houses of Parliament within 12 sitting days after the report is received by the Minister.

Consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendment.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The opposition is delighted that the government has seen the good sense to accept these amendments, with regard to the reporting on the Community Road Safety Fund. As I say, we are delighted that the government has accepted the amendment.

**The Hon. J.M. RANKINE:** Revenues received from expiation notices go into the Community Road Safety Fund, and it funds a range of good works around our state, keeping commuters and motorists as safe as we possibly can on our roads. We have no objection to actually reporting on this annually.

The money that goes in there is used for road safety. I guess I would say this is just another administrative burden that the opposition is putting on our Public Service, but, nevertheless, we are happy to accept this amendment, and we appreciate the very good sense of the Legislative Council in not accepting some of the other amendments. In saying that, can I thank the members of the Legislative Council for their work on this; in particular, the Hon. Gail Gago, who has been working up there, getting this piece of legislation through for us.

Motion carried.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### AUSTRALIAN YEAR OF THE FARMER

**Mr VENNING (Schubert) (17:10):** I rise to speak about 2012 being the Australian Year of the Farmer. I rise in this place in an attempt to clear the blinkered vision of government members and to get this Labor government to understand that farmers are real people with a real commitment to South Australia and a real role to play in our day-to-day living.

Next year will be the year of the Australian farmer—aimed at enhancing the ties between city and rural communities. At the recent launch, the Year of the Farmer chairman, Philip Bruem said the campaign hoped to communicate to all Australians the importance of farming to our economic and social fabric. According to Mr Bruem, and I quote:

The Australian Year of the Farmer recognises what farmers do for all Australians. It celebrates them for feeding the nation, for leading the world in farming techniques and innovation, and for sustaining the vital agribusinesses that underpin our economy. Farmers are the providers of our nation.

Sadly, Mr Bruem has his work cut out for him when it comes to our city-centric Labor government here in South Australia. I proudly stand in this place representing regional South Australians—people who contribute more than \$36 billion to our economy every year.

The grain harvest is in full swing out there right now. The weather has been a bit tricky but yields are generally good and the quality is excellent. We should have grain in abundance and, because the farmers are doing well, so will the state economy—it goes together.

During the last Liberal government, regional South Australians were heard and given their rightful place in this house. We established a world-class water system in the Barossa Valley that is the envy of other regions. We believed in the support of our agronomic agencies, providing valuable assistance and advice for our regional communities. We built the new Waite Plant Research Centre up at the Waite.

But it has not been so with the current Labor government. Labor's idea of regional South Australia extends to the Parklands in Victoria Square and the banks of the Torrens. Its support for our regional communities and farmers is even more short-sighted and you would know that, Madam Speaker, coming from Whyalla, being the only government member outside the CBD. We commend you for that.

Our farmers have received nothing but disdain and complete disrespect from the government. Outgoing Thinker in Residence, Professor Goran Roos, recently described the wine industry and other industries, according to *The Advertiser*, and I quote: 'Australia's wine industry is a lazy sector that has lost its innovative edge.'

I am very disappointed that the professor chose to describe one of our great industries as 'lazy', but when you look at what Labor has done to our farmers, it is easy to see how he came to that observation. I refer to the complete lack of support for our farmers by this government.

State agencies such as PIRSA and SARDI have had resources cut and slashed. The member for Hammond, our shadow minister, has reminded this house on many occasions about

that. These are the same agencies that once encouraged scientific developments, boosting farm productivity and improved crop quality, and they had a fantastic record back in the mid 1990s.

I wonder what the Hon. Lynn Arnold thinks about what is happening to SARDI. It was his brainchild, and he set it up when he was the minister. Now that the former premier has finally changed batons, he might want to spend some of his time explaining to Professor Roos why he sanctioned the removal of the agricultural advisory board—a board that provided more than 120 years of valued and much sought-after assistance and advice to the farmers.

