

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 4 April 2012

The **SPEAKER (Hon. L.R. Breuer)** took the chair at 11:01 and read prayers.

SUMMARY OFFENCES (WEAPONS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)
(11:02): I move:

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

Motion carried.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (MISCELLANEOUS) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)
(11:02): I move:

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

Motion carried.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE: DRAFT MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (11:03): I move:

That the 64th report of the committee, on Water Resources Management in the Murray-Darling Basin: Volume 3, be noted.

This is the Natural Resources Committee's third report on water resources management in the Murray–Darling Basin. This report considers and makes recommendations on the draft Murray–Darling Basin plan. This report draws on evidence from 78 witnesses and 21 written submissions, together with three fact-finding trips that the committee made to South Australian river communities, including the Riverland, Chowilla and Lake Victoria; Goolwa, the Lower Lakes and the Coorong; and Mannum and the Lower Murray swamps.

A number of expert briefings were also received and a comprehensive literature review was undertaken. This evidence and, consequently, this report encompasses a breadth of views expressed by the South Australian community. The Murray River is the lifeblood of this state with its health underpinning much of the state's history and ongoing prosperity. As well as supporting communities in the basin, the River Murray is also a critical source of water for Adelaide and communities as distant as Keith, the Upper South-East and Whyalla, Kimba and Lock on the Eyre Peninsula.

In fact, the majority of members seated in this chamber, except for perhaps the members for Finnis and Mount Gambier, will have at least part of their electorates serviced by water from the River Murray. Supplying, as it does, between 40 and 90 per cent to our state's urban water supply, I think I can safely say that the ongoing health of the River Murray is a big deal for South Australia.

South Australians have argued passionately to protect the river system in times gone by and now we must do so again. While experts like Professor Peter Cullen (sadly now deceased) have warned us for decades of the consequences of overallocation, the recent millennium drought has shown us all the graphic and devastating results that long-term overallocation and over-extraction of the basin's resources has on our natural assets and communities.

While touring South Australian river communities, members heard from a number of residents and stakeholders. Rose Faehrmann from the Riverglens Marina at Mannum said that in their town 15 tourism, retail and other businesses had disappeared during the drought and have not returned, highlighting the effect on the economy in just one of South Australia's river towns.

The South Australian Murray-Darling Basin NRM Board told the committee that a number of native fish species have not been seen since the drought and would be unlikely to survive long-term if not for the captive breeding programs. Joanna Pfeiffer from Long Flat showed members how the acidified groundwater on her dairy farm allowed prolonged drying and rewetting of the Lower Murray swamps flood plain.

Blanchetown pistachio grower, councillor David Peake, related to the committee the immense stress experienced by many individuals as a consequence of the drought and the damaged social fabric of the majority of South Australian river communities. In a number of instances, the stress and depression brought on by the drought have sadly contributed to people taking their own life. These are stories from people living and working on the river, reminding us that the consequences of not dealing with the underlying problem of overallocation and uncertainty are serious and can be catastrophic.

The Australian community needs a long-term resolution to allocation in the Murray-Darling Basin. The Goyder Institute (whose damning expert panel assessment report was unfortunately only received Monday of this week and too late to be considered in our report) back in 2011 estimated South Australian drought impacts exceeded \$750 million between 2000 and 2009, while drought legacy impacts, such as acidification, river collapse, dying river red gums and black box forests, as well as a severely degraded south lagoon of the Coorong and elevated salinity in Lake Albert, are ongoing problems unlikely to be rectified by the new regime proposed in the draft plan.

The basin planning process provides the best opportunity yet to deal with the root cause of all these problems. However, the committee believes that in its current form the basin plan fails to meet the objectives of the commonwealth Water Act 2007 and does not meet the social, economic, cultural or environmental needs of South Australia and South Australians. Significant amendments are needed and key pieces of additional work are still required. For example, the committee is recommending that the basin plan should include:

1. salinity targets for Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert of less than 1,000 and 1,500 electrical conductivity units respectively for 95 per cent of the time measured as a 10-year rolling average;
2. the need for water height targets for below Lock 1 within the height of Lake Alexandrina to remain above 0.5 metres AHD (Australian Height Datum) for 95 per cent of the time measured as a 10-year rolling average, with water height never again allowed to fall below mean sea level, which has obviously proved devastating; and
3. it is also this committee's recommendation that prior to the finalisation of the basin plan additional hydrological modelling is needed to determine the viability of removing some of the operational constraints that we are told prevent environmental outcomes in South Australia and elsewhere in the basin.

I would like to sum up by quoting from Mr Tom Trevor, Ngarrindjeri Elder and Chair of the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority. Mr Trevor, speaking on behalf of his people, the traditional custodians of the country encompassing the Lower Lakes, Coorong and Murray Mouth, told this committee that:

In our beliefs, the lands and waters are a living body. It is a living thing and not something to be looked at and to be used solely for economic purposes. We look upon it...for survival. We need water, a right amount of water, good quality water to flow down through the river into our lakes, into our Coorong, out through the Murray-Mouth to keep our lands and waters alive and to keep all our stories and our culture and the Ngarrindjeri people alive. If we are deprived of water, then what is happening is we are being deprived of our culture and our cultural rights within our own lands and waters to pass on to our next generation of children. So, that is the way we look upon water: it is a cultural right and it should be sufficient, good quality water coming down into the lakes and out through the Mouth.

I would like to thank all those who gave their time to assist the committee in its inquiry. The response from the community and different people with interests in the Murray-Darling Basin draft plan was quite outstanding. I particularly commend the members of the committee. This is a wonderful committee and I really appreciate the effort that has been put in by everybody. I thank Mr Geoff Brock MP, Mrs Robyn Geraghty MP, Mr Lee Odenwalder MP, Mr Don Pegler MP, Mr Dan van Holst Pellekaan MP, Hon. Robert Brokenshire MLC, Hon. John Dawkins MLC and Hon. Gerry Kandelaars MLC for their contributions to this report, as well as the former members of the committee, Hon. Russell Wortley MLC and Hon. Paul Holloway MLC. All members have worked cooperatively on this report.

Finally, I thank the committee staff—Mr Patrick Dupont, Mr David Trebilcock and Dr Mark Siebentritt—for their assistance in this report. I commend this report to the house.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (11:11): I, too, stand to support the report, and I also support all the comments that have just been made by our chair, the member for Ashford. This report has been done by our parliamentary standing committee as a report to parliament, and it has

certainly tried to represent all the interests of South Australia. We have done everything we possibly can to represent every corner of South Australia on this issue.

I take particular interest in this, of course, because in the electorate of Stuart are the towns of Morgan, Blanchetown, Cadell and Murbko in that important section of the river. Also, the vast majority of the Mid North area and the regional city of Port Augusta rely on the river for their water. It is an important issue for enormous parts of our state, not just the obvious sections on or near the actual Murray River. We have done this work from a South Australian perspective, and we have tried to consider all of South Australia in our work. The report includes recommendations which we believe are the very best that we can come up with for this parliament and our state to consider as a response to the Murray-Darling Basin plan draft report.

It is important to say that our committee has worked exceptionally well together. It is usually the case that we work very well together and I think there is no better example than this piece of work of how we have come together in a multipartisan way. I also thank our staff, Patrick Dupont, David Trebilcock, and also consultant Mark Siebentritt, who have been an enormous support for us. This is probably the single biggest piece of work that we have done, and everybody has pulled together exceptionally well.

We went to great effort to get out and about: we did not want this to be just desktop work. We took an enormous number of submissions, and we thank all those people who put in the time and effort to make submissions, whether they be short or extensive. The committee visited, with our staff, the Riverland, Mid Murray area and also the Lower Lakes area. We deliberately went to all those areas so that we could see, touch and feel firsthand the places, the river and, most importantly, listen to the people who live and work in those areas.

I wholeheartedly commend this report to parliament. This is the most important issue facing South Australia and regional South Australia at the moment. There are many issues, but there is nothing bigger facing our state right now than what to do in response to the Murray-Darling Basin plan draft report and how South Australia will participate in the very important negotiations leading forward—hopefully over the next several months, not the next several years—to come up with a plan of how we are, as a nation, going to deal with the Murray-Darling Basin.

Mr BROCK (Frome) (11:15): I take this opportunity also to speak on the Natural Resources Committee's report, which is before the Parliament of South Australia for discussion and to look at the Murray-Darling Basin draft plan. As the member for Stuart has already done, I also thank in advance all the members of this committee. It has been a committee that has worked very well. It is a multipartisan committee, and we get on very well. The Hon. Steph Key, our chairperson, has been a great leader and an inspiration to us, and she has guided us very well. I also thank the staff of our committee—Patrick Dupont, David Trebilcock and Dr Mark Siebentritt—for their work. The staff have worked tirelessly to complete this report and the recommendations for us. The report has been very well received by the community. As the member for Stuart said, we wanted to make certain that we did not just do a desktop audit. We went out and talked to people, and we also had submissions coming in.

One of the issues I have is that Port Pirie is reliant 100 per cent on the River Murray. So, I am very passionate about this committee, and I am very passionate about the health of the river and the Murray-Darling Basin. Before I go into discussing the issues, I want to say that I am very disappointed in terms of the local government's point of view. We asked for local government to forward recommendations. I specifically asked the councils in my region, and out of all the local government councils in South Australia, only three put in a submission to the committee, two from the Murray and one from outside, and that was the District Council of Barunga West. We need to be very clear that, if we have a concern, we need to put in a submission outlining that concern, no matter how small it may be, to ensure that when people higher up look at this to make a decision, they will see that there are concerns out there; otherwise, if they do not put in a submission, people will say, 'There were no issues; the status quo is quite okay.'

The River Murray is the lifeblood of this state, with its health underpinning much of the state's economy, history and ongoing prosperity. As well as supporting communities in the basin, as I indicated, the River Murray is also a critical source of water not only to Adelaide and the communities across the vast areas of South Australia but, in particular, the cities of the Upper Spencer Gulf, the Copper Coast and also around the Clare Valley, which has a mixture of bore water and mains water. Very clearly, we rely on the health of that river. People say to me, 'Why are you concerned about the health of the River Murray; you don't live on the Murray?'

As the member for Stuart has indicated, and as other people have said, 'We live off the River Murray. If it goes down and it does not survive, we are the ones who suffer.' In fact, the majority of the members seated in this chamber, except perhaps for the member for Finnis and the member for Mount Gambier, would have at least part of their electorate serviced by water from the river. In times gone by, South Australians argued passionately to protect the river system, and now we in this chamber, and that includes all political parties, and we as a state need to do this again. I can vividly remember, as a councillor in the Port Pirie Regional Council, attending a water conference at UniSA—

Mr Venning: As the mayor?

Mr BROCK: No. I was a councillor at the time; it was before I became the mayor. This was when my wife was alive. It is a long time ago. Member for Schubert, if you can be a bit patient, I will explain to you how it turned out.

Mr Venning: I will.

Mr BROCK: You will? Thank you. I attended this conference on water. It was on a Saturday morning. I went to North Terrace, and I sat in there. The speaker talked about the salinity of the River Murray and the viability of the river, and he talked about the reduced opportunities for selling wines to Europe and so on because of the quality assurance that would not be there in the future.

He also mentioned that there would be wars between the states and that there would be water trading happening. I looked at it, and I thought, 'This is a comical show.' I sat there for the whole conference. When I got back home, my late wife said, 'How did it go?' I said, 'It was just a comical show. It is a far-fetched thing, and it will never happen.' It is happening today. The issues are there. We are not at war, but each state does not agree. There is an issue with salinity, and the health of the river and the Murray-Darling Basin is at risk. That conference was held over 20 years ago. We should have listened, but we did not. Now is the time to get this right.

The basin planning process provides the best opportunity yet to deal with the root cause of all these problems. However, the committee believes that, in its current form, the basin plan fails to meet the objectives of the commonwealth Water Act 2007 and does not meet the social, economic, cultural or environmental needs of South Australia and South Australians. Significant amendments are needed and key pieces of additional work are still required.

Whilst the terms of reference for the Murray-Darling Basin plan were very concise, it is my belief as an individual that we need to look outside the square and bring extra water in from other under-utilised locations to better utilise our precious resource to achieve the fullest economic outcome for not only South Australia but all of Australia and, very importantly, to improve the health of the river system.

The Hon. Steph Key has put the three recommendations of the committee forward, and I agree with those. In closing, I reiterate that we need to start acting as Australians and not as individual states. This is our time. We need to get this plan right. As a country and as a state, we need to get it right. I commend the report to the house.

Mr PEGLER (Mount Gambier) (11:21): First of all, I support this report and I congratulate our Chair, the Hon. Steph Key, and the members and staff of our committee. I particularly commend all those people who put in submissions and showed us around when we had a look along the river.

As the member for Mount Gambier, I have never known a lot about the Murray River; I certainly know a lot more now. We inspected the river, from the mouth right through to Lake Victoria in New South Wales. I must say, it is a river that is very much at risk. All rivers, wherever they are, should be assessed from the mouth backwards. Unfortunately, that has not been the case with the river.

We saw elevated salinity levels in the Lower Lakes and the Coorong, and some of those areas are now hypersaline. That certainly needs to be addressed. We then saw the acid sulfate soils around Mannum, where the river was allowed to drop so low that the peat soil actually cracked open. That allowed air to get to the reed beds underneath, which caused acid sulfate to accumulate and millions of dollars worth of infrastructure have been completely ruined. All that country will have to be completely laser levelled again. The banks around those irrigation areas will have to be completely relaid again because they have been allowed to crack open. I think it is a very sad thing to have seen happen.

We also saw along the river the collapse of the banks in various areas. That was mainly because the river had been allowed to drop far too low during the drought. Of course, we saw a lot of areas where there has been a loss of both flora and fauna species. Many of the significant Indigenous sites have also been put at risk.

The Murray-Darling Basin plan, as far as I am concerned, does not go far enough to address the needs of the river in South Australia. I do not know that it is always about the amount of giganlitres; it should be about the assessments. We should have in place maximum salinity levels, minimum river levels, etc., right throughout the river so that the river can be managed properly. Unfortunately, the Murray-Darling Basin plan does not approach it that way. As far as I am concerned, to assess a river you should start from the mouth backwards. I commend the report to the house.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (11:24): I rise to speak on the 64th report of the Natural Resources Committee before the house today, 4 April, entitled Water Resources Management in the Murray-Darling Basin. I, too, would like to thank the hardworking committee for giving me and many Chaffey constituents the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry. I also acknowledge the committee's visit to the electorate of Chaffey in October last year as part of the inquiry. I applaud the principles adopted by the committee in the undertaking of this inquiry. The first principle, in particular, recognises the need for a balanced approach to the Murray-Darling Basin water reform that delivers a balanced outcome.

Turning to the report itself, some of the questions that need to be answered involve whether the basin plan provides enough water for the environment. Perhaps it does not. I will just explain that, to date, water returned to the environment before 2009 through Living Murray, Water for Rivers and other environmental initiatives has been about 823 giganlitres. The basin plan, as it stands to date if adopted, will return some 2,750 giganlitres—and that is before the recommendation of having an assessment in 2015 of how the plan is working. But in 2019 there will be some 3,573 giganlitres of water returned to the system.

One thing we cannot forget is that we have seasonal flows. We have unregulated flows that will need to be utilised coming into the dry periods. We cannot just rely on the number. To date, the number has been divisive. Not only is the number dividing the states, the communities and the interest groups, but it is just a divisive number. We look at the plan and people are looking for that extended number, and that number is the topic of argument at the moment. However, we are asking for a number without an environmental watering plan. What are we going to do with the number? What are we going to do with the extra water that needs to be put back into the environment? How will we manage it? How are the flows going to be managed? How are the targets going to be achieved? These are the issues underlying unanswered questions, and it is very frustrating.

Are other social, cultural, environmental and economic needs for South Australian communities being addressed? No, they are not. There are no provisions for social and economic benefits in the Water Act. Sadly, the first plan did not recognise the impacts, both to production and communities. To the credit of the commonwealth government, the Tony Windsor house of reps parliamentary committee did a roadshow, much like the Natural Resources Committee has done, and talked to the people. They went out and got an understanding of exactly what was happening at the grass level, just to have a better understanding. So, when they put in their report, they had a clear understanding of the impacts and the circumstances that the system is under. More importantly, they understood just what effect the lack of a plan is having and what the social and economic impact was right the way along the river.

How are the SDLs being treated? Are they being implemented fairly? I would say that there is little recognition for that. The assessment period started in 2009. South Australia has reformed its water use and efficiency gains since 1969, after coming under a cap. That cap was put in place due to an agreement that South Australia would not build the Chowilla dam. In not building the Chowilla dam, they settled for a storage right in Dartmouth in a newly built dam. They would put their storage water into that dam and forego any storage facility here in South Australia. We look back on that through history and we ask whether that was a silly move. Some say yes and some say no. Commercial users would say that, yes, we should have had that storage. The environmentalists rightfully stated that that storage facility would have had huge environmental impact downstream.

The assessment period started in 2009. It is not a fair starting point because South Australia started their reform in 1969. All the other basin states and irrigation areas have come up

looking pretty happy about having a 2009 starting period. Again, that was to South Australia's detriment. Regarding the increased diversion by 3,000 gigalitres since 1969, it is funny that the number we are looking to put back into the system is about that 3,000 gigalitres. I would say that perhaps the overallocation has occurred since 1969.

Are the proposed transition arrangements sufficient? To date, irrigators have contributed 92 gigalitres in South Australia through buyback and some on-farm efficiency. I believe the review in 2015 does not have enough teeth; that review will just see some new reforms starting to impact, with buybacks, with on-farm efficiencies, with efficiencies gained through works and measures in our river management, through environmental assets.

I think that with the transition arrangements we should have another review in 2019. That is when that plan is to be implemented, and I say that we should be reviewing the plan in 2019 to see where it is taking us. Again, this plan needs to be adaptive, it needs to be able to be modified along the way, and to date we have competing interests. We have people hell-bent on a number, and they are not looking at the adaptability of the plan.

With other terms, I would really like to address the salinity and the river heights, and these can be addressed in many ways. When we have lower river levels, in particular, we look at people who are impacted, people being able to access water, people being able to wet dry wetlands. We need to look at money already on the table, and we particularly need to look at the \$110 million through the Riverine Recovery Project.

That would take people off those backwaters and lagoons so that they are not dependent on sucking water from them, and it would also enable those backwaters to be managed. Today we see that a lot of those backwaters, those environmental assets, are not managed: water flows in, and when the river levels drop water flows out. There is nothing there to manage them. Again, that is something else that needs to be addressed.

Obviously climate change and groundwater have been issues, or an extension of the plan. I am very concerned about the lack of science and the lack of evidence and the authority wanting to release some 2,600 gigalitres of groundwater. Groundwater was once surface water; we are trying to address one problem and creating another problem. I think the plan to put back 2,750 into the surface water system and take out 2,600 gigalitres of groundwater really does need to be researched. Science tells us that there is a connection between groundwater and surface water.

Again, the constraints: towns, bridges, roads, causeways, the shape of the valley, the levee banks. I might add that the levee banks in Renmark will not be too much of a constraint to any of the river flows because they are in such poor condition. However, back to the crux of it: the constraints are the issue around the Murray-Darling Basin Authority using the number of 2,750. Without constraints, we could put down 4,000 gigalitres into our system.

With compliance, all extractions from the natural point of take from the river need to be metered. In terms of solutions, we look at many solutions across the basin. We should be looking at solutions in our own backyard, not just pointing upstream and saying that they caused the problem and they need to fix it. For many of those solutions, we need to look at our environmental assets, we need to look at on-farm, we need to look at irrigators, and we need to look at an audit. An audit right across the basin will give an independent assessment of just where we can find water to put back into the system.

Sadly, our South Australian government has focused on a number and a legal challenge. This plan today gives us an opportunity for reform—something that has not been achieved for over 120 years.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:34): I, too, rise to support the 64th report of the Natural Resources Committee, entitled Water Resources Management in the Murray-Darling Basin: Volume 3. I would like to acknowledge the Presiding Member (the member for Ashford), Steph Key, and the committee for being very inclusive of local members in the research into this report. It was pleasing that the committee invited local members along. I was glad to be involved in the meetings at Goolwa and the surrounding area and also around Murray Bridge and Mannum. It was very much a tripartisan committee, with Labor, Liberal and Independent members.

Much has been said already in this place, but we certainly need major reform in the River Murray. As the member at the bottom end of the river and as a former River Murray shadow minister, I know only too well of the carnage that was caused by the most recent drought and the over-allocation that was imposed on this state, especially on my electorate of Hammond.

We have many competing interests below Lock 1. We have a tourism industry with houseboats and a farming industry that wants only to draw water. We had water that was below the height of the siphons and we also saw a time where it looked as though Adelaide's water supply was under threat because the government was telling us that it could not lower the pumps, which was an engineering solution that was finally achieved.

We also saw over that time a flawed proposal to build the Wellington weir at Wellington, and this shows just how desperate things got. The government spent something like \$14 million or \$15 million on approach roads to that site. Thankfully, nothing else was spent there. This shows just how desperate the situation became in this state. I still believe that the government at the time did not negotiate enough emergency water to get us through.

The River Murray swamps were rehabilitated several years ago for close on \$30 million, and I have mentioned this in the report. There is a real disaster happening down there now, where we have seen major cracking in these swamps. We have seen stock disappear into cracks in the landscape. It is said that to rehabilitate these swamps again would cost about \$2,000 a hectare, and potentially up to \$50 million.

As I reported to the committee, we must either do this properly or not at all. If we are going to rehabilitate the Lower Murray swamps, we need to get on with it and we need to do them all, instead of leaving out pockets, which is what happened last time under the Labor government. This was once a bountiful part of the Lower Murray. I remember going past as a child, and later in life, seeing these fantastic green swamps that were providing such great feed for the dairy industry and for this state. This is a major problem.

One of the other issues was riverbank slumping. I have mentioned it in this place before. I was out with some people getting photos of the slumping by a marina at Murray Bridge and, in the background, just as the shot was being taken, a piece of the river fell in. We caught it on film, so to speak. We noticed that, during that period, three cars went into the river, and I think only one came out. So there are still two cars in there. Thankfully no-one was in them at the time. These were desperate times, especially below Lock 1.

We see what happened with Lake Albert. It soon became too saline to use and it recorded EC levels of salinity in the tens of thousands. Still to this day we see salinity averages in Lake Albert of about 4,800 EC. It is just terrible that farmers cannot access that water for irrigation. Some are now putting in a pipeline through to Lake Alexandrina so that they do not have to rely on the emergency water that was piped to them through the SA Water pipeline. That water was badly needed at the time because some dairy farmers were spending up to \$5,000 a week just to cart in water. So there has been a massive cost, a massive loss to the industry, a massive loss to the population in that area, and a massive loss of jobs.

We saw private desalination plants go in around these lakes and now we have an EPA program to impose a tax on these people who spent well over \$200,000. In fact, one property owner spent close to \$1 million all up so that he could make himself self-sufficient through having a desalination plant, yet now we see a group that wants to tax these plants, so essentially the message I am getting is that people will just shut them down and mothball them. This is the reward that people get for looking after themselves.

Some of these plants were installed around Lake Alexandrina; also in Clayton and Goolwa where there is another side of the tourism industry, apart from the fact that the mouth was closed up, thousands of boaties who usually use the waterways around there did not have the water to operate. I must commend the people of Goolwa for hanging in there and still running events like the Wooden Boat Festival when there was very little water in the river channel flowing out to the mouth.

It was a real struggle. Many boats left the area and not all of them have come back by any means, but it is looking good at the minute. We must make sure that we have good water in the area for this part of the river, and it is a very important part. Obviously food production is extremely important, but the needs of boaties for recreation and as somewhere to wind down is also important. So there are many needs up and down the river, and I note the member for Chaffey's comments. His irrigators and my irrigators were reduced to minimal levels of irrigation and this is where one big deficit in water management is: even though we are supposedly on high security water, we cop the biggest penalty as far as allocations in this state. I want to talk about some of the recommendations coming from the committee:

1. salinity targets for Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert of less than 1,000 EC and 1,500 EC, respectively, for 95% of the time measured as a rolling average over a 10 year period;

I think that sets a very good target instead of having some so-called magical number. These numbers were modelled on different hydrological modelling: the 2,750 gigalitres as outlined in the plan and the 4,000 that the state government seems intent on pursuing. The second recommendation:

2. water height targets for below Lock 1, with the height of Lake Alexandrina to remain above 0.5m AHD for 95% of the time measured as a rolling average over a 10 year period;

That is extremely important for the people on the Lower Murray swamps and others who want to be able to access water through inlets onto their properties, or through their siphons and pumps. The third recommendation:

3. targets that never allow water height downstream of Lock 1 to fall below mean sea level;

That is absolutely essential with regard to the health of the environment and the salinity and acidity issues that we saw during the drought. The fourth recommendation:

4. targets that will see the Murray Mouth open with river flows for 100% of the time;

That is a very important target inasmuch as for a small percentage of that time it may need mechanical dredging. We do need to keep the mouth open to keep the end of the river alive and to keep the Coorong alive. I also note:

5. stronger requirements for monitoring and evaluation, including in relation to salinity and water height below Lock 1;

There should be more permanent monitors being monitored all the time as far as salinity and height with regard to the river. We need to get on with the job, we need to get on with the plan and we need to make sure that South Australia never again experiences the utter carnage that happened before. It could have been irrigators who had access to water above Lock 1 who had to spend a fortune getting water in, or people downstream of Lock 1 who could not access water at all, and it sent many people to the wall. Also, the environment suffered, the economy suffered, and everyone in this state suffered. I commend the committee for the work it has done and I hope the government takes notice of this report.

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (11:45): I would like to thank the committee and also the members in this house for their cooperation this morning, because we are really keen to see this report actually being a submission that we will forward to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and, if we can pass this report today, that will allow that to happen. So, thank you everyone, and I commend the report to the house.

Motion carried.

FARMING RIGHTS

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Venning:

That this house establish a select committee to investigate and report upon factors that impact upon a farmer's 'right to farm', including a specific examination of spray buffers, conflicting land uses, mining, farm sustainability, profitability and the Development Act 1993.

(Continued from 14 March 2012.)

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (11:45): I rise to speak in support of the member for Schubert's motion to establish a select committee to investigate the matters impacting on our farmers' right to farm. For centuries, myself, and many of the members on this side have come from farming backgrounds—some still there—and we feel that living and working on a farm gives us the right to continue our business, no matter whether others make a choice to move in close proximity, or make a choice to have a country lifestyle.

Again, it is really about the urban encroachment on farming land or coming into the country style of living. I am calling on those people who need to understand in coming into a farming community and a non-urban area, that operations of farming are noisy; and they are sometimes not a 9-to-5 type job—they are a 24/7 job in a lot of cases, particularly in harvest, particularly in seeding, particularly with some of the maintenance and spraying programs that happen at night, we see transport coming in.

People coming into those farming areas must understand that they are entering a country lifestyle—they must look at their rates notice, they must look at the planning information when they come into these areas—and that it offers farming practices next door, and down the road, and that that must be noted. In the electorate of Chaffey, we have a large amount of farming practices,

whether it be horticulture or agriculture. There are many procedures being undertaken on a daily basis 24 hours a day/7 days a week—whether looking after horticulture crops through checking irrigation, through harvest, trucks coming and going, tractors in and out of orchards and vineyards—there must be an understanding of what is involved in practices of farming.

Those people coming and looking for that country lifestyle need to understand. I will ask a simple question: does a farmer who moves to town for a personal choice, apply to have the pub shut down up the road for the reason of noise and cars driving away, and people having a good time? No, he doesn't. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (11:48): Madam Speaker, I wish to move an amendment to this motion. I move:

After 'report' remove all words and replace with:

'on land arrangements for primary production (agriculture, viticulture and horticulture), mineral resources and regional development, focusing on planning for farming sustainability and improving farming practices that promote the sustainable use of our state's natural resources, a clean, green food supply for South Australia and report on advantages that this promotion may bring to the South Australian economy.'

My amendment seeks to maintain the establishment of a select committee. What the motion does do is try to—

The SPEAKER: Member for Light, could we just have a copy of the amendment?

Mr PICCOLO: You can. The intent of the amendment is to support the establishment of the select committee and also to support the intent of what the motion seeks to do. We are making it a bit broader, and we are taking out the words that narrow the debate. We are looking at farming in the broader sense and trying to establish what it is we need to do to make farming sustainable and profitable in the future.

As I said, the intent of the government's amendment is to ensure that the community recognises that the government is very interested in this section of our economy. The South Australian government has recognised it in the seven strategic priorities, in our role as a supplier of clean, green food and in relation to the importance of mining in our present and future.

South Australian primary produce makes up 5 per cent of our gross state product, while mining represents 4 per cent of our gross state product. South Australia's gross food revenue reached a record high of \$13.7 billion in 2010-11. The food and wine industry employs nearly one in five South Australian workers and accounts for around 40 per cent of the state's exports, so it is a very important sector and that is why we are supporting this motion in an amended form.

I also wish to comment on something the member for Chaffey touched upon earlier, that is that land use and methods of primary production do not remain static over time; therefore, to ensure that we can build on our substantial base in primary industries and improve our productivity, various land uses must coexist, and we must find solutions to those existing conflicts.

We have all become more aware of the importance of sustainability in our land use, and many primary producers are exemplars of how to husband and nurture land. There is an increasing interest here and overseas in 'green' food and produce that can be sustainably produced with the least impact on the environment and consumed with confidence. Consumers may seek out and pay a premium for products with a clean, green image.

An important point is that proper planning and a proactive policy can minimise conflicts between different types of farming. Preventative policy measures are more useful than remedial ones. There are existing and ongoing processes to ensure these conflicts are minimised, including the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, which includes the protection of agricultural land in the Greater Adelaide region and the introduction of character preservation regions in the Barossa and McLaren Vale.

A select committee should therefore investigate how preventative policy measures assist in dealing with the range of uses for land in regional areas to support farm sustainability and to help provide a market advantage to South Australian primary industries. With those few comments, I seek support for this amendment.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (11:52): I will second the amendment. We would like to deal with this today, and I will take the opportunity, having spent most of my working life involved with

agriculture, to support both the original motion and the amendment by the member for Light on the intent to set up a committee to consider the right to farm.

I have to say that this issue has been brought to my close attention in recent times in the seat of Flinders where, right at this very moment, we are dealing with the interface between particularly mining exploration and landowners who have been, in many instances, in place and on properties for 100 years or more—since settlement. I am aware of the angst, anxiety and sense of the unknown that that brings to people's businesses, their outlook on life, and to what the future might hold.

I note that of late there has been a series of public meetings across Eyre Peninsula—particularly Lower Eyre Peninsula—to address some of these issues. At the same time, there have been public forums held by exploration companies to actually put their intentions out into the public domain. My feeling is that, right at this moment, the best efforts are being made by both parties to address these issues. But at the core of this, I think, is that there are often competing interests when it comes to agricultural land, and it is about how we best manage that. It is nothing new; there have always been competing interests through urban encroachment or the establishment of factories or other lifestyles or even a change of land use. I think it is a good opportunity to consider all of those, and I look forward to the committee being established and presenting to that committee.

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (11:55): I thank all members who have contributed to this debate, and I particularly thank the government for supporting the principles involved with this select committee. I support the government's amendment because I believe the result will be the same. This is a very complex matter and it has been on the political agenda in Australia for many years. I envisage this inquiry going for quite some time, but I hope it will be all completed by the end of 2013, which is the life of the government. I look forward to a most interesting and rewarding investigation and putting up ideas for legislation in the future.

Amendment carried; motion as amended carried.

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (11:56): I move:

That the select committee consist of Mr Piccolo, Mrs Vlahos, Dr Close, Mr Pederick, Mr Griffiths and the mover.

Motion carried.

An honourable member: Is this your swan song?

Mr VENNING: It's not my swan song, no. After that interruption, which floored me a bit, I now move:

That the select committee have power to send for persons, papers and records and to adjourn from place to place and to report on 28 November 2012.

Motion carried.

Mr VENNING: I further move:

That standing order 339 be and remain so far suspended as to enable the select committee to authorise the disclosure or publication as it sees fit of any evidence presented to the committee prior to such evidence being reported to the house.

The SPEAKER: I have counted the house and, as an absolute majority of the whole number of members is not present, ring the bells.

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

Motion carried.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SUPERANNUATION SCHEME) (MERGER) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for the Public Sector) (12:00): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008. Read a first time.

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for the Public Sector) (12:00): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the detailed explanation of the bill and clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

This Bill seeks to make amendments to the *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008*.

The Local Government Superannuation Scheme is a Commonwealth regulated superannuation scheme conducting business as the Local Super Scheme. The scheme essentially ceased to be subject to State legislation following the enactment of the *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008* and the expiry of Part 2 of Schedule 1 of the *Local Government Act 1999* in January 2012.

The *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008* required the scheme to be continued in existence under a trust deed prepared by the Local Government Superannuation Board. Since 1 January 2009, Local Super has been governed by a trust deed and its trustee has been the private company, Local Super Pty Ltd. Local Super also now operates as a public offer fund, and any employer can make contributions to the scheme for his or her employee.

The recent release of the Federal Government's Cooper Review into the operation of Australia's superannuation system has encouraged superannuation funds to consider merger and acquisition opportunities. Against that background, Local Super and Statewide Super have publicly announced that they are interested in a possible merger. This Bill therefore seeks to make a minor amendment to a transitional provision of the *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008* that would, unless amended, prevent the possible merger of Local Super with another superannuation fund, and the possible winding up of Local Super.

The central provision of this Bill is therefore the proposal that Clause 2 of Schedule 1 of the *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008*, which currently provides that the Local Government Superannuation Scheme is to continue in existence under a trustee deed, be amended to allow for the possible future merger of the Local Government Superannuation Scheme with some other scheme that may result in the discontinuance of the scheme in its own right and under its current name. The Bill also contains a number of consequential amendments to other transitional provisions of the *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008*.

I commend the Bill to Members.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Amendment provisions

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008*

3—Amendment of Schedule 1—Transitional provisions

This clause amends the transitional provisions of the *Local Government (Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Act 2008* so as to allow for a merger of the Local Government Superannuation Scheme with another superannuation scheme.

Clause 2 of the transitional provisions currently provides that the Scheme is to continue in existence under a trust deed prepared by the Board. As amended, the clause will allow for the Scheme to continue in existence under another trust deed following a merger (or subsequent merger) of the Scheme with another superannuation scheme pursuant to a transfer of the benefits of the members of the scheme to a successor fund. A successor fund is a superannuation fund that confers on members equivalent rights to the rights that they had under the original fund in respect of members' benefits. Before the transfer, the trustee of the fund must have agreed with the trustee of the original fund that the fund will confer on the member equivalent rights to the rights that the member had under the original fund in respect of the benefits.

If a merger occurs, a council or other authority or body that is a participating employer for the purposes of the new scheme immediately before the merger will be taken to be a signatory to the trust deed under which the Local Government Superannuation Scheme continues in existence following the merger. A reference to 'the new scheme' in Schedule 1 as amended will not apply in relation to the Local Government Superannuation Scheme as continued in existence following a merger.

The Schedule includes a number of provisions that apply in relation to the Local Government Superannuation Scheme as continued in existence under the trust deed prepared by the Board but will not apply if a merger occurs. For example, clause 5(4) provides that a company established by the Board is to continue to hold office as trustee. This requirement will not apply if there is a merger of the scheme with another superannuation scheme as contemplated by the Schedule as amended.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Pederick.

MENTAL HEALTH (INPATIENT) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 3 April 2012.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:02): I wish to continue my remarks on this bill, having run out of time yesterday. The legislated onus is entirely upon the inpatient. Section 34 (clause 5 of the bill) states:

- (3) If granted a leave of absence, the involuntary inpatient is required to comply with the conditions of the leave of absence.