As it was being cut down, not one of those board members complained. They just took it as professionals. Never did they get involved with politics, and I pay them the highest tribute. Much needed funds for regional infrastructure, our roads and communications, in particular community health services, are being squandered by this government. We would never deny the right of city people to enjoy good health facilities, and even a decent seat at the footy or cricket, but we will forever question Labor's ability to manage our state's funds and resources.

As I said before in this place, I sat on the Public Works Committee for four years when this government came into power in 2002, and for four years, apart from some of the major projects left over from the previous Liberal government, there was almost no major infrastructure project brought forward for approval.

However, on this side of the house I am very proud to say that we welcome the celebration of our farming communities in 2012. I look forward to contributing at every opportunity to promote what our farmers do and how we all value their efforts. It will be a great opportunity to narrow the communication gap, to educate our city cousins on where and how their food is produced, and how our food is the most nutritious, freshest and cleanest in the world.

I hope that the 2012 Royal Adelaide Show will make a big feature of the Year of the Farmer. Issues like 'right to farm', new development plans and zonings all impact on farmers and their ability to remain efficient and therefore viable.

As the blinds are now being drawn on this parliament for 2011, it is time for some reflection. We are very relieved that in 2011 the River Murray returned to its former glory and flowed, and thanks to the bountiful rains the water levels are back to normal. However, the debate continues on how we share the resource and protect that vital environment, and that will be one that we will have again next year. And how will we justify the huge costs of the desal plant?

Also, I hope that in 2012, two years before the next state election, the government will announce and deliver some major road upgrades, especially the dualling of our three major highways, particularly Highway 1—Port Wakefield to Port Augusta—to assist the gigantic development at Olympic Dam, Roxby Downs, because the traffic is already increasing, and also the Sturt Highway and the Dukes Highway. Road safety is a big issue, and when we start seeing these triple road trains it is most important that we run them on roads that are safe for everyone to use.

Tourism will be a big issue in 2012. Only last week we heard that the forecasts revealed that half a million Chinese people will visit South Australia, and the Barossa in particular, by 2020, and we will also see 23 cruise ships coming to South Australia in 2012. We saw a major report on tourism access released last week being quite critical of poor access for tourism. So, here we go!

Surely we will at least see the government encourage the reintroduction of the wine train. John Geber of Chateau Tanunda fame still owns it and waits patiently. At this point I also congratulate him and the Chateau Tanunda team for winning a fantastic award, the best shiraz, with their beautiful 2008 Grand Barossa shiraz. It has won world acclaim, and I will have to try some over the break. If any member wants to be around I am sure I would like to share some with them.

I hope the government, in its new year's resolutions, will promise to at least start—and I am pleased minister Hill is here, because he knows what I am going to say—the Barossa hospital. No? There is no response, Madam Speaker.

Finally, I hope next year we will create history and change the standing orders in this place. As a member of the Standing Orders Committee I am confident that there is enough good will around to achieve some meaningful change; and, of course, that comes under your control, Madam Speaker. I am confident that, with the Clerk, we can come up with some reasonable changes. We have been trying to do this for years and years. Plenty of Speakers before you have

tried this, Madam Speaker, and have never achieved it, so you can go down in history—and we are there to help you.

So we look to the year ahead with interest. We do worry about the global economy, but it will be interesting to see the developments at Olympic Dam and the benefits to the people of South Australia.

**The SPEAKER:** I hope that wasn't 'go down screaming' in history!

#### **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT FUND**

**Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (17:20):** I want to take this opportunity to commend the work of many volunteers in my electorate who were recently recognised by the member for Kingston, Amanda Rishworth, in a ceremony that she conducts each year to recognise the contribution that volunteers make to our joint communities. Reynell is, of course, the heart of Kingston, and—

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

**Ms THOMPSON:** Despite what the member for Kaurna might say, Reynell is the heart of Kingston. Of course, the people she recognises are serving my community as well. The first person to receive a commendation from my electorate on the day that the member for Kingston held two ceremonies—there were so many people to recognise—was Karen Christensen from the Christie Downs Community House.