The government has indicated that the staff's responsibility is covered under 'professional conduct', which does not require legislation. Further the bill's new section 34A(2) also states:

- (2) Treatment centre staff may take measures for the confinement of the patient, and exercise powers (including the power to use reasonable force), as reasonably required—
- (a) for carrying the inpatient treatment order applying to the patient into effect and ensuring compliance with this act; and
- (b) for the maintenance of order and security at the centre or the prevention of harm or nuisance to others.

The shadow minister has indicated that he believes there is no compulsion on treatment centre staff to take any measures if an involuntary patient has left a treatment centre without a leave of absence or has breached their leave of absence conditions. In some cases this may have public safety implications for the inpatient and/or the broader public.

The consent for ECT on minors, clause 6, alters the parameters in which a patient under 16 years of age can be prescribed electroconvulsive therapy. This new amendment enables consent to be given by the parent or guardian or, failing this, by the Guardianship Board.

In summarising my few comments, the house will need to strike a balance between the interests of mental health patients and the interests of public safety. The bill reinforces the long-standing practice of allowing patients 'detained involuntarily' but rebadges these patients as 'involuntary inpatients'. In the interests of destigmatising mental health, and on the basis of professional advice, we will support that measure.

The bill would be improved if it included an obligation on treatment centre staff to act as soon as practicable to notify police when a leave of absence, or conditions attached to it, have been breached so that the police can act appropriately. This would minimise any risk of misunderstanding by staff about their mandated requirement to act in such cases, and an amendment would also mandate the reporting of such events in the public interest. I note that the member for Waite will be moving amendments.

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: No, he will not be, he has now indicated that he will not be. Thank you, member for Waite. Regarding mental health and when it gets to these issues of where people have to be held in detention, either voluntarily or involuntarily, I want to talk about where funding has been pulled from various organisations, not just in my electorate but across the state. I note the One Voice Network, which has membership extending from Mount Gambier, Mannum, Berri, Auburn, Wallaroo and Yorketown, right through to Port Augusta. For the past two years, Country Health SA Mental Health has funded the One Voice Network to pay a coordinator for 15 hours per week to run each member centre, and I note that funding has ceased as at the end of March.

One area I am really concerned about is the funding that has been axed from Our Wellbeing Place in Murray Bridge. Ann-Marie Garrett used to be the coordinator of Our Wellbeing Place and when the funding was terminated she decided that her time with the Public Service was over and she has retired. I note that there are 7,500 people who access Our Wellbeing Place in Murray Bridge each year, no longer will they be greeted by a coordinator as she has left the program. The direct mental health programs which have been put in place are out on a limb, so to speak.

According to outgoing coordinator Ann-Marie Garrett, since it opened in 2006, the centre has had a mental health focus and fulfilled a vital role in the community by giving isolated, lonely or sick people a place to connect. I note that in 2009, the centre won a Dr Margaret Tobin award for excellence in mental health. The youth in the community have headspace, and Our Wellbeing

Place is focused on adult needs. Two adults who had mental health issues joined the art group and went on to university to do a degree in art. One comment from the art group was, 'If we had more classes like this we would need less medication'.

Mrs Garrett indicated that she was shocked to find that funding for her position had been axed, as without a coordinator, as I indicated earlier, the centre could not continue in its current capacity. So, the future of the centre is up in the air. It was set out to have a centre that was open to everyone and where there would be no discrimination, but with no-one driving that what can be done to continue what has been started?

I am disappointed that the funding has stopped. I note that the government is keen to get NGOs involved, but I think the Labor government has missed the ball here. A little bit of funding would help alleviate the mental health needs of thousands of people throughout the state and my electorate in making sure that they had their needs met before (potentially) there might be an issue with these people having to be detained, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

My hope, now that the government has taken its eye off the ball, is that NGOs will pick up these positions and keep up the vital services in this area, not just in my electorate but across the state, for the health needs of the community.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (12:09): I thank members for their contributions to this debate. I thank the member for Waite for expressing the opposition's support for this legislation. I think it is always fantastic, particularly in these areas which can be sensitive, that there is bipartisan support for a position. I reflect that, when this legislation went through four or five years ago, it probably would have been difficult to have reached agreement on or even put this kind of philosophy into the legislation.

What we are attempting to do here is to continue the destigmatisation of people with mental illness in our community. There is a whole range of things that we are doing as a community at a state level, at a local level and at a national level to improve services for people with mental illness to make sure that there are acute settings for them to go to when their illness becomes so difficult that they have to be in an institution and to ensure that there is a range of services in the community—subacute care, community-based care, home care and a whole range of packages—to support people.

But the advice to me was that the one big bit of territory that we needed to explore as a government and as a community was in the area of public attitude to people with mental illness. Part of that campaign is being addressed through advertising campaigns which we are running on TV, in bus shelters, on radio and so on to help members of the community have a better understanding of people who have mental illness, and this piece of legislation is very much part and parcel of that strategy to reduce the stigma that people with mental illness suffer.

It is just a change of a word but words can be very powerful, as members know, particularly members in this place. Much of politics is about language—how we use language. We can label people with language and those labels stick with them for a very long period of time. The use of the word 'detention' to apply to mentally ill people against their will in an institution does create the sense that they are being detained because they are dangerous or they are criminal, and that helps foment an attitude towards people who are mentally unwell, and that is something that we are trying to address in this legislation.

As I think the shadow minister would understand, there are a range of ways that people who have an acute mental illness can be treated. A lot of those patients—I think, indeed, the majority of patients—who end up in acute institutions are there as voluntary patients and they are subject to a whole range of treatment as voluntary patients. They are not under lock and key. They can move around and, of course, they can choose to go at any time. Some patients, against their will, are obliged to be in an institution to receive care, so they are what have been described in the past as 'detained patients'. However, the detention is not under lock and key; they are there under the supervision of the staff but they are not in a locked environment—they can move about the place.

The majority of those patients who are detained in that sense comply with the orders that are imposed upon them and they do not leave, they do not run away. The reason they are not under lock and key is that it is a more humane way of treating them. It is a practical way of dealing with them given that they do not generally leave the place where they are being kept, and it is obviously more therapeutic if you have a mental illness to know that you are not under a lock and

key. The patients do not therefore feel like prisoners, and so it is really part of the therapy that is being applied.

There are a small number of patients, I am advised, who are compulsorily held in institutions who are under lock and key, generally for very short periods of time, when their illness is at its most acute and where the risk to themselves or to others is so great that the only way they can be managed is in that sense, under what we would properly understand as detention. This legislation will not change any of those arrangements, it just changes the labels that are applied to people in those categories; so, some patients will still be under lock and key, will still be detained in that classic sense of detention. They will be in the minority of cases. The majority of patients who are in an acute institution against their will, involuntary patients, will be there but not under lock and key.

There are also patients in the community who are subject to treatment orders against their will who have compulsory treatment orders applied to them. They are not under lock and key; they are not in an institution. They have, I guess, light supervision in the community and, as long as they maintain their medication, they are fine. We already acknowledge a group of patients who are compulsorily treated in the community, in their own homes, who are managed through our system, and we do not use pejorative language about those people.

All the patients I have referred to have to be distinguished from those who are in an institution like James Nash House or who are classified as forensic patients who are subject to court orders. They may be in an institution other than James Nash where they have to be managed according to the court's rulings. I distinguish those patients because they do have criminal elements to their treatment orders, if you like. We are not interfering or changing those arrangements by this legislation, as I understand it, in any way at all.

The member for Waite raised issues about escaping and failing to comply and how we balance the issues of public safety with the stigma issues. How we do that is at the heart of what this is about. This legislation will not change those arrangements at all: it is just changing language. The member suggests that one option—and he is not pursuing this by amendment and I am grateful to him for not doing that—would be to mandate a requirement that staff or clinicians who work in these institutions notify the police when an involuntary patient absconded, if certain conditions had been set—I think he said 'a reasonable time frame'.

I have advice on a range of things. Firstly, we would then, I think, get rid of stigma in one category, but we might create stigma another category in that a patient who leaves an institution against the order is suddenly subject to a police investigation and the police start looking for that person. So, there is that issue.

Putting that to one side, quite often, I am told, when patients who are subject to these orders leave, the clinicians generally know where they have gone. They are generally fairly predictable. Sometimes they go to the pub, I understand; sometimes they go to their mum's place or their girlfriend's place, so they can be found pretty quickly.

But there is a category of patients who disappear. I think the member referred to a couple of tragic suicide cases which were subject to the Coroner's Court. Sometimes patients who are under treatment orders, who are in technical detention but not under lock and key, leave the facilities and cause harm to themselves or someone else—generally, I think, it is to themselves but I am not sure what the statistics say—and they are a danger to themselves and the community.

How do we deal with that? The way that is dealt with now is the clinicians refer those patients to the police and the police are called in to assist in finding those people who have control orders on them, but that can also apply to voluntary patients who are in an institution and who leave, where their clinicians feel that there is a risk to themselves or to others. Often, you do not need to use a control order. If a patient turns up or is brought to, say, Glenside or another of our hospitals with a particular acute episode, and they say yes and voluntarily put themselves in, if they said no to that, then there would be a control order placed upon them.

There is no real difference in the character of the patients. It is just that they will have agreed to being in the institution. Probably, they have had past experience and they know what needs to happen. If they too were to go away, the clinicians would still call the police in some circumstances where they believe they were at risk or the community was at risk, so there is no real distinction in how they treat them.

I have talked to the chief psychiatrist and asked him what process they go through. The clinicians have their own protocols in place. To pick up the point that the member for Waite raised—I think what he was inviting me to do was to think about how we might better improve that—I asked him whether or not we could consider establishing some guidelines for the use of clinicians across our institutions so that, if patients were to leave in these circumstances, there would be some clarity about under what circumstances police should be called. I understand he is reasonably happy that we could do that, so I give the member for Waite an undertaking that the Chief Psychiatrist will examine and introduce, if it is deemed appropriate, a set of guidelines which are clear about under what circumstances and when.

I think it would aid clinicians if they knew there was a set of protocols in place which they could follow. At the heart of it, of course, you want the clinicians to use their own judgement and not rely on a piece of paper, because they are trained and, if they think something needs to be done quickly, they will do it quickly and so on. I do give him that undertaking.

I think I have pretty well covered the central issues the member for Waite asked me; if I have not, I am happy to try to pick them up if we go into committee. There are also some questions or issues around the ECT changes. As I think the member for Waite explained, this amendment really just clarifies what the law was supposed to be, and it brings into one place provisions which are in other bits of legislation and makes clear what process one needs to go through, particularly if it is a child under the age of 16.

I think the member for Bragg raised some questions about ECT, and I can give some general information to the house. ECT, or electroconvulsive therapy, is a psychiatric treatment for severe mental illness prescribed in particular circumstances. It is most commonly used to treat the symptoms of depression, although there is evidence that it can also be effective in treating the symptoms of mania, catatonia, schizophrenia and other serious mental illness. ECT is a procedure that is performed under a general anaesthetic, where controlled seizures are induced. The 2010-11 annual report of the Chief Psychiatrist states that a total of 6,393 ECT treatments were given in the 2010-11 period; of these, 3,749 (58.6 per cent) were provided by public mental health services and the remainder by private psychiatric hospitals.

The act requires ECT to be consented to by the patient, by the Guardianship Board, or in the case of an emergency, by the treating psychiatrist. Consent to ECT was provided by the patient in 5,095 (79.7 per cent) of the treatments, by the GSB (the Guardianship Board) in approximately 1,150 (18 per cent), and by a psychiatrist (that is in those emergency circumstances) in 148 (2.3 per cent) of the treatments. ECT for children, that is under 16 years of age, is a rare event, occurring only once in the last five years. Nevertheless, amending section 42 of the act to remove any ambiguity about consent requirements for children is important so that clinicians are very clear in applying the law to that area.

Finally, I will just respond briefly to the member for Hammond's comment about funding—it is not really covered by the legislation, but since he has raised it I will try to address it—for a range of community based mental health services; One Voice, I think it was called.

Mr Pederick: One Voice and Our Wellbeing Place.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Yes, One Voice. As I understand it, there was some one-off money provided a few years ago to assist the establishment of these, and it was very clear that it was short-term funding. The obligation that was part of the funding contract was that the organisations would find alternative funding sources for the future. We extended that funding, I think maybe on two occasions, but it was not ongoing funding, and while some of the organisations which received the funding have been successful at working out how to have the service continued others have been less so.

While I can understand the frustration of local communities about this, the money was given on that basis. I have to say I was not aware of this funding. I am not sure that I was responsible for mental health at the time, but I am not blaming anybody. I am very reluctant to provide one-off funding to organisations. I just think it creates these kinds of problems all the time. It seems to be a good thing or a nice thing to do at the time for a group that is doing something good, 'Here is some money to get you going.' You set the protocols in place and of course it gets a head of steam and then there is no ongoing support for them. I think it is a very problematic way of doing things and certainly, to the extent that I can, I have avoided doing that in my areas of responsibility.

Sometimes it can be a good thing: for example, in the arts having a one-off fund to do something is fine but in a health delivery service I think it does create these issues. I regret that these communities have built up an expectation which can no longer be delivered but, quite frankly, there is no budget line to provide these services on an ongoing basis.

Finally, once again, I thank the opposition for its support. It is fabulous that we have bipartisan support around this small but significant change in language and, I think, attitude. That is a good message for this parliament to send to the community—that people who suffer from a mental illness are to be treated as ordinary citizens who have an illness, in the same way that we treat any other citizen who has an illness. If you have a bad heart or cancer or you need dialysis, we do not pillory or victimise or stigmatise but we treat these people as ordinary citizens who have rights and we should extend that same set of attitudes to people with mental illness.

The casual use of language around mental illness is endemic in all of us. We have all grown up using those kinds of phrases. We just have to try to school ourselves to be more inclusive in the way we talk about people who are mentally unwell.

In conclusion, I thank my advisers who have helped worked on this bill: the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr Peter Tylliss; the former chief psychiatrist (I think somebody on the other side was asking who that was) Dr Margaret Honeyman, who has returned to New Zealand; Lisa Huber, principal policy officer; Ben Sunstrom, the manager of the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist; Cassie Bouyer Penney, policy officer; my former adviser in mental health, Alex Keen; and, of course, parliamentary counsel Christine Swift and Alice Graham. I thank them very much and I commend the legislation to the house.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I want to explore with the minister the change of definitions from detention and treatment order to involuntary inpatient and get on to the record more fulsomely the government's thinking here. I thank the minister for his overview in regard to wanting to destigmatise and move away from the term 'detention'. I guess the focus of my question is on how the public might perceive this term. If an offender under one of our criminal laws has been detained and escapes and that is reported in the media, everyone knows that a detainee has escaped, if you like.

Does the minister have any concerns about possible press reporting if there is an act of violence, whether it is an act of violence against the patient themselves by themselves or anyone else, that the reporting of it might be clouded by the new definition? That is to say, that instead of the media reporting that someone involuntarily detained or under a detention and treatment order has escaped and is at risk—now an involuntary inpatient has escaped or is at risk or has breached their leave—does the minister have any concerns that the public might be less clear than they were before about the status of that person?

Where they might be alert, for example, if they knew they were in the company of someone who was under a detention treatment order, they might not be quite as alert if they were in the company of someone who was an involuntary inpatient. Could the minister expound on that for us, please?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for his question. I think there will be better clarity. When the media reports that a detained patient has escaped (to use that language) from a mental health facility the perception that members of the community have now is that somebody has broken out of a prison-like environment and is roaming the streets and is dangerous.

We saw recently the escape of a number of young offenders from Cavan, and that is the kind of image that you have. You are associating a prison breakout with a mental health facility, which is a hospital. We are talking about a patient walking out of a hospital who is under a controlled order, but we currently call it a detention order, which implies that they have broken out.

In the future, the media will record it as the media will, and I guess changing the language is not going to change the way the media deals with the issue. How we try to move public opinion is a longer and different proposition. However, if the media were to say that somebody who is under a controlled medical order has walked out of the hospital where they should be, the police have been

notified, and the public are given a warning if that person is potentially dangerous, I think that would be a fair assessment and reflection of what is going on.

I think it is more transparent about what is happening. I understand; we always want to make sure the public is protected, but, generally, if somebody is currently under detention and they are a really strong risk to the public, I imagine there would be a higher level of scrutiny given to them. That is all I can really say.

Clause passed.

Clause 5.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: This strikes to the question of leave. I note the minister's point that we are not really changing substantially the pre-existing arrangements, but bringing them up to date with new definitions. However, it does open the question of leave. In my consultations on this, some members of the public expressed surprise to me that someone detained involuntarily might be allowed leave; now they will be described as voluntary inpatients and would be allowed leave.

The question was put to me along the lines of: well, if these people have been detained involuntarily, either to protect themselves or for the protection of others, why would we let them out on leave? I have had the benefit of some discussions with advisers on this, but I think for the record the minister might just clarify why we do this, to give the public some assurance as to the practice.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member again for his question. I think it is important that we do clarify this and I appreciate the opportunity he is creating. As I said in my preliminary remarks, at the moment we have compulsory treatment orders for outpatients and we also have compulsory treatment orders for inpatients. As long as the outpatient, who is under a compulsory order, is taking the medication and doing the things that they need to do, then there are no issues.

Equally, as I understand it, that applies to patients who are in hospital, too. As long as they are complying with their medication and the management regime they are under, that is fine. I think sometimes it is important that they are allowed to be given leave as part of their therapy. Can they catch a bus to their parents' place, or to their wife or husband's place? Can they go down to the shop to buy a drink or something of that order? Can they go to the movies and come back?

All of those elements, as I understand it, are part of their therapy. The other example that was just given to me is it could be done for just good, humane reasons such as mothers wanting to visit their children, for example. An ill woman who has some children who are being looked after by the husband or grandparents, perhaps, can be given leave for an hour or two, half a day, or even overnight, to go and be with family.

Ms Thompson: Attend Christmas dinner.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: Attend Christmas dinner, as my colleague the member for Reynell says. All of those would be quite sensible reasons. It is not dissimilar to patients who have some sort of non-mental illness who are in a hospital for a long period of time who are sometimes allowed to go and do things as long as they are back by a particular time. It is really just part of the therapeutic process. Clearly, if they were current dangers to themselves, or to others, the clinicians would not allow this.

This change of language does not change any of these arrangements. Obviously, medicine is not an exact science and not on every occasion will it be 100 per cent correct, but I dare say 99 per cent of times, or even more, it is. It is a matter of managing those risks, and that is what the clinicians are trained and paid to do. I agree with the member that it does not make sense to say, 'That person is detained, therefore we are allowing them to have leave.' That is correct: it does not make sense. That defies common sense. That is one of the reasons, of course, for changing the language—because it does not make common sense and it does create confusion and concern in the community unnecessarily.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I thank the minister for his answer. I note the minister's offer of a set of guidelines in regard to management of leave and thank him for that, because I think that will be a step forward. As I mentioned, the opposition considered drafting an amendment to tighten up these arrangements but has accepted the advice of the minister and his advisers that we should deal with the control of leave in another way, and I think this set of guidelines is a constructive move forward.

However, in exploring that further, I suppose I seek some direction as to how that set of guidelines might evolve. For example, I am aware of one case where someone who I understand

was on leave, some years ago, threw themselves in front of a car. Patients are involuntarily detained or become involuntary inpatients, presumably, because they are a risk either to themselves or others, and it can be very traumatic for a member of the public to be the driver of the car, or for a member of the family or a loved one to find that suddenly this person they love is threatening or trying to kill themselves, etc., where they arguably might more safely be back in the institution or in the facility from which they have come but they have overstretched their leave or did not go back when required because they were either drinking or breaching some condition of the leave.

The loved one, or the person who is accidentally brought into this situation where they are witnessing or involved in a suicide or a violent act, or are on the receiving end of a violent act because the loved one struck them, or something along those lines, might understandably be quite outraged or hurt that the system did not move more quickly, if you like, to ensure that person was found and returned to the clinical facility where they were being treated. They might be outraged that, it having been made clear the person was breaching their terms (for example, having contacted the facility under the influence of alcohol, or something like that—clearly, in breach of the conditions), more prompt action was not taken to get them.

I take the minister's point that we might not necessarily want the police having to spend their time chasing people up in every instance as a matter of course and, therefore, mandate that that occur, but I am sure the department has other devices for recovering people and getting them back to the facility. It might be the deployment of a nurse or carer in a vehicle going to get them. It might be getting on the phone and arranging for a loved one, or someone involved, to physically put them in the car and bring them in, or something like that.

But it does seem to me that, at the moment, there is no onus on the staff in a facility to necessarily act. So, I am looking for some elaboration on what the guidelines might contain. For example, if I were a nurse at a clinical facility and the instruction I had been given was that Mr A was out on leave and he was due back at 4pm and then, come 5pm, Mr A had not turned up, come 6pm I might of my own account say, 'Oh, well, I suppose that can wait until 10,' or 'That can wait until the morning. I'll raise it with the doctor when they are rostered on.' In other words, the discretion is left to me to make a judgement about whether I will chase up that person or report it, or follow it up in some way. Meanwhile, Mr A commits suicide, or Mr A is involved in some act of violence and somebody is hurt who, arguably, need not have been.

I take the point that we rely on the professional status of the clinical people involved in caring for our mental health patients, but it seems to me that there needs to be something a little more rigorous to give comfort to loved ones and to patients, and to the public at large, that something will be done to follow things up when, clearly, leave conditions have not been complied with. Can the minister give us any further detail on how the guidelines might be enforced?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I have just received some further advice. There is a policy in place now in metro mental health treatment centres. The policy guides practice and stipulates that when it becomes evident that a consumer may be missing from a bedded unit, as it is described, action is to be taken within these time frames: rehabilitation aged-care units, 45 minutes; acute admission units, 30 minutes; psychiatric intensive care units (known as PICUs), closed units and high-dependency units, within 15 minutes.

Details of any parties who may potentially be at serious risk of harm from the consumer should be reported to SAPOL by the unit nursing staff, in liaison with the clinical director, duty coordinator, nursing director and clinical practice service manager, as per the Department of Health's requirement to inform on the grounds of public safety, which allows considered breach of consumer confidentiality in exceptional circumstances.

I will just make the final point that it is worth noting that the directive is to be followed regardless of the patient's status. So, even if they are not currently detained but they are a voluntary patient, if they are missing without anybody's knowledge, those sort of protocols are put in place now. Also, for the benefit of the house, I table a set of guidelines, under the heading 'Adelaide metro mental health directorate', procedure title 'Missing consumers bedded services,' and there are two pages of details of what has happened. Further, I table a form known as MP1, which is a missing consumer notification form, which is used in these cases. I also table the form known as MP2, 'Missing consumer patient at large checklist, treating team follow-up'. I think that it would give the member some comfort that there are actually some protocols in place.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I thank the minister for that elaboration, which is most welcome. My final question on this clause is to explore what follow-up action might be taken should the guidelines not be adhered to. I am just remembering the Coroner's comments on Simon Christopher Hynes, who committed suicide whilst on leave. As I pointed out, the Coroner was critical of the mental health system in his report when he said:

There was no attempt made by mental health authorities to locate Mr Hynes, despite the fact that he was on a community treatment order...

If these guidelines are not adhered to, what devices can the minister institute to ensure that we follow that up so that it does not happen again?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am advised that adverse or sentinel events, or reports from the Coroner (of course, the Coroner's events, by definition, would be adverse or sentinel events) are followed up by a monthly meeting of the incident review panel, which consists of senior clinical staff and managers, who supervise how all of these processes work, and that is exactly what they try to do; that is, if there is a mistake, they try to learn from it so that it does not happen again. One of the things I know, having been in this job for a while, is that the health system is very good at learning from error, and it does institute new procedures when something goes wrong. I think that is a pretty good system.

Clause passed.

Clause 6.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: I must say, when I read the parent act and what it says about the approvals required for ECT treatment, I could understand why this amendment had been brought forward. It took us a while to try to imagine how you might make it work as it was, so I understand why you have done this. For the record, I think I should ask the minister in his own words to explain to the house why the pre-existing act was not working and why we have changed it, through this amendment to section 42(1)(c), to free up the approval arrangements where we have to conduct this sort of treatment for patients under the age of 16. What was wrong before and why have we had to fix it with this clause?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: As I understand it, the intention has always been that parents should agree to ECT being provided to their children. In circumstances where they cannot or will not and there is a clinical view that it should occur, there is the capacity to go to the Guardianship Board or, if the Guardianship Board is in the place of the parents, for the Guardianship Board to make that decision.

My understanding is that the wording in the original act was considered to be ambiguous. It was being taken that every single time ECT treatment was required for a child then the Guardianship Board would have to be approached. As I say, it has only happened once in five years, so I guess that has not created a burden for anybody in particular, but the language in the original legislation created that sense of ambiguity.

The facts are: if the patient is over the age of 16, under the general provisions in relation to health treatments, they are capable of giving their own consent; if they are not capable over the age of 16, then their agent, a guardian or the board can do so under an application; and if the patient is under 16 years of age, the parent or guardian can do it or, on application, the board can do it. This amendment brings together all of the provisions in one location and makes it really clear how it should operate.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: To seek further clarity on that point, new section 42(1)(c)(iii) provides that, if the patient is under 16, approval can be given 'by a parent or guardian of the patient or by the board on application under this section'. Do I take that to mean that the board could authorise ECT against the express wishes of the parent? So, could they overrule the parent or guardian? Or has that been put there as an alternative should the parents not be available? What happens if there is a conflict between the two?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think the member has expressed the two circumstances under which it would apply. If the parent is not available, is missing or cannot be contacted for some reason, the Guardianship Board, under application, can give consent. If the parents say no and the clinician believes it is in the best interest of the patient then they can approach the Guardianship Board.

The equivalent would be in the area of blood transfusion, and we have had this a number of times at the Women's and Children's Hospital. For religious reasons, some parents have refused to have a blood transfusion for their child and the clinicians know that, if they do not get the blood transfusion, the kid is going to die. I am not sure whether they go to the same authority or whether they go to the court. I think they might go to the District Court or the Supreme Court. I am not sure exactly, but they go to the court and say, 'The patient is going to die and the parents are saying no. We seek your intervention to allow us to provide this treatment.' The court then weighs up all of the issues.

In relation to ECT, it could well be that a parent, for religious reasons or due to being mentally ill themselves or who knows, may make a decision which is not wise. I think the clinicians would be always mindful to explain the risks and what the benefits might be. If there were alternatives—say, whether you could have an ECT or something else—and if the parent said, 'I'd rather try this than an ECT,' I am sure the clinicians would go along with it. This is obviously in very exceptional circumstances. It has happened once in five years that there has been even one ECT given to a child. If the clinicians are absolutely of the view that the child needs it for their own safety and the parents are in disagreement, they have the right to approach the board, and then the board can adjudicate and make a determination based on the evidence it has put before them. I guess there are appeals then to the Supreme Court and so on if parents do not like it. There are safety provisions in there but that is what it is about.

Clause passed.

Remaining clause (7), schedules and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (12:52): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUPPLY BILL 2012

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 March 2012.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:52): I rise to continue my remarks in relation to the Supply Bill. The River Murray is very much front and centre in our thoughts at the moment, and it is certainly always front and centre of mine, especially in regard to what has happened in recent times as a result of overallocation and drought. One thing we see in regard to this is the government making such a big call on what they want to see. They are talking about the 4,000 gigalitres that they want in the plan, instead of the 2,750 gigalitres that has been put in the plan.

Why hasn't the government sent any staff to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to put South Australia's case in regard to this plan? I think this is a vital opportunity that has been missed by the government. They could have sent one or two staff along who could have taken the South Australian message directly to Canberra to make sure that the thoughts of South Australia were front and centre, especially because rivers die from the mouth up—and that is my concern. I am stunned that that did not happen. I find that disappointing, especially considering the amount of passion all politicians have in regard to this debate.

I want to reiterate comments I have made here previously in regard to the two milk factories at Murray Bridge and Jervois. Tony Esposito from United Dairy Power—and I think I mentioned this the other day—indicated that after months of lobbying by me, Mayor Allan Arbon and Brenton Lewis from Regional Development Australia, we have been unable to secure any funding or relief for United Dairy Power to help make these two factories viable. Well, we can see this come at a huge cost to the region, especially in terms of jobs.

I want to talk about the proposed amalgamations of schools that is going on as well. It is a target by the government to allegedly save \$6 million by asking many schools across the state to amalgamate. There are two in my area, the Murray Bridge North School and the Murray Bridge North Junior Primary School, that are on the same campus and they operate very well under their

management structures and teams. They believe they will be worse off if they are asked to amalgamate.

That is certainly the way it is going, certainly the way this government is headed under Premier Jay Weatherill and minister Grace Portolesi, and that is another disappointment. Again, here we have regional students who will potentially lose the benefits of education funding, inasmuch as funding drives the outcomes you can get; if you have the appropriate funding in place you can get the appropriate education outcomes.

I spoke earlier in my speech about mental health and the funding cuts in services provided to the One Voice Network as well as Our Wellbeing Place. These are services that keep people out of detention and supply valuable mental health appraisals and services so that people can enjoy better wellbeing. It is disappointing that that money has been pulled. As I indicated in my speech earlier today, Our Wellbeing Place, under the coordination of Ann Marie Garrett, was having visits by 7,500 people a year. That is an incredible amount of people, but now the centre has been left without a coordinator.

People have come through Our Wellbeing Place and have gone on to study degrees, arts degrees, so it is just disappointing that this has happened. We just want to see people getting the right assistance, and they are good establishments. The One Voice Network, which is not just in my area but across country regions from Mount Gambier through to the Yorke Peninsula, supplies valuable mental health work for the citizens of this state. As I indicated, it is disappointing that this has gone.

I want to talk about the debacle of Shared Services. It is not just the fact that members of parliament in the place, on all sides, have had their phones cut off due to late payment. We have had that constant battle. I note that the finance minister, who seems to be the only one on the other side who has any business acumen, has undertaken a program to try to offset this. Why not do just simple things—

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: I am glad you concede he does.

Mr PEDERICK: He did run a business, I acknowledge that.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: Koutsy ran a business.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): Order!

Mr PEDERICK: I acknowledge that there have been attempts made to fix this inequity, but I cannot understand that all this work before me has supposedly gone to this great place of Shared Services, which is just an absolute disaster.

However, the biggest issue for me is that there are services in the community—ranging from people who provide services to the Zoo, whether in Adelaide or Monarto in my electorate, whether it is people doing general work for government at any level—who are just not getting paid. Anyone who has any idea of business knows that if you do not have the cash flow that is when businesses fall over. There is no way that any individual or business should be propping up the government's debt issues through their small business. It is disgraceful. The bills are there to be paid on time so that we can promote small business in this state and promote the individual entrepreneurs of this state.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. J.D. Hill.

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

MCGEE, MR EUGENE

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss): Presented a petition signed by 600 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the Attorney-General to refer the conduct of Mr Eugene McGee in relation to the death of Mr Ian Humphrey on 30 November 2003 to the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I draw members' attention to the presence in the gallery of a group of years 11 and 12 students from the Charles Campbell College, who are guests of the member for Morialta. Welcome; I hope you enjoy your time here today.

URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)
(14:01): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: On 20 November last year in this place I announced that the state government intended to create a single body to bring together all agencies responsible for land and housing development. This body, the Urban Renewal Authority, has now been in operation since 1 March and today I am very pleased to announce the appointment of a full-time chief executive officer.

The introduction of a new Urban Renewal Authority is born of the simple fact that we want to create great places for people to live, a vibrant city, and safe and healthy neighbourhoods that offer affordable living. These are essential elements of the seven priority focus areas for government action to make the most of South Australia's exciting future. A coordinating body to renew our cities and suburbs is central to this task and that is the role of the Urban Renewal Authority.

I am very pleased to announce today that Mr Fred Hansen, an international expert in transport and liveable cities, has accepted this position and will soon start in the role. Mr Hansen is already well-known in South Australia. He has spent valuable time here in the past two years as a Thinker In Residence. Before that he was general manager of TriMet, the department of transport in Portland, Oregon. He filled that role from October 1998 until July 2010, a time of unprecedented development in that city. Mr Hansen is recognised as a leader in the transit planning world, having lectured and participated on panels throughout the US and around the world. His message is that land use and transportation must be fully integrated to build and revitalise neighbourhoods and to make places where people want to live, work and play.

Before his appointment as general manager of TriMet, Mr Hansen was Deputy Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, the number two person appointed by the President charged with protecting the environment. Mr Hansen's Thinker In Residence report, 'All on board: Growing vibrant communities through transport', which was released last year, drew on his significant experience to recommend ways to create walkable, liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods.

I look forward to welcoming Mr Hansen to Adelaide in his new role and to him bringing his expertise to the future development of Adelaide's neighbourhoods. It is a compliment to South Australia that there were 26 applicants for this exciting new role and a compliment to Mr Hansen that he came through this competitive process from a final shortlisted field of four who were involved in the final interviews.

I thank all the applicants for their interest in what the government believes will be a pivotal and exciting role. I would also like to thank Mr Rod Hook for his interim stewardship of the Urban Renewal Authority and the staff of the URA for their hard work and commitment during this transition process.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Health Advisory Council—

Lower North Annual Report 2010-11

Penola and Districts Annual Report 2010-11

Review of Country Health Advisory Councils' Governance Arrangements

By the Minister for Education and Child Development (Hon. G. Portolesi)—

Child Death and Serious Injury Review Committee—Erratum Annual Report 2010-11

BONYTHON, MR C. W. (WARREN)

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (14:05): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P. CAICA: I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the passing of one of our state's—indeed, the nation's—most passionate conservationists and champions for the environment, Warren Bonython AO. A scientist and explorer who worked all over the world, Warren's name is synonymous with support for many environmental causes and especially for his achievements in and promotion of bushwalking in South Australia.

Over many years, Mr Bonython took part in a number of amazing treks, including on Mount Everest and an attempt to climb Mount Kilimanjaro at the age of 75, but it was South Australia's arid landscapes that held a truly special place in his heart. Warren Bonython became famous when he and expedition partner, Charles McCubbin, became the first people to walk the 2,500 kilometre crossing of the Simpson Desert, carrying their own supplies by pushing and pulling a two-wheeled cart. He also traversed the length of the MacDonnell Ranges, the Larapinta Trail and Lake Eyre and, of course his exploits in walking his beloved Flinders Ranges are the stuff of legend.

A key part of Warren Bonython's legacy is the Heysen Trail, his role being pivotal in the planning and development of the trail, which of course extends from Cape Jervis to Parachilna Gorge. This was Warren's vision of a long-distance walking trail in South Australia to rival America's Appalachian Trail or England's Pennine Way. I understand that at a meeting in 1969 he proposed the concept of a long-distance walking trail from Cape Jervis, on the southern tip of the Fleurieu Peninsula, to the Northern Flinders Ranges, with the concept beginning to gain support in early 1970 with the government establishing a body called the Long Distance Trail Committee.

The committee's remit was to investigate and develop a walking and horse-riding trail of a length and general route that we now recognise as the Heysen Trail. The first section of the Heysen Trail was opened in 1976 and stretched nine kilometres through the Cleland National Park, but that was only the beginning. The Heysen covers more than 1,200 kilometres and is valued locally, nationally and internationally.

Warren Bonython's passion and commitment have helped to promote the importance of caring for our natural environment and inspired generations of South Australians, especially through his close involvement with the Conservation Council, the National Trust and as a founder of the National Parks Foundation in 1981. He was also founding president of the Friends of the Simpson Desert National Park.

Warren was decorated with the Order of Australia for services to conservation in 1980, and all South Australians are the beneficiaries of the rich contribution he has made. At this difficult time, our thoughts are with Warren's wife, Buntly, his three children and six grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr SIBBONS (Mitchell) (14:09): I bring up the sixth report of the committee.

Report received.

QUESTION TIME

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My question is to the Minister for Finance. Now that the head of economics at Westpac Bank, Bill Evans, the head of economics at *The Age* newspaper, Tim Colebatch, and the head of economics at Prescott Securities, Darryl Gobbett, have all said that South Australia is in recession, does the minister accept that South Australia is in recession? Treasurer Snelling said on 7 March, 'I don't think any economist or any sensible person is seriously going to claim that South Australia is in recession.'