Karen has been a volunteer and mentor at the Christie Downs Community House for the past 11 years. She devotes hours of her time each week as chairperson of the CDCH board, volunteer recruitment officer and cook serving meals. Karen is applauded for the care and dedication she brings to CDCH and her good humour. I think that it was a very low key commendation. I also had the privilege of recognising Karen's contribution to our community in the International Women's Day recognition awards, and here Karen was recognised for the role she has taken as a model for many other women in our community.

When Karen first went to the Christie Downs Community House she openly acknowledges—I am not telling any secrets—that she was lonely and a little bit afraid of what was going on in the world. She gained her confidence through the community house such, as you now hear, that she is now the chair of the board, she has achieved a TAFE Certificate III and she is going on to a TAFE Certificate IV. Karen illustrates very well the valuable contribution of community houses in general and the transformation that can occur to people's lives through the work of the community houses.

Georgina McKay-Brown from the Noarlunga District Senior Citizens Club is the current secretary of the club assisting the president and overseeing operations. Georgina demonstrates strong initiative and energy in everything she does. She also coordinates her own chat and friendship group.

Ronda Eden is from the Christie Downs Primary School volunteers both in the canteen and classroom at the Christie Downs Primary School. In addition to preparing food and other duties in the canteen, Ronda also supports the health and well-being of students in the classroom. Christie Downs sees Ronda as a great asset to our local community. She was nominated by the school principal, a very dedicated school principal, Gail Evans.

Also from the Christie Downs Primary School is Ray Fleming, who volunteers in the kitchen cooking program at the school. He is a dedicated, flexible and valued asset to the school community due to his expansive knowledge of food preparation due to his former life as a chef.

Joan Webber from Pimpala Primary School was nominated by another leading principal in our community, Linda Olifent. Joan is the school service officer volunteer at Pimpala Primary School. She has volunteered at the school for over 20 years. She coordinated the fine and gross motor coordination program in the junior primary school as well as assisting with the special education program. Joan is passionate about her work, and the children love to participate in her programs.

The Reverend Malcolm Martin was nominated by Father Dirk van Dissel from the Anglican parish of Christies Beach. Since his retirement 10 years ago, Malcolm has voluntarily conducted services at the Gulf View Nursing Home and conducted weekly visits to Noarlunga Hospital, as neither of these facilities has a chaplain. Reverend Martin is recognised for the comfort and encouragement he brings to residents and patients.

Molly Hutton from the Noarlunga District Senior Citizens Club Incorporated is the publicity officer with the club. Recently she has been coordinating, instructing and assisting with dance routines. With many years of volunteering experience, Molly supports all club activities, often beyond expectations. Molly is of advanced years but very sprightly and a real example of the benefits of keeping active well into retirement and later years.

David Blowes was just nominated for being a member of numerous Morphett Vale community groups by Susan Tones. David recently retired from the City of Onkaparinga's Community Bus after lodging over 10 years' loyal service. David was formerly a CFS captain for 11 years and has been involved with the Morphett Vale Bowling Club for 11 years. David's long record of community involvement is applauded.

Janine Hook from the very worthy Sammy D Foundation: Janine has volunteered over 2,500 hours in the past four years at the Sammy D Foundation. Her dedication and skills in the area of administration, volunteer management and event management have been vital to the success of the organisation. Some members will not know about the Sammy D foundation, which was established by the parents of Sammy Davis after his tragic death in a violent incident at a party.

The volunteers are drawn largely from Sammy's friends and family, and it has been quite enlightening and strengthening to me to see the way these young people have maintained that commitment. It was not something they got excited about briefly and then let go. They have remained loyal to their vow to ensure that violence does not ruin the lives of more families and take more young people from us.

Tania Craig from Coorara Preschool was nominated by the director, Michelle Morrissey. Tania began volunteering at Coorara Preschool when her daughter attended and has continued her relationship following her daughter's transition into school in 2008. She has supported and enriched the school community by giving her time to tackle various often time-consuming tasks. Tania has been described as the woman Friday of Coorara Preschool, and this acknowledgement is richly deserved.