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:10): As Minister for State Development, Madam Speaker, I think it is entirely appropriate that I take this question. Can I say, Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Evans when he was in Adelaide recently, and I must say that I thought he was very positive about South Australia's economic future, and—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Madam Speaker, on the last occasion when this issue came up, both the Treasurer and I explained that state final demand is just one measure—one component of our economy; it just measures consumption in our economy, and it is not a measure of economic output, which is the key determinant of a recession. It is a pretty simple proposition—

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: No, what I am saying is, and I think it is absolutely important for all the community to understand this, that it is one component of our state economy that is comprised—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —of consumption and, of course, the better measure of the economic health of our state is indeed the productive effects of our economy. It doesn't measure, for instance—

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It doesn't measure, for instance, the whole question of our exports or, indeed, the produce which is sent interstate. So, all of the production that goes interstate and overseas is not part of the equation of state final demand. Now, I know those opposite are trying very hard to talk down South Australia's economy, but we have great confidence in it. Madam Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Madam Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hammond, order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Madam Speaker, we do acknowledge that there are weaknesses in certain sectors of the economy. We know that there are weaknesses in our domestic construction industries—we know that. We know that, of course, the retail sector—although, interestingly, we saw figures today that saw the South Australian retail sector I think outperforming elements of the national retail sector; but, nevertheless, they are in a relatively weak state. But to extrapolate from one component in the economy that somehow the South Australian economy is in recession—we simply don't share that view.

It ceases to pass the common-sense test, Madam Speaker. What we have in this state is an unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent—near historically low levels. That is not consistent—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That is not consistent with a recession. We also have in the CBD, in terms of commercial construction, 13 tower cranes in the city, which has not been seen—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —for decades in this state. We know that that work will continue and be enhanced with the coming online of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital, and also the Adelaide Oval, and of course the expansion of the Olympic Dam project. But there are alternative points of view that have been expressed recently, which need to be balanced with those that the opposition cite. They, of course, choose to cite the least favourable constructions on the South Australian economy, and BIS Shrapnel—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —just today, Madam Speaker—they conveniently left this out of their recitation because it didn't suit their case, but BIS Shrapnel today released a report forecasting a doubling in civil construction activity between 2011-12 and 2014-15, which will remain elevated for several years as work progresses in stages on the Olympic Dam expansion. Now, Madam Speaker—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Leader of the Opposition, you asked a question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Madam Speaker, can I conclude with this: they have been fond of citing various commentators; I would have thought that they would have paid more attention to what the federal shadow treasurer said on Adelaide radio just last week. He said these words:

The growth opportunities here in South Australia that I see as an outsider is, that you've got an outstanding quality of life. I think you've got excellent educational opportunities and I'd really like, personally I'd love to see South Australia become the education hub for Asia...that is something that a lot of people have talked about over the years...there's great opportunity.

I share in the views of the federal shadow treasurer, Joe Hockey—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —when he expresses great confidence in the South Australian economy.

OBESITY PREVENTION AND LIFESTYLE PROGRAM

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (14:15): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Can the minister advise the house how the Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle program is encouraging greater physical activity amongst school students?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (14:15): I thank the member for Florey for this important question. I also note that there was an interesting article in the press today about new National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines in relation to issues to do with obesity management, I can assure members that the program that we are funding in South Australia with state and commonwealth money—OPAL—is on the mark in terms of those guidelines, as I read them.

The newest theme for our OPAL program is encouraging South Australian school students to 'think feet first' and step, cycle or scoot to school. Every 12 months OPAL introduces a new healthy lifestyle message to the community to encourage children and their parents to live healthier lifestyles. Since the 1970s, the rate of active travel in Australia has declined significantly.

Less than 20 per cent of young people walk to school these days compared to almost 55 per cent in 1970. When asked, most children do want to walk, cycle or scoot to school. In the same period, cycling to school decreased from 7.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent and car travel increased from 14 per cent to 55 per cent.

An international study of six to nine year olds found that Australians had lower levels of walking and cycling and higher levels of car travel than children in Canada and Sweden, despite having a better climate for active travel. Children who walk, cycle or scoot to school are 30 per cent more likely to actively travel to other destinations in their neighbourhood as well. This is obviously not only good for their health but leads to a more vibrant and connected community.

Children who actively travel to school also have higher levels of physical activity and improved fitness compared to those who have sedentary forms of transport. In relation to the perceived risks, data indicates that an Australian child is nearly twice as likely to be killed as a car passenger than as a pedestrian and more than four times as likely to be killed as a car passenger than as a cyclist.

Children should be active every day for at least 60 minutes. Walking, scooting or cycling to school increases physical, mental and social health, helps maintain healthy weight and establishes healthy habits for a lifetime. Active travel to school also gives parents a chance to spend more quality time with their children and to get some exercise themselves.

I would encourage all members, through their community newsletters and other fora, to promote this message in their communities and help get more families choosing active travel in their neighbourhoods. If members would like information to support them doing that, I would be happy to have my office provide it to them.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): My question is again to the Minister for Finance. If South Australia is not in recession, why are building approval figures at 11-year lows, property sales figures at 27-year lows, retail sales figures the worst in the nation and fewer people in full-time employment than there were when your government promised 100,000 new jobs?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:18): Can I supply to the house some other material which gives an entirely different perspective about the South Australian economy. Those opposite obviously seek to scrounge around for all of the material that they can find to talk down the South Australian economy.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We know from the most recent published data in relation to gross state product that the South Australian economy grew by a solid 2.4 per cent in 2010-11. They are the most recent gross state product figures, and that was above the economic growth rate of the national average, which was 2.1 per cent. They are the last published figures. The next gross state product figures will be published later this year and we will compare them with last year. That is the present state of play and what we know about the growth of our state economy. I am sure you can find some areas of the economy that will be performing more strongly than others, but to selectively choose those areas of the economy which are not growing strongly—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —and ignore others that are growing strongly—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —creates an entirely inappropriate picture of the South Australian economy. So, I simply supply some additional material which will allow the house to put what has just been said in context and it is this: overall new business investment in South Australia rose by 4.3 per cent in the December quarter 2011; the state's unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent is down from 5.5 per cent a year ago. So, it has come down from a year ago—not gone up, gone down from a year ago.

Spending on mining and petroleum exploration increased by 57 per cent through the year to September 2011 and, in trend terms, compared with national growth of 45 per cent during the same period—so higher than national trend growth over the same period in respect of spending on mineral and petroleum exploration. What could be a stronger indicator of the health of the economy for the future? South Australian crop production, the very numbers that are not included in state final demand—

An honourable member: Yes, it rained.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I'm sorry, we actually regard grain as part of the economy.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The South Australian crop production in 2011-12 looks likely to be the third highest on record, following the record crop in 2010-11. Is it not worthy to mention these things and create a complete picture of the economy, rather than seeking to choose those things which create a false impression of the South Australian economy? There is a record

total of \$109 billion worth of major projects occurring or in the planning stage in this state and the state government is, obviously, undertaking the very substantial capital works that I referred to before.

What would be the motivation of those opposite to actually talk down the South Australian economy in this way? Why would they choose—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —to do that? All of this material was canvassed a few weeks ago. What would be the motivation in returning to it, except calculating to reduce confidence in the South Australian economy? Why would you do that? Why would you actually do that? There is no new information in the public sphere. This is precisely the way they do their business: they wake up in the morning, they read the paper and then they tell us all what it means. Well, we can read.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WILLIAMS: Point of order, Madam Speaker. The Premier is now debating the answer to the question.

The SPEAKER: Thank you for that, Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I think the Premier has finished his answer. The member for Light.

EASTER ROAD SAFETY

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Road Safety. In the lead-up to the Easter long weekend, can the minister outline what actions will be taken to keep people safe on our roads?

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) (14:22): The Easter holiday period is often a treasured time with our families and one we all expect to enjoy without incident. With a bit of forward planning, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from becoming another road safety statistic over the long weekend.

Today, I visited SAPOL's vehicle compound for cars that have been involved in horrific accidents. I think everyone who was present today would agree that it was incredibly confronting to see mangled vehicles in which someone had lost their life. I was joined by members of the South Australian police force, the Metropolitan Fire Service and the Country Fire Service to make a plea to all motorists this weekend to drive like their families' lives depend on it and to give our hardworking emergency services a break this Easter so that they, too, can spend time with their families over the Easter break.

The Country Fire Service attends around 1,000 road crashes every year—about 1,000 last year. This a volunteer service, so people are being pulled away from their own family celebrations, rescuing injured people and retrieving bodies from cars. For the Metropolitan Fire Service, it was around 4,000 crashes.

Today, Mr Chad Campbell spoke. He witnessed his father pass away following a crash on a country road after a family holiday. He bravely spoke to the media about the impact this had on his family and told me how heart wrenching it was to hear his little boy on special occasions say, 'I wish poppa were here.' Sadly, these experiences have been shared by the friends and families of the 103 people who died on our roads in 2011 and the 25 who have died so far this year. This Easter, police will be using all available resources in the hope of preventing a repeat of the tragic Easter break in 2005 when seven lives were lost.

We all enjoy hopping in the car and heading off on a weekend adventure. Drivers need to think of their holidays as starting once they arrive. Their responsibility is to get there safely. Their holiday is over once they hop in the car to come home. This March a total of 10 people have died on country roads, and 75 per cent these crashes have been attributed to fatigue. I urge people: plan your trip, take breaks and be patient.

Police will crack down on the non-use of seatbelts over the long weekend. It defies belief that in 2011, after years and years of campaigns warning people about the dangers of not wearing a seatbelt, 30 per cent of those who died in road crashes last year were not wearing a seatbelt. There is no excuse for speeding. There is no excuse to drive with alcohol or drugs in your system, and there is no excuse not to wear a seatbelt. People need to be mindful that in the flick of a eye a little bit of inattention can change their lives and that of their family forever. Mr Campbell's story indicates the true cost of road trauma. Our South Australian police will be out in force this weekend. Motorists need to take care.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Finance. Will the minister confirm that the GST revenue growth has exceeded South Australia's economic growth in nine out of the last 10 years and that the state government has also budgeted for this to occur in each of the next four years?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:27): Thank you, Madam—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can I just also add for the interest of the house that we have had an opportunity to communicate with Mr Bill Evans, who, I think, is relied on by those opposite. He in fact confirms that he didn't say South Australia was in a recession. He said that state final demand contracted in two quarters and that some people might refer to this as a recession rather than wait for the gross state product data.

So quick are they to seize on any piece of bad news that they have been embarrassed talking down the state. This is consistently the position of those opposite. They are more interested in getting a quick political point—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. I.F. EVANS: Point of order. Standing order 98: relevance. The question actually was about whether the government could confirm that the GST revenue growth has exceeded South Australia's economic growth in nine out of the last 10 years and that the government has also budgeted for this to occur in the next four years. That was the question, and the Premier is going nowhere near it.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Premier, I would ask you to return to the substance of the question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am happy to do that, Madam Speaker. I just thought I might—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —illuminate the house with some relevant material to an earlier question. Obviously, the question of our forecasts about future GST growth will depend on material that we get from the commonwealth. We will be making—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: We will be illuminating all of that at the time when we receive that information—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: —from the commonwealth. And, of course, the responses that we need to make will be published in our state budget when that becomes a reality.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (14:29): Supplementary question: given the Premier's attempt to answer the question, was Treasurer Snelling correct when he told media, as reported this morning, that the GST revenue growth had not kept pace with economic growth?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (14:29): I have not seen Mr Snelling's reported remarks. I have not had—

The Hon. I.F. Evans interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Davenport! The Minister for Transport.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The opposition has taken two points of order on orderly proceedings and will not stop interjecting. Their behaviour is out of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The member for Norwood seems to know something about everything, which I doubt.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Unley, behave! Order!

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey, order! Premier.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not aware of the precise remarks that minister Snelling was making and I do not know whether he was accurately reported, but what I can say is this—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I don't know whether you are accurately recounting what was said and I don't know what he said to the relevant journalist, but I do know the sentiment that he was expressing, and it is simply this. The rate of taxation, the grants that we receive through GST from the commonwealth, especially in the current circumstances where we have a dip in spending, do not keep pace with the sorts of commitments that we as a state government have to our community. We have a continuing obligation to meet the healthcare needs, the hospital needs, the police needs—

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Norwood, you will leave the chamber for 10 minutes.

The honourable member for Norwood having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The burden of his remarks were directed at this proposition. We rely very substantially on a couple of sources of taxation. One of them, of course, is property transactions, and we know that property transactions have fallen dramatically. The other is commonwealth grants, a substantial proportion of which comprises GST. Of course, GST is a taxation regime based on consumption expenditure and consumption expenditure has dramatically fallen and is not keeping pace with the sorts of obligations that we have as a state government to meet the needs of the community. I understand that is the sense in which the Treasurer was communicating. He was raising the question that our obligations—

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will leave the chamber for 10 minutes.

The honourable member for Heysen having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: I am trying to give information to the house, Madam Speaker, which I think is important. Our obligations as a state continue. They are not removed,

reduced or mitigated just because a funding source from the federal government takes a dive. That is the burden of what he is suggesting. We have a very substantial ongoing set of obligations to provide services to our community but we have not had commonwealth revenues that have kept pace with that through the GST, and we have seen a very dramatic change in those circumstances recently. That is the burden of the proposition that the Treasurer I think sought to communicate. I do not know precisely what he said but I know that is the sentiment that we certainly share.

CHILD-FRIENDLY ADELAIDE

Mrs VLAHOS (Taylor) (14:33): My question is to the Minister for Education and Child Development. Can the minister inform the house what steps are being taken to engage young people in having a say about the planning of the built environment of Adelaide and to help build upon a reputation of Adelaide as a liveable city that supports children and families?

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Education and Child Development) (14:33): I thank the member for Taylor for this important question. I know that this is a policy area that occupies a great deal of her time so I am very pleased to have this opportunity to address this question. The idea of a city that is supportive of children makes a great deal of sense for us, both from the point of view of attracting children and families to live in Adelaide and from a long-term social and economic perspective. That is why I was very pleased, just recently, to open and address a forum whose subject was, in fact, promoting a child-friendly Adelaide.

The idea of a child-friendly environment suggests we have things such as creative playgrounds, safe walking trails to school, public art works that invite children to explore and enjoy the community around them and, of course it goes without saying, very good access to services like health and education. We in the state government recognise this, which is why we are bringing together a number of services, and then together joining them with, of course, our children's centres; and can I say what a fantastic job our children's centres are doing.

It is important in this debate that we do look beyond the traditional child-oriented areas if we are to promote and develop a child-friendly Adelaide. The idea of the forum—which I understand was very successful—is to connect the experts with children to look at how we might best include child and youth-friendly principles in Adelaide's planning and development processes. I am very pleased that a number of local government areas are directly involved, and I was very pleased to see a number of mayors attending the forum. In fact, one of my own councils, the Campbelltown council, deserves a huge round of applause, which in fact has a children's plan, I think it is (I cannot remember the proper title for it), but that council is at the forefront of engaging in this area.

There was also great support from schools on the day, including contributions from children from Sturt Street Community School where, in fact, the member for Taylor's children attend—and my own child attended that childcare centre—and Gilles Street Primary School. This approach is in line with this government's priority of investing in children in the early years because that is a time when we can make a long-term difference if we are prepared to encourage creative children and engage with them. I cannot commend this work enough.

CARBON TAX

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy. By how much will the carbon tax increase the electricity bill of the average household in South Australia? The Queensland Competition Authority has calculated that Queenslanders will have \$192 a year built into their electricity bills because of the carbon tax.

The SPEAKER: Order! There was an assumption there that the carbon tax will increase electricity bills; however, the Minister for Trade.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:37): The commonwealth has modelled—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: —a household's average weekly expenditure to increase by \$9.90 due to the carbon price, which includes a 10 per cent increase in the average electricity prices (or \$3.30 per week) and a 9 per cent increase in gas (\$1.50 per week). However, the assistance is modelled to be at \$10.10 per week on average. A \$15 billion assistance package has

been announced for households, with nine out of 10 (around eight million) households receiving assistance through pension increases, tax cuts and increased family benefits—benefits that members opposite oppose.

For two-thirds of households this will be sufficient to cover the entire average price impact. The South Australian government is committed to facilitating a competitive retail energy market, whilst at the same time consumers can be assured that there are sufficient protections for those customers who remain under the standing contract. It is essential that any price rises are fully justified, and accordingly ESCOSA retains responsibility for regulating the retail component of electricity standing contracts for AGL and gas standing contracts for Origin.

Standing contract prices are charged to small residential and business customers who choose not to move onto a market contract. I will say that the \$15 billion assistance package is something that every single member opposite opposes.

Mr WILLIAMS: Madam Speaker, can I seek a point of clarification? You told the house yesterday that questions will be in order and answers will relate to the substance of the question. We have now asked four questions, and I do not think that one answer has been relevant to the question put. The specific question then was: what is going to be the increase in electricity prices in South Australia? We had the question before about the GST.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. This is not an opportunity to make a statement. Sit down.

Mr WILLIAMS: Madam Speaker, we are not getting answers to the questions.

The SPEAKER: Order! The ministers can choose to answer as they choose. I cannot force them to answer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Statement. I said—

The SPEAKER: But I am sure that listening, from what I can hear, minister—

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Madam Speaker, I said that the commonwealth has modelled that a household's average weekly expenditure is estimated to increase by \$9.90. I went on to say—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Unley, order! I cannot hear the minister.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Madam Speaker, I also said that the average household's weekly expenditure is estimated to increase by \$9.90 due to the carbon price, which includes a 10 per cent increase in the average electricity prices, or \$3.30 per week, and a 9 per cent increase for gas, or \$1.50 per week. I went on to say, however, the assistance is modelled to be \$10.10 per week on average—a \$15 billion assistance package. I answered the question immediately. You are just not paying attention.

SERVICE SA

Dr CLOSE (Port Adelaide) (14:40): My question is to Minister for the Public Sector. Can the minister inform the house about the performance of the Service SA customer contact centre?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for the Public Sector) (14:40): Yes, I could have done the GST one as well. I thank the member for Port Adelaide for the question. Service SA customer contact centres provide important facilities to people across South Australia such as motor vehicle registrations and driver's licences. For the nine months to March 2012, the state's customer contact centres received 798,790 calls compared with 694,937 for the same period in 2010-11. Overall, Service SA manages around 1.3 million calls, faxes and emails each year.

I am pleased to inform members that service has improved, with performance targets for answering having lifted to 90 per cent for answering calls within five minutes, as from February of this year. Members may be interested to know that this particular service is provided by 65 full-time

equivalent staff employed in the CBD, metropolitan and regional locations. The opposition would be particularly interested in what I have to say about the way that we are using our regional locations.

In addition, some staff in metropolitan and regional customer service centres have been trained to provide telephone call centre services so that the workforce is more flexible across the network. Metropolitan and regional staff are increasingly multiskilled, translating into a back room operator also being equipped to provide front counter telephone services when needed which helps balance volume loads when high volumes occur.

The registration and licensing number, which is 13 10 84, allows for incoming calls to be directed to the closest local service centre. If someone is calling from a regional location, the call will automatically be directed to the closest customer service centre to be dealt with by a trained contact centre service member. By way of example, if somebody is ringing from the bottom of Eyre Peninsula, the call would automatically be allocated to the Port Lincoln office. However, if the call volumes for that regional centre are high, the call is redirected to another location after three minutes' waiting time. The reverse occurs when there is a high demand in the Adelaide contact centre with calls diverting to regional and other locations as overflows occur.

What we have done is set it up so that regional centres will take the overflow of metropolitan calls to our major call centre in the CBD. Having these staff and positions available in the regions offers employment and development opportunities that may not otherwise be accessible. Regional service centres are based in Berri, Gawler, Kadina, Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Murray Bridge, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln and Whyalla. I think this is a tremendous example of a decentralised service delivery model giving greater employment opportunities in regional South Australia.

The improved performance results have also been achieved by using virtual technology and real-time workforce planning tools. This means that staff can be switched between counter work, helping on the phones or providing back-of-house service as customer volumes require. Service SA call centre technology enables staff to view queue status and their own performance at any stage during the day. This promotes a high degree of self-management.

Managers and team leaders have a dashboard of statistics in coloured graphics that show their individual team performances. The central workforce planning team uses the dashboard to check call volumes across all call centres and teams to balance consumer demands very quickly. Service SA is continuing to develop this particular—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Thank you, minister. Your time has expired. Member for Bragg.

BUS TIMETABLES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (14:44): My question is to the Minister for Transport Services. Given the Minister for Transport's admission yesterday that the government sets bus timetables, will the Minister for Transport Services immediately—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! Point of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Minister for Transport, point of order.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: To phrase a question as a minister's 'admission' is to argue. I answered a question yesterday; I admitted to nothing.

Ms CHAPMAN: I'll rephrase that.

The SPEAKER: Thank you. Rephrase it.

Ms CHAPMAN: Given the Minister for Transport's confession yesterday that—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the member for Bragg not to be provocative. If you ask a political question you will get a political answer. Would you just use the word 'statement'.

Ms CHAPMAN: —that the government sets the bus timetables, will the Minister for Transport Services immediately amend the bus timetables to create certainty for people who catch

our buses? The minister stated yesterday that she would be waiting until July to amend bus timetables. The current timetables are clearly not practical and cannot be met, resulting in unpredictable waiting times for the commuters.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! That was a—

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Again, it's a comment: 'clearly not practical'.

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Explanations are to explain the question, not to make a political statement.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has a lot of time I can attempt to explain it to him.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Transport Services.

The Hon. C.C. FOX (Bright—Minister for Transport Services) (14:46): I thank the member for Bragg for this question. We are working towards timetable changes that will occur in July. Those changes cannot be made overnight. We have received submissions from all of the three contractors about what they think would be a good outcome in terms of timetabling. We are looking at the 20 worst performing routes to see how best they can be fixed. Timetabling is not something where you just wave a wand and fix it, it involves serious mathematical equations—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pisoni: Get Einstein to do it for you!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Pederick: The buses worked in '78!

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Hammond! You will leave the chamber for 15 minutes.

The honourable member for Hammond having withdrawn from the chamber:

The SPEAKER: Minister.

The Hon. C.C. FOX: As I was saying, timetabling is a complicated process. There are various mathematical equations involved. As I said, there are submissions from the three contractors. We have timetable changes or service changes every six months. We are working as quickly as we can within those parameters to get these timetables changed and we have made it very clear that we have a commitment to doing so.

BUS TIMETABLES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (14:47): A supplementary: in the event that you are able to achieve that earlier than July will you do so or are you bound by the current contracts and required to undertake those timetables until July?

The Hon. C.C. FOX (Bright—Minister for Transport Services) (14:48): There seems to be a bit of hypothetical comment in there: 'in the event that'. As I said in my previous answer to the member for Bragg, we are working towards the 1 July date now. That date will not be moving forwards; it will not be moving backwards.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Ramsay.

COORONG, LOWER LAKES AND MURRAY MOUTH REGION

Ms BETTISON (Ramsay) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation. To what extent is community knowledge in the Coorong, Lower

Lakes and Murray Mouth region being used to guide the implementation and planning of projects in the region?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (14:48): I thank the honourable member for her very important question. The government is committed to ensuring that local communities in the Coorong, the Lower Lakes and the Murray Mouth region remain central in the planning and implementation of projects aimed at restoring and maintaining the health of these precious environments. In fact, it is safe to say that over several years (especially during the drought) we relied a great deal on the understanding of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about this particular area.

The community played a critical role in the development of the long-term plan for the region. Today there are hundreds of people from the region directly involved in drought recovery activities and programs aimed at building environmental resilience, such as through the planting and monitoring projects I have referred to before in this place. The contribution of knowledge and advice through communities has also been significant in the implementation of The Living Murray program, for example, in the rollout of the Icon Site Environmental Water Management Plan. Local representative groups and committees are making ongoing contributions to the shaping and running of numerous other environmental and water-related projects that are being led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department for Water—contributions that are welcomed.

As many of the projects begin to change their focus from drought recovery to work aimed at building long-term resilience in the region, we have been presented with an excellent opportunity to bring together that community wisdom and practical know-how in the shape of a Community Advisory Panel, which will provide guidance on government-led projects in the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth area.

The panel members under the leadership of the Chair, Bill Paterson, bring with them a wide range of knowledge and skills, and I am confident this will enhance not only the quality of the work undertaken but also the coordination across projects. The inaugural meeting of the Community Advisory Panel was held on Monday of this week and I had the pleasure of attending that meeting. On behalf of the government, I thank the members of the panel, as I am sure the house does, and the participants who support them, for their commitment to taking action that will generate benefits for their region and, in fact, benefits for all South Australians.

CARBON TAX

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (14:51): My question again is to the Minister for Transport Services. Has the minister received advice on the cost impact of Labor's carbon tax on public transport and, if so, what will the cost be? Under the carbon tax, rail transport will be affected from 1 July this year, and modelling provided by the Victorian government shows the impact on their public transport system will be \$13 million per year through increased electricity costs, and modelling from the New South Wales government shows that they will need to increase fares to cover the increased cost of services.

The Hon. C.C. FOX (Bright—Minister for Transport Services) (14:51): I thank the member for Bragg for this question. The member for Bragg has quoted figures which have been provided by the New South Wales government and by the Victorian government. These are figures which I have not seen, and I am not prepared to make any comment as to them.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WILLIAMS: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: the question was about the cost impact here in South Australia. The explanation was just to point out that other states are doing some work to work out what the impact is, and we still don't get an answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I presume you are talking about standing order 98. Minister, have you finished your answer?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: On a point of order—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Is it the position of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the explanation wasn't relevant?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

CARBON TAX

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg) (14:52): Given the minister has refused to give any answer on whether she has had advice or not, my question to the minister as a supplementary is, are you ever going to ask any questions about whether the carbon tax has an effect on public transport?

The SPEAKER: Member for Bragg, thank you. I rule that question out of order.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Science and Information Economy. Can the minister inform the house about what is being done to help keep intellectual property rights in South Australia?

The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy, Minister for Recreation and Sport) (14:53): This government is committed to providing support to ensure that the growth of innovation and knowledge-based enterprises in South Australia. Intellectual property protection and commercialisation strategies are fundamental to achieving this outcome. I am pleased to advise the house today that the state government is funding a new \$1 million initiative over three years to help South Australia's three main universities seek patent protection for their intellectual property.

Funding through BioSA will provide grants to the commercialisation offices at the three universities: Adelaide Research and Innovation at the University of Adelaide; ITEK at the University of South Australia; and Flinders Partners at Flinders University. These grants will enable these institutions to better protect intellectual property generated by researchers, assisting them to capture and protect emerging technologies generated by their research. It also aims to promote the proactive filing of patent applications and reduce the financial risk in intellectual property protection. This will allow more local innovations to be driven towards successful commercial outcomes here in South Australia, rather than other states or countries reaping the benefits of our local research.

Successful intellectual property protection and commercialisation strategies have the ability to significantly add value to and further build our bioscience industry. This industry has grown significantly since BioSA was established, recording strong employment growth from around 800 to 1,700. In the past 10 years, BioSA has provided \$32 million in project grants and this, in turn, has leveraged around \$300 million in additional funding.

There is no doubt that building an advanced manufacturing sector capable of competing internationally through innovation and excellence is critically important to driving productivity across the whole economy. This initiative lines up well with the state government's manufacturing green paper released last month, which is an important step towards achieving growth of innovation and knowledge-based enterprises in South Australia.

MODBURY GP PLUS SUPER CLINIC

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for Health. Is the Modbury GP Plus Super Clinic still offering full medical services following the withdrawal of the company contracted to provide GP services at this clinic and, if not, when will full services resume? The minister recently announced that this clinic will soon be without permanent GPs until the state government can source a new provider. The opposition has received from the public that patients are being told that, from next Tuesday, there will be only one doctor working at the clinic, and the clinic will only offer GP appointments in the afternoon.

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (14:56): I thank the member for—

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the—sorry?

Mrs Redmond: I said it's a GP minus, instead of a GP Plus.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I thank the member for his question. As this was a matter in the media a week or so ago, I could perhaps provide some of the background. The commonwealth government, through the super clinic arrangements, imposes on those who sign up to them certain arrangements, certain requirements. They differ from what we as a state would do in our GP Plus centres. In our GP Plus centres we reach agreement with the local doctors about how we should provide GP services, and we have been able to do that successfully at Elizabeth, Aldinga, Woodville and Marion; a different arrangement in each place but, on each occasion, providing service which the communities need.

The commonwealth government, through its arrangements, has said that there ought to be a traditional, if you like, GP clinic placed in the super clinics through the GP Plus Super Clinic at Modbury, and also the one at Noarlunga; we were obliged to sign up to this agreement. We tried to make it work at Modbury, and we entered into agreement with a company called GP Solutions, which provides GP services for us at a range of locations. They found that it did not work for them commercially, and that contract was coming to an end, and I am not sure whether it has already happened—it's probably the end of this week, in fact.

We have said that we would provide interim arrangements, locum services, while we went to the marketplace to see what other providers of services were out there. I am advised by my agency that there are a number of interested parties who now want to be engaged in providing services there. I have also said to my agency, 'Let's think about, in a stronger way, what the communities—and that includes the local GPs—would want to see,' and I have made representations to the commonwealth about varying the contractual arrangements we have with them so that we can get a system in place that makes sense to that local community. Our undertaking is to ensure that there are GP services there.

Can I say that, since the service has been open—which is about a year now—more than 7,500 patients have been seen by the GPs, so it is clearly providing a valuable service, and more than 3,000 patients also use the public allied health services in the clinic. So, we are at a transition stage between what was tried, and we are now looking at what will work better.

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER

Mr SIBBONS (Mitchell) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Small Business. Can the Minister for Small Business inform the house about the Office of the Small Business Commissioner mediation panel?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:59): I thank the member for his question and his keen interest in the Small Business Commissioner. The Office of the Small Business Commissioner is now up and running and, to assist with mediation between business disputes, a panel of specialist mediators has been appointed. The open public tender for the services opened on 21 November 2011 and closed on 21 December 2011. Seven applications were received and reviewed by the mediation selection panel which consisted of members from DMITRE, the Office of the Small Business Commissioner and the Courts Administration Authority. The tender panel deliberated within the approved DMITRE Accredited Procurement Unit framework.

Six shortlisted applicants were invited to an interview to discuss aspects of their tender. The panel report was then submitted to the Accredited Procurement Unit chair for consideration. I am pleased to announce to the house the successful panel members for the initial panel of external mediators for the Office of the Small Business Commissioner. They are Beckmann & Associates, Ian Nosworthy of Nosworthy Partners, SG Law Pty Ltd and Stella Personnel Pty Ltd.

Mediation will cost \$195 per party, per session. It is worth noting that the commissioner's office will endeavour to resolve disputes before formal mediation is called upon. This will involve investigating claims by businesses, educating businesses on their responsibilities and other powers assigned to the commission under the act.

The Office of the Small Business Commissioner has been very active since opening. In fact, I am advised that the Small Business Commissioner and his team actually resolved a dispute between two businesses on their very first day of operations without the need for formal mediation. I encourage all members to inform their business constituents about this new office and I again call upon the opposition to finally admit that they got it wrong and throw their full support behind the Small Business Commissioner. People can call 1800 072 722 or visit www.sasbc.sa.gov.au.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

MEDICARE BILLING

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (15:01): My question is again to the Minister for Health. Is the practice of using the Medicare provider numbers of state government salaried doctors for treatment of patients at public hospitals as private patients, with confluent charges to Medicare, including arrangements for the donation of any portion of private income earned by those doctors, voluntary or is it mandated?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (15:02): I thank the member for his question. It raises the issues that he raised yesterday, and in fact I had prepared a ministerial statement which I was going to give at the end of question time which goes through this. I can either do it now or you can wait until the end of question time.

Mr Hamilton-Smith: Do it at the end. Well, no, I want an answer to that question.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I think it covers all of the issues, so I will take it on notice.

Mr Hamilton-Smith: Is it voluntary or mandated?

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I heard the question. If I do not cover what you want to be covered, I will come back with even more information. I think it covers it.

The SPEAKER: Member for Waite, did you have another question or was it related to that?

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH: Madam Speaker, I would actually like an answer to the question now, if I may.

The Hon. J.D. HILL: I am happy to provide the information. As I said yesterday, I would try and get back information. This is a complex set of issues and they cover a range of issues so I will do my best to go through it. Rights of private practice is a longstanding arrangement enabling salaried medical officers to see patients privately within the public hospital system. It has been in place since the 1980s in South Australia and is also conducted extensively throughout Australia. The practice is officially recognised by the commonwealth in the National Health Reform Agreement which explicitly provides for a patient at a public hospital to have the choice to be seen or admitted as a private patient. It requires patients making a private choice to have made an informed financial consent.

The South Australian health policy directive around outpatient billing practices—which gets to the point—released in November last year is drawn from and reflects the business rules and the current National Health Reform Agreement and the relevant parts of the Medicare Benefits Schedule. As I said yesterday, the directive provides clarity of the requirements to medical officers and administrators.

Under the Salaried Medical Officers Enterprise Agreement 2008, doctors are entitled to retain the income from their private billings up to a defined ceiling (minus a 9 per cent administrative and indemnity fee) according to their specialty. Anaesthetists, for example, can retain up to 45 per cent of their base salary; intensive care unit consultants, up to 35 per cent; rehab consultants, up to 20 per cent; and other consultants, up to 65 per cent. Emergency medicine consultants and paediatric emergency consultants are not eligible for private practice.

A salaried medical officer has the option to choose a higher ceiling scheme (known as Scheme Two Option B) but forgoes their salary based attraction and retention allowance. Under this option, the doctor receives a further third of billing receipts above 65 per cent, up to 100 per cent of base salary, plus a further 15 per cent of receipts above 100 per cent of base salary.

Each participating doctor enters into a memorandum of agreement stipulating the terms and conditions of their private practice. The form and content of agreements was written by the Crown Solicitor's Office with full consultation and agreement with the Salaried Medical Officers Association. It is only after a doctor has reached their income ceiling that they are required to pay excess earnings into hospital funds. Some doctors reach their ceiling, some don't. The amounts paid to the funds are consideration for the use of hospital facilities to perform their private practice.

In the 2010-11 financial year, total doctors' billing receipts from private practice were \$75 million of which they retained \$43.5 million, with \$24.4 million paid by doctors to hospital specific funds and \$7.1 million paid for indemnity insurance and administrative services. These figures represent the total private practice including hospital inpatients and outpatients and compensable patients.

The funds are held at each hospital site and established under local arrangements. There are numerous funds. They are usually overseen by a committee whose membership includes the participating doctors and hospital administration. The amounts paid by doctors into the funds and which funds are utilised in each case are according to the doctor's individual private practice agreements. Amounts are only paid to the funds where the doctor has performed sufficient billing to exceed their own income entitlement.

There are usually terms of reference that specify what the funds are to be used for. As a broad generalisation, they may be used to fund medical research, professional development, education and training, improvement to equipment and other expenditure that helps the hospital provide better service to patients. These arrangements have been ruled upon by the commonwealth Commissioner of Taxation in public rulings CR2006/24 and CR2008/65. As I mentioned yesterday, transparent financial records are provided to doctors so they can properly declare their income and deductions in their tax returns.

SASMOA has supported the continued conduct of private practice through the enterprise and private practice agreements they have entered into on behalf of their members. I am advised that advice is sought from time to time with the association and is satisfactorily resolved by the department in most cases. There have been very few issues raised in recent times.

To an extent, that is very complicated, but I wanted to get it in a thorough form. I will have a look at what the member asked me again and, if I have left anything out, I will get back to him. My understanding is that doctors have choices about what they do and it is not mandated.