Bert Justin from the Morphett Vale Riding Club: Bert has been a member of the club for over 30 years. Despite being 80 and no longer riding, Bert still attends every meet to staff the canteen's barbecue and continues to make equipment for the use of riders. Bert is described as a staunch and loyal supporter of the club and an asset to the community.

Barry Wells: I was surprised to see Barry being nominated for his membership of the Seaford Meadows Scout Group, because he is also a very active member of Neighbourhood Watch. He is the current chairperson of the Seaford Meadows Scout Group. Barry gives up his time, often volunteering with young and disadvantaged members of the group. Seaford Meadows Scout Group is proud and thankful to have such a dedicated member of the volunteer team.

Tracy Gabel from TS Noarlunga Navy Cadets Unit Support Committee is dedicated to the cadet cause. She gives freely of their time in and out of committee commitments. She is a hard worker with lots of energy and ideas, works full-time and has a son at cadets. She is extremely valuable in her role to the committee and the unit. David Gabel also from TS Noarlunga Navy Cadets has also put in many hours both in and outside of his committee commitments. He is dedicated and dependable and an asset to the unit.

Andrew Clark from Wirreanda High School is the deputy chairperson of the school governing council, has been a committee member since 2005 and helps to organise and attends all working bees. He is a valued volunteer and friend, whose efforts on behalf of the school community are much appreciated. Andrew is somebody else who is involved in many activities around the Reynell community centred on Morphett Vale.

Patricia Winn from the TS Noarlunga Navy Cadets is a member of the executive committee who has volunteered on many occasions and often at short notice. She is an extremely hard worker and a valued asset to the committee. Vici Brennan for Wirreanda High School is secretary of the governing council, has been a member of that council since 2006 and volunteers in the school canteen. She is recognised for her commitment and dedication to the school community.

I apologise to the last people; I will be very brief. Dennis Paterson from the City of Onkaparinga Community Bus: the community bus is just one of Dennis's activities. He was chair of the over-50s club at Wakefield House for many years and a valued member of our community. Bob Dyer is the driving force behind the Friends of Sully's, an organisation that advocates strongly for

the people of O'Sullivan Beach, a slightly isolated area that has many unique difficulties and many unique advantages. Bob makes the most of them both.

Jane Bristow from the Southern Montessori School has worked tirelessly on behalf of the school community for the last eight years. She has coordinated safe food handling courses, runs Saturday soccer barbecues, coordinated and cooked weekly soup pasta lunches for the whole school, served on the board, organised community evenings, to name just a few. I think all members join with me in thanking the volunteers in our communities, those who I have named from my community are but a simple representation of those in all our communities.

#### VALEDICTORIES

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Hammond, I will give you my indulgence, as it is the last day of the year.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (17:30):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have certainly appreciated working with you over this last year. It was remiss of me to miss a few people out, and I will be very brief. I do not want to hold up the house, but I would like to thank my staff for everything they do for me. Helen in the Whip's office here does a fantastic job; all my electorate office staff; Jess Keen up here as well; our Legislative Council Whip, John Dawkins, and his staff. I would also like to thank my deputy whip for his contribution throughout the year, Peter Treloar, the member for Flinders.

It is extremely remiss of me to forget one of minister Conlon's staff who has been one of the conduits in conducting the Whip's duties, Mary-Lou Corcoran. I hope Mary-Lou forgives me for forgetting her in my earlier remarks. Thank you for your indulgence, Madam Speaker.

**The SPEAKER (17:31):** Thank you, members. I also failed to mention in my closing comments Mr Bob Fisher, who is well-known to all of us who have drivers. I certainly hope he gets all he deserves for Christmas, particularly after his efforts today.

At 17:31 the house adjourned until Tuesday, 14 February 2012 at 11:00.