MEDICARE BILLING

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (15:06): I have a supplementary question. If, given the minister's answer, the doctors have choices and it is not mandated, why is the policy directive prepared by the department's finance and administration division and approved on 17 November 2001, titled 'Medicare billing for private non-admitted patients in SA Health local health network outpatients clinics', stamped 'compliance is mandatory'? If it is voluntary, why is it stamped 'compliance is mandatory'?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (15:07): Obviously, our policy is mandatory on the department but that policy might contain an option and the option could have a range of possibilities. So, the policy is a mandatory policy and compliance with that policy is mandatory for the department. It does not mean an individual officer is obliged to do a particular part. As I say, I am happy to have another look at it and get back to you.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (15:07): My question is again to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Who is really responsible for the Auditor-General's inability to report on the Department of Health? Is it the Auditor-General or the minister? In his statement to the house in the last week of sitting, the minister said that delays have been caused by 'change in audit methodology' by the Auditor-General, but the Auditor-General told parliament in October last year that the failure of the minister's agency to provide proper financial reports and information is the cause of the delay. The Auditor-General stated that, accordingly, audit determined that the financial report for the Department of Health for the year ending 30 June 2011 cannot be concluded until the audits of the financial reports of the health regions and services are finalised. Which version is factual?

The Hon. J.D. HILL (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts) (15:08): As I have explained to the house, I think, on at least two other occasions, the Auditor-General changed the way in which he considered the health department and the health regions' accounts. In the past, the health department, which is a separate entity from an audit point of view from the health regions or the hospitals, would put in its report and that would be audited separately and, subsequently, the health regions would then be audited. This time, the Auditor-General decided to audit them as one

lot. That is certainly within his remit and he made that decision. I have no criticism of him for doing it, but it was a changed practice which he undertook and we will obviously try in future to comply with the arrangements that he wants.

The SPEAKER: Question time is finished. I am sorry, members, there was some disturbance during that question time, but it is okay. There was an accident in the building; someone was hurt, but it is alright. The house will note grievances. The member for Davenport.

GRIEVANCE DEBATE

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

The Hon. I.F. EVANS (Davenport) (15:10): There has been a lot of debate of late about the economic performance of the state. I will just make the point that this government has the same economic approach as premier John Bannon and the same budget approach as premier John Bannon. John Bannon used to run around saying, 'Don't worry about the economy. Everything's fine; look at the number of cranes.' That is exactly the same process that the current Premier and, indeed, the current Treasurer are going through. I just make the point to the Premier that the famous economist was John Maynard Keynes, not John Maynard Cranes.

We also have exactly the same problem with their budget management. It was the John Bannon government that was running budget deficits of around \$350 million a year, and it is this government that is running budget deficits of \$350 million a year—so exactly the same approach. Let's have a look at the economic performance of the state: the figures speak for themselves.

The reality is that over the last weeks there have been numerous economic reports released, most of them bad news for the state. South Australia has the worst economic growth—the nation's worst economic growth, the nation's worst business confidence, the nation's worst business confidence, the nation's worst retail figures, and the nation's worst housing finance commitments.

If you look at the issues in relation to the building industry in particular, we have the worst building approvals in 11 years, we have the lowest quarterly dwelling commencements in 10 years, and we have the worst real estate sales figures in 27 years. There is a common thread running through all that. If you look at those industries that are doing it really tough—the real estate industry and housing industry in particular—they are the industries that are most hit by two of the most aggressive taxation regimes the government has: its land tax and its stamp duty regimes. In South Australia, this government applies those taxations at a higher rate—a much higher rate—than the Australian average.

The land tax charges in South Australia are applied at a value that is 40 per cent higher than the Australian average. Insurance duties are charged at 53 per cent above the Australian average, and stamp duties are charged at 27 per cent above the Australian average. It is no secret that you have the housing industry really struggling with low levels of approvals, low levels of housing finance, and you have the real estate industry struggling with the worst sales performance since 1985—the worst sales performance in 27 years. They are the two industries that are struggling under that very heavy tax regime. It is absolutely no coincidence at all that those two industries are struggling.

The government can spin it whichever way it wants. The reality is this government has been there 10 years. It is this government that has delivered this economic result. When you have economists out there talking about the state being in recession, of course the opposition is going to ask questions on it. Do they really want us to sit here like meek, mild mice and not ask questions about the state being in recession?

Even Bill Evans, in the amended response given to the Premier, says that when you have two quarters of negative growth some people call that a recession—even he admitted that, and I note the Minister for Finance nodding. The reality is that Bill Evans did not take the opportunity to say South Australia is not in a recession; he did not actually say that. He actually said, as the chief economist to Westpac, 'Some people say that when you have two consecutive quarters of negative growth, that's called a recession.'

Then, the Premier, of course, comes out and says, 'Oh, you don't include exports.' Well, he did put out a press release about exports. The reality is that in the September quarter and the December quarter South Australian exports also went backwards. So, let's be clear: for the September quarter to the December quarter state final demand went backwards and exports went

backwards as well. That is why some people in the community are saying the state is in a recession, and it is in a recession because this government has been there 10 years. We have the highest taxes in Australia, the worst WorkCover scheme in Australia and they are expecting businesses to compete on the international market with such high costs. They have the budget in May and they should use the budget to stimulate the economy and stimulate economic growth.

MURIEL MATTERS

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (15:15): This week marks the end of a special event here at Parliament House. For some months now, the Grille Exhibition has been on public display in Centre Hall, made possible through the generous loan of artefacts from the Museum of London. The exhibition has seen most of the historical items involved in the Grille Protest in the House of Commons on 28 October 1908 displayed together for the first time.

The protest centred on the actions of Bowden-born suffragist Muriel Lilah Matters and her associates from the Women's Freedom League, Helen Fox and Violet Tillard. As part of the campaign to put votes for women on the government's agenda, suffragists had protested outside Westminster whenever parliament was sitting. Women had rushed the house on many occasions, once getting almost as far as Central Lobby.

From that time on, women had to be escorted into the house or the Ladies Gallery. In the Ladies Gallery women were only afforded a peripheral vision of the chamber, obscuring their view of proceedings, and even the Prime Minister at the dispatch box. Women felt the brass grilles used to prevent not only them seeing into the chamber below but also MPs noting how many women were present and actively engaged in observing debates as offensive.

On the night in question, Miss Matters and Miss Fox were wearing thick leather belts under their clothing. Attached to the belts were heavy duty chains with which the women hoped to attach themselves to the grilles. Chaining was a popular suffragist tactic which would buy them time to voice their messages before authorities could detach them and move them on. So that the chains would not be heard rattling, the women wrapped them in woollen cloth, wound them around their waists and then hid them under their cloaks. Miss Tillard had a banner, A3 in size, wound up and concealed up her sleeve. All three women were taken to their seats in the gallery by an unsuspecting member of parliament.

Just after the dinner break, two gentlemen supporters took up their places on either side of the Strangers Gallery, ready to create a diversion to allow our hardy suffragists time to unwind their chains and attach themselves to the grille. When the first supporter stood up and shouted, 'Votes for women' and threw brochures onto the MPs below, he was soon set upon by chamber ushers. This was a signal for the women to spring into action.

As the first man was removed, the second followed suit, rising up to shout, 'Votes for women' and also throwing brochures onto the floor of the house. He suffered the same fate and, as he was dragged out, Miss Matters used her years of elocution training and acting experience to begin an oration on the reasons women should be enfranchised and the benefits that would flow. Miss Tillard lowered her proclamation banner, attached by string to bamboo sticks, to the Speaker's chair below.

As Miss Matters was eventually set upon by ushers, who soon discovered how difficult it was going to be to remove her, Miss Fox took over. Miss Tillard was not chained and was easily removed and put outside a back door. She returned to the protest in St Stephens, no doubt, to report progress from inside. Back upstairs in the Ladies Gallery, time was ticking by and Muriel was berating MPs for not giving women equal rights in voting, something she had already done twice before she left South Australia.

It was soon decided the fastest remedy was to remove the women while still attached to the grilles. By taking the grilles out of place, Muriel was technically placed on the floor of the house, thus making her speech that night the first by any woman in the House of Commons. The house's proceedings were eventually closed down, *Hansard* merely noting a disturbance, but no other detail.

After being taken to a nearby committee room, Muriel and Helen's chains were sawn through—and I presume they were able to undress in private to remove the belts, which were then confiscated by the Speaker, explaining their subsequent transfer to the Museum of London. The banner was held by the House of Lords archives, which also has the original police report. For our

exhibition these items have been copied by generous permission. A section of the grille, located after significant investigation, is on loan, with the generous permission again, from Westminster.

That night, Helen Fox vanished, never to be seen again, but Muriel and Violet were among the 14 women who were imprisoned in Holloway. Muriel's Women's Freedom League prison badge is also part of our exhibition.

On behalf of the Muriel Matters Society, I would like put on record our appreciation to Dr Mark Collins, Estate Curator at Westminster and Mrs Beverley Cook and Mr Nickos Gogolos from the Museum of London. We are also indebted to the Clerk of the House of Assembly and parliamentary staff who have provided tremendous assistance in mounting the exhibition.

Many thousands of people, including our Governor-General and our Governor, have marvelled at the exhibition and the powerful statement the artefacts make in telling the story of the struggle for votes, something which women rightly saw as the only way to help change things for the better. I put this on record to say to everyone how important voting is and that I hope members who have had the opportunity to show people the exhibition will take it as an opportunity to also explain the story behind the struggle for franchise and why our democracy remains such a shining example in the western world.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (15:19): Just before I make some comments about the issue of youth homelessness, particularly in relation to Easter, I want to commend the member for Florey for her work on the Muriel Matters display and inform the house that with us today were year 11 legal studies students from Charles Campbell College, as it is now, and they were most interested in the grille display, as are most school students who come through.

Easter is a time for spiritual reflection and it is a time for families and communities to come together, but for thousands of young people in our community in South Australia it is also a time of social alienation, isolation and unhappiness. Figures released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) showed that more than 45,000 young people across Australia aged between birth and 24 years were among the group seeking accommodation assistance in the September quarter.

To put that into context, that is one in five of the homeless people in Australia seeking help in the September quarter were children under the age of 10. In South Australia that equates to more than 4,500 young people up to the age of 24 seeking urgent housing assistance, and an alarming number of them are very, very young children indeed. Much of this problem is hidden from open sight as many vulnerable young people find themselves in inappropriate or risky accommodation—couch surfing their way through their friends' and acquaintances' homes, allowing themselves to be put into dangerous circumstances rather than getting the help that they need.

The issue of couch surfing is something that I was aware of when I was at university. It is something that often does not show up in the homeless figures because people are in accommodation of some sort even if only for a very brief period of time. They are not necessarily showing up in the figures because they are not actively seeking government support or an NGO support at the time, but they are often in vulnerable circumstances. They can be placed in risky situations. Some of them are there by the grace of their host, which may not be a long arrangement. In some circumstances people are there at the grace of a partner who they may not necessarily wish to be with but they feel like they are forced to.

I am looking at the AIHW report on government-funded specialist homelessness services, and I particularly note that for South Australia the figure of 4,900 was put forward in its 2009-10 figures (the 2011 figures for this one are not out yet as I understand), that is, 400 under the age of 15 years, 2,400 from 15 to 19 years and 2,100 from the ages of 20 to 24. This is again across all those categories—people who are couch surfing, people who are rough sleeping even, and that is very serious, especially at Easter.

This week the Service to Youth Council—which I think is a tremendous non-government, not-for-profit organisation and which does great work across Adelaide, but I know particularly in the northern suburbs, and I see the member for Little Para nodding—launched its new branding on its youth agency. It will be referred to as HYPVA, and it will support and assist over 4,000 young people each year to access and maintain safe and appropriate accommodation, to reconnect with families, school, employment and the community, and to address their offending behaviours in some cases.

HYPA Housing apartments offer young people stable accommodation for 12 months at a reduced market rate capped at 30 per cent of their income thereby allowing young tenants to establish a rent history (which many do not have), acquire furniture and gain independent living skills ensuring some stability to pursue a learning or employment pathway. When a young person completes their 12-month tenancy, the Service to Youth Council will work with the client so that they can make a successful transition to other accommodation options.

HYPA Housing is a stepping stone towards independent housing for young people, aged 17 to 25, who find it difficult to get into the rental market. It is affordable housing. It is fantastic work. I really commend the work that SYC are doing in the HYPA Housing project. I think it is terrific. With Easter coming, as families across South Australia are coming together and enjoying reflection, I urge everyone to remember those less fortunate and particularly commend those such as SYC through their HYPA Housing project who are helping the vulnerable at this time.

Time expired.

MAWSON LAKES ENVIRONMENT WATCH

Dr CLOSE (Port Adelaide) (15:25): I am delighted to inform the house about the excellent work being undertaken by the group Mawson Lakes Environment Watch. I was recently invited to meet this group and do a tour of their planting efforts. I look forward to going out and assisting at the next planting day.

Mawson Lakes Environment Watch is a great example of the kind of community group that springs up to make their local environment healthier and more beautiful. It is also an example of the strength and vibrancy of the Mawson Lakes community. In my journeying around Mawson Lakes, I heard again and again how proud the people are of the community they live in and the environment that surrounds them.

Mawson Lakes Environment Watch was launched about five years ago with the assistance of the developer Delfin Lend Lease. Links were quickly established with the City of Salisbury through the Environmental Management Officer and the group has received strong support from that officer and the Biodiversity Team. Most supplies, equipment and associated training are provided by the City of Salisbury. Mawson Lakes Environment Watch is a registered community volunteer group with the Adelaide Mount Lofty NRM Board which arranges insurance, provides training opportunities and has supplied some equipment.

I am informed that membership is open to the residents of Mawson Lakes who volunteer their time and are proactive in taking responsibility for positive environmental outcomes in Mawson Lakes. Membership is currently 49, of whom 28 are regularly active. Organisational arrangements are flexible and, while some members focus on their local area, others roam far and wide within the suburb often undertaking specific tasks.

I will list some examples of the range of activities the group undertakes: graffiti removal; weed control spraying; weeding by hand; litter clean up; tree staking and side-shoot pruning; watering newly planted seedlings to get them through their first summer; growing plants from seed; group efforts for litter clean ups such as Clean Up Australia Day; and seedling planting, involving members too numerous to mention. The coverage of Mawson Lakes Environment Watch events, and environmental issues generally, is provided by the publication *Mawson Lakes Living* which is an important contribution to the profile of the group.

I understand that the biggest undertaking by Mawson Lakes Environment Watch has been the development a one kilometre stretch of railway wetlands in Mawson Lakes as a biodiversity corridor. It was this corridor that I visited recently and saw how successfully the native habitat has been recreated, and it is now home to an array of bird life, in particular.

Several thousand seedlings have been planted, most of which were grown from seed by members, and the plants have been cared for through watering and weed control. As usual, when an environment is improved for biodiversity, it is also improved for people's enjoyment, and the area provides a tranquil spot for walking or cycling. When door-knocking the area over summer, I looked longingly at the pools of water and green areas designed for resting, as I trudged on to the next door and the next. It truly is a beautiful and special area.

I am pleased to note that the group received recognition for its contribution when coordinator Colin Taylor received the 2009 Living Legend Award from the City of Salisbury—clearly, a well deserved honour and one that the whole group can be proud of.

HARDING, MR A.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:28): Yes, I am wearing an 'I Love Murray' T-shirt just in case you were wondering.

Members interjecting:

Mr WHETSTONE: And, just to reaffirm, my mother's name is not Murray.

The SPEAKER: What's your wife's name?

Mr WHETSTONE: It doesn't matter. Today I speak about a selfless act of heroism and a family quest to have the act recognised in the Riverland. Alfred John Ronald Harding was a young man when he left his family home in New South Wales more than 80 years ago. He eventually found his way to the Riverland where he worked on the construction of Lock 6 adjacent to the ancient Chowilla forest, which is upstream from Renmark.

He boarded with a family known as the Westleys, who were working on the lock. On 23 December one hot summer's day in 1927, Alfred took the Westley children for a swim in the river. One of the boys, Arthur, known as Jim, found himself in trouble and called out for help. Alfred jumped into the water without hesitation to rescue the nine-year-old Jim. Witnesses say Alfred went under the water in an effort to keep Jim's head above water.

Later, a rescue boat came along to the struggling pair. While Jim was saved, Alfred disappeared. He was eventually pulled from the water after a 25-minute search. A brief pulse was detected before Alfred was realised to be dead. Alfred was hailed as a hero by the community but the 20 year old received no official recognition for his act of bravery. Alfred Harding's sacrifice was recently brought to light thanks to the efforts of his brother, Harold Lyell, and Harold's family. Alfred's grave at the Renmark Cemetery now has a headstone commemorating 'a heroic act finally recognised'.

I commend the family, in this house, for their efforts. I also commend the *Riverland Weekly* newspaper for a sensitive and poignant story about Alfred Harding, published on 15 March. The families of both Jim and Alfred will gather at Alfred's newly marked grave on Good Friday for an informal memorial service, and I am moved by how two families came together after more than 80 years thanks to a heritage shared by a single act of bravery.

MAWSON ELECTORATE

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (15:31): I rise today to talk about some schools in the electorate of Mawson. This morning, it was my great privilege to be at Willunga High School to open more than \$7.5 million worth of improvements to the school. We actually lost count of how much money was spent on it (I am sure the department will have it somewhere) but, as we went through the process of fixing up one of the most rundown schools in the state, we worked out that more and more needed to be done, and we found some things along the way.

We were going to do up half of the home economics area, but then the rats got in and ate the electrical wiring in the other half, so we had to come up with some more money to do the whole lot. We also had the problem of bubbling sewage on the school property, which meant more cost, but it was money that the department and the minister found so that Willunga High School can now rate itself as having some of the best facilities of any school in South Australia.

That was not the scene in 2005 when, as the candidate for the seat of Mawson, I was invited to Willunga High School by the then chair of the governing council. There were pretty bad old buildings that had not been replaced since the school was built back in 1960, and in fact some of the temporary buildings had been there since day one, so they were almost 50 years old. They had rotting wood, they had rats, and they were terrible places to try to study in and also terrible places to teach in.

It was also bad because they were the years 8 and 9 classrooms; parents would bring their primary school kids along to have a look at the school and quite often make the decision that Willunga High School would not be the place they would send their children to school because the conditions were not up to scratch. I took Jane Lomax-Smith (the then education minister) along to have a look, and in fact we turned up with the then premier on Janelle Reimann's first day as principal at Willunga High School.

Jane Lomax-Smith was taken aback by the conditions, and she described them as being like a concentration camp and vowed to do everything she could to fix the problem. I kept lobbying

for the next year, and we got some funding to do a feasibility study. In the 2008 budget, I was very pleased that the money was there to do a complete overhaul, to build a lot of new classrooms and also to upgrade and retrofit the existing classrooms.

That is what we opened today—these sensational classrooms that in many cases have glass walls that open up so that you actually have the feeling that you are outside while still sitting in class. Willunga High School has gone from having some of the worst buildings of any school in South Australia to having the very best, which is only appropriate for a school that already boasts very fine students, a wonderful principal and great teachers and support staff.

Another school in Willunga (although it does not operate as a school anymore) is the James Bassett School, which is 158 years old. The National Trust in Willunga does a magnificent job, and on Monday night I presented them with a cheque so that they could buy computer equipment to enable them to do live links to schools around South Australia to show what schooling was like 158 years ago. I congratulate the National Trust on that, and it will be great to compare the old James Bassett school with this almost brand-new Willunga High School around the corner.

It is also a special day for another school in the electorate of Mawson—Woodcroft Primary School, the state's biggest primary school, which is today celebrating its 20th anniversary. Being the biggest primary school in the state, with almost 1,000 students, it is obviously a big part of the local Woodcroft community where 11,500 people live. The school is a focal point for all the parents and grandparents of children who go there, and it was wonderful to be at their sports day last month and see so many parents and grandparents out there, and to participate in one of the more fun events of the day, the tug of war. I jumped on the teachers' side and we took on the parents and we won the best of three competition—2-0.

I really want to congratulate Pam Kent, the principal at Woodcroft Primary School, all the teachers, the SSOs and the governing council (I am a regular at their governing council meetings) and all the wonderful students there. I look forward to seeing you the next time I am at the school or the next time you come in for a tour of Parliament House. All the best for your 20-year celebrations and all the best for a bright future.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)

(15:36): I move:

That this house—

- (a) acknowledges the central role the River Murray plays in the lives of all South Australians, including primary producers, local businesses, holiday-makers, and Aboriginal people for whom the river has an intrinsic spiritual and cultural meaning;
- (b) notes the degraded and fragile state of the river in South Australia as a result of decades of overuse of the waters of the Murray Darling Basin;
- (c) recognises that South Australia capped its take from the river in 1969 and that overallocation in upstream areas of the Murray Darling Basin has continued since that time;
- (d) notes that the Goyder Institute for Water Research has reviewed the state government's scientific analysis of the draft basin plan and concluded that under the 2,750 gigalitres water recovery scenario, the ecological character of the river environment in South Australia is unlikely to be maintained, and will remain at risk of further degradation;
- (e) agrees that the state government submission on the draft Murray Darling Basin plan must advocate for—
 - i recognition of South Australian irrigators' efficient use of water and responsible management of the river compared to the upstream states;
 - ii more water to be returned to the system than currently proposed so that it can be returned to an appropriate level of health, including environmental sites such as the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth and the Riverland Chowilla flood plain;
 - iii a basin plan that is based on the best available science consistent with the requirements of the Water Act 2007; and
 - iv the burden of adjustment to be placed on upstream states given that they have continued to significantly overallocate water after South Australia capped its take.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)
(15:38): I move, without notice:

That standing and sessional orders be and remain so far suspended as to enable the speaking times for the debate on the motion of the Premier to be limited to 30 minutes each for the mover and the lead speaker for the opposition; and 10 minutes for any other member and the mover in reply.

The SPEAKER: A quorum not being present—ring the bells.

A quorum having been formed:

The SPEAKER: Quorum present.

Mrs REDMOND: Madam Speaker, I am a little puzzled; my reading of standing order 399 is that:

When it is moved without notice to suspend any Standing or sessional order or orders, the Speaker counts the House and if a majority of all of the Members is not present, the bells are rung for up to three minutes, during which time no Member may leave the Chamber...

You allowed the Premier to read the entire motion before counting the house.

The SPEAKER: No, the Premier read the motion and then went into the suspension of standing orders. So, he did read the motion. I am not sure whether you were here; you might have been on your way down. The motion now is that standing and sessional orders be suspended to enable speaking times for the debate on the motion of the Premier to be limited to 30 minutes each for the mover and the lead speaker for the opposition, and 10 minutes for any other member and the mover in reply. I think you were actually here, but I think you were busy.

Mrs REDMOND: Madam Speaker, the other part of it was that you spoke about a quorum, when in fact it is a majority of the whole house.

The SPEAKER: Yes; we had an absolute majority. We waited until we had an absolute majority, so I have accepted the motion now. Is there a seconder to the motion?

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Yes, ma'am.

Motion carried.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development)
(15:42): Madam Speaker, the health of the Murray-Darling Basin, particularly that part of the river which flows into South Australia, is of fundamental importance to the future of this state. There is not an aspect of South Australian life that is not touched by the Murray River as it comes into South Australia and its region.

Apart from being an area of extraordinary natural beauty, it sustains our food producers (such as our citrus, wine grapes and other fruit and nut growers), the suppliers of our small shops in our river communities that benefit from a strong primary production sector and the value-adding processing businesses, holiday-makers and tourism and recreational businesses, and every South Australian who has acted with the river's preservation in mind when they turned on their tap, watered their garden, installed a rainwater tank, planted native plants, or found other ways to save river water, especially when it was in dire need during the recent millennium drought.

What comes to mind are those school students who were saving the turtles down in the Lower Lakes, as they saw they were the subject of an attack by the worms that encased the shell of those turtles. So many people have been touched by this and, of course, most profoundly, the Aboriginal people for whom the river is part of their identity and, in fact, is part of them.

Because we have all these different associations with the river, we all have different perspectives. Many of these have been discussed since the draft basin plan was released in November, but we have seen South Australians, whether they are farmers, city dwellers, environmentalists or our First Australians, increasingly share a common set of concerns about the proposed basin plan and the condition of the river in our state.

That is why the government believes it is time for members of this house, irrespective of their political persuasion, to unite behind a common set of principles that will be at the heart of the state government response to the draft basin plan. These principles are borne out of many long

hours of talking with people interested in the future of the river and the rigorous scientific work that we have undertaken and made publicly available.

I have always made it clear—the government has made it clear—that the health of the river is a vital issue for the state, but it is not just an issue for South Australia; it is more than South Australia. It is our most important national river, and it is no surprise that, when the nation was formed, in the convention debates that formed this very nation, about a third of the discussion was devoted to the River Murray; such was the importance of this water course to the future of this nation. Of course, now it is recognised as containing precious environments of international significance, so not only is this an issue of fundamental importance to South Australia but it is important to the nation and it is indeed important to the world.

I outlined my views on the River Murray in the very first speech that I made as Premier of this state. Within four days of taking on the role, I visited the Riverland and held a town hall meeting in Berri and met with farmers and local community representatives who talked about the importance of the river to their lives.

I talked to communities in the Lower Lakes, and I have spoken to representatives of environmental groups. I have spoken to the Ngarrindjeri. I have always made clear our government's view: that there must be more water returned to the river—certainly more than is currently being offered; that determining what the river needs to be healthy should be based on science; that the burden of adjustment should be borne by the upstream states; and that we should not accept a poor compromise offered by a second-rate plan.

My advocating for these things begins with a couple of basic facts. First, South Australia takes something like 7 per cent on average of the water extracted from the river system; 93 per cent is taken by the upstream states. Secondly, South Australia capped its take from the river in 1969 but, since then, upstream users have pulled a lot of extra water out of the system without regard to the warning signs that the health of the system was declining.

Not only did we cap our take in 1969 but we followed on with further efficiencies in irrigation and we were the first state to achieve our targets under the Living Murray initiative, an initiative that this state fought strongly for, as indeed did the very member who walks in here, when he was minister for the environment—the member for Kurna.

Then we fought hard for the creation of the present national authority because we wanted the basin to be managed on the basis of the best available science. The scientists had been telling us for generations that the river system was not sustainable, but the Murray-Darling Basin commission, which was a set of states that come together—the basin states and territories—was set up for paralysis. Any proposed change, any suggested reduction in the use of water from the basin could only be stopped if it was unanimous. That meant that the pace of change was glacial.

The power of veto for any one jurisdiction meant that the gains were very slow indeed, but it had a benefit as well. It meant that the gains were locked in: we could not go backwards. Now we have made a very significant decision that is a step into this federal national independent authority, and the basis of that compact—we went into that compact and cooperated with the referral of certain powers—was that we were going to get a river that would be healthy and that would be judged on the basis of the best available science.

An honourable member: A historic opportunity.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Indeed it was, and now is an opportunity to realise the full purport of that historic agreement. It was an achievement to get the Water Act 2007 and the creation of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority to succeed the commission. When the new authority was set up, we brought to an end the entrenched situation of South Australia being stymied whenever the upstream states dug in their heels.

The new system—the national authority and the basin plan which was required to flow from it—has been designed to give us an independent authority doing its work on the basis of science. We owe it to ourselves and to the future of this state after we are gone to join in advocating for the best possible plan for the basin.

This is an historic opportunity and we must get it right. Every single one of us in this chamber will be judged by the decisions that we take in relation to this plan. Make no mistake about that. When people reflect back in 20 or 30 or 40 years' time and they look at the state of this river, they will be asking: who were the people who were in the positions of authority that made decisions now? Make no mistake about the gravity of the decisions that we take now.

When I mentioned that this should be based on the best available science, we must reject this idea that we accept any old plan. The science now makes that clear. Earlier this week, a report by the Goyder Institute for Water Research on the ecological consequence of the draft basin plan was publicly released. The Goyder Institute was asked to independently review the South Australian government's scientific and ecological analysis of the draft plan. That review focused on whether 2,750 gigalitres of additional water, as proposed in the draft basin plan, would secure the health of the River Murray in South Australia.

The Goyder Institute concluded that, while there was potential to deliver some improved outcomes under the proposed basin plan, the volume of water is insufficient to meet the water requirements for key assets in South Australia. The report states that the ecological character of the South Australian environmental assets is unlikely to be maintained under the basin plan scenario and, further, that few of the environmental watering requirements required to maintain the ecological character of the region are met.

The risks presented range from degradation caused by salinity to declining vegetation, habitat loss and threats to species of plants and animals. How could we in all justice accept that plan on behalf of South Australia—not just South Australians today but future generations of South Australians?

There have been some other views. It has been argued by some, as late as yesterday by the chairman of the authority, that we should accept this plan. Some of those advocating this point of view have been critical of me and the government for pressing as firmly as we have for improvements to the plan, and they include the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

A few weeks ago, at a public forum, the deputy opposition leader—and I attended that forum—said, 'I would suggest that South Australia would be well served by taking on board the offer that's on the table.' The deputy leader went on, I think, on another occasion to deride me for seeking a Rolls-Royce, urging that we settle for a Mazda.

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, here are your words.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members on my left will get a chance to respond.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: The earlier quote was 'something is better than nothing'—that profound statement—then later:

'This is obviously not the Rolls-Royce, but it's a very good Mazda and we're quite happy to drive in the Mazda,' Mr Williams, the Opposition's water spokesman told *The Advertiser* yesterday. 'The reality is we're not going to get everything we want and this is a very good start.'

The Goyder Institute report demonstrates this is not a good start. Even the science makes it clear that it is not. Even the potential benefits under the 2,750 gigalitre scenario are fundamentally dependent upon the way in which the water is delivered and used. The current benefits forecast represent only one outcome of the delivery of the additional 2,750 gigalitres on average per annum.

This is what the scientists are telling us. That is one scenario that may give you these benefits. There are other scenarios that may not give you those benefits, but they have not been modelled by the authority and one cannot know that. So, it is inadequate but, even in relation to the benefits that are provided, that is only one possible scenario, and it is highly dependent on a range of factors which are not contained within the plan. The plan mandates the water to be delivered in the fashion that was modelled.

The deputy leader has also expressed his view about the Goyder Institute, and this is very illuminating. He said:

...the Goyder Institute can't be relied on as an independent scientific institute. They are the Government's scientists.

This is patently inaccurate. The panel formed by the—

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Well, that is a quote. You can correct it if you like. The panel formed by the Goyder Institute was drawn from our state's three universities and the CSIRO. The statement made by the deputy opposition leader has also been thoroughly refuted by the Goyder Institute Director, Tony Minns, who said, 'We only provide the science essentially devoid of policy. That's our role.'

More concerning is this extraordinary attempt to discredit Goyder scientists, even before their work was released, suggesting that the position is driven more by politics than by the need to understand the real problem and the real solution. I urge the deputy leader to reconsider his position, and I ask him to follow the course that has been adopted by other members in this house on his side of the chamber, this very day, in their debate in relation to the Natural Resources Committee's consideration of the draft basin plan. That report indicates the very point that we have been making, that this is an inadequate plan, more water needs to be given to the river, regard needs to be given to the science. We are asking for a bipartisan position on this issue, and we ask for those opposite to support this motion.

Pressing our case hard now has been suggested by some as a threat to the development of a plan. This is nonsense. It will not force a stalemate. We will not see a return to the present inadequate arrangements because the authority is obliged to produce a plan. There is a water act that obliges them to produce a plan. They are required by law to do so.

Our point is that the plan should be a solution and that we should not settle for a poor compromise. We are not prepared to settle for second best. We need only remember the terrible effects of the millennium drought to appreciate what such a settlement might deliver, and we need to remember that the plan that comes out of this process that we are now involved in will last an extraordinarily long time. If it falls short of what we need for certainty, uncertainty will remain, and this is the key message we have received from those who are involved in business, those who make their investments and seek to create enterprises and businesses out of the use of the waters of the river. They need certainty for the future, and an inadequate plan does not give them that certainty.

We say that the plan should be set on a base that provides certainty, that provides a sustainable use of this river, and that the necessary adjustment should be made clear from the start. The burden of adjustment is a critical issue for many South Australians. We say that the burden of adjustment should fall fairly. South Australia showed restraint and foresight a long time ago. We capped our take and our irrigators joined in the effort to convert to efficient practices. They spent their own money. State government money was added, and we have all lived with a lower level of production in this state, a lower level of economic growth, in the interests of sustainability. Meanwhile, the upstream states continue to use more and more water and have, therefore, benefited from increased production without respecting the sustainable limits on this resource.

When I attended the authority's meeting just yesterday we had the benefit of Auntie Josie Agius opening the public meeting with a welcome to country. Auntie Josie made some remarks, and the remarks she made were simple but I think profound. She said, 'Well, look, in our culture we share.' It seems to me that is the issue here: we need to share this river. I could not think of a more fundamental description of the South Australian position.

The simple proposition at the heart of our claims is that the upstream states have not been sharing: they have been taking more than their fair share. This has caused the degradation and depletion of the waters of the river, and this is a simple matter of justice. You cannot take from a shared resource in a way that damages your neighbour. This is a principle that has underpinned so much of our common law. It has underpinned simple notions of justice that have governed the affairs of human beings for as long as they have had to combine together on this planet. That simple matter of justice is our claim.

In terms of the remedy, the cause of this damage, of course, is the overallocation, the taking of too much. It is a simple matter of justice, about what should be done to remedy that wrong; that is, those who have taken too much should put it back. What they should not be suggesting, as has been suggested in the plan, is that those who have suffered from the wrong should somehow be part of the reparation—asking those who have suffered from the injustice to make good the wrong. This offends basic notions of justice. This is at the heart of our claim in relation to this river.

My plea to members is this: we stand together for South Australia. This puts us in the best position possible to right this wrong. It gives me more authority to advocate to this authority. It allows me to present a united position—irrigators, environmentalists, Aboriginal groups, South Australian city dwellers—on behalf of this state. It gives us the best position to assert our rights. I believe there is a growing sense of self-respect and confidence in this state. We should have the confidence to assert our rights. We should stand up strongly for South Australia. This house should support this motion.

Mrs REDMOND (Heysen—Leader of the Opposition) (16:00): Just as with the GMH debate last week, the Premier sent me a hand-delivered note yesterday afternoon indicating his desire to have this matter debated today and to suspend standing orders to debate it forthwith. The Premier must have known that our joint party room had already met this week and he was thus depriving us of any opportunity to have a meeting as a joint party room in order to come to a position in relation to this motion. Nevertheless, that is typical of this Premier. No wonder his own side considers him snaky and calls him 'the smiling assassin'.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, will you keep to the motion, please?

Mrs REDMOND: They were just preliminary comments, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I suggest that you keep the preliminary comments brief?

Mrs REDMOND: Yes, I have. The letter itself suggests that the Premier wants a bipartisan approach. He says, 'A bipartisan position will send a strong message that South Australia is united on the River Murray.' Isn't that just what a new Premier would want—bipartisanship? It is very handy if you do not have any opposition. He would love life without a pesky opposition asking questions or putting an alternative view or trying to hold the government to account. But the thing is that in this state we have what is called a Westminster system of government and it is basically democratic, and it is democratic because there is an opposition. That is the whole point of having both sides of this chamber.

The government simply wants to obliterate any idea that the opposition might ever take any course other than what the government is suggesting, and it wants to say, 'We've got to have a bipartisan approach on all these things.' As I said, he said, 'A bipartisan position will send a strong message that South Australia is united on the Murray.' But just before he said that, he said, 'In the coming days, the state government will be finalising its submission on the draft plan.' So, without telling us what is in his submission, he wants us to adopt a bipartisan position. That would be typical of this government.

Mr Marshall interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: Yes, exactly what I thought. He will not tell us what it is he wants us to agree to. I had a déjà vu experience when I got this letter because I thought here is the government saying once again, just as they did last week on the Holden debate, 'What we want is your agreement. What we are going to do is spend \$50 million of our taxpayers' money—plus, don't forget, those taxpayers are also federal taxpayers so, probably, closer to \$65 million of our taxpayers' money—to save Holden. We are not going to tell you any of the details of that, but we want you to support it. We want to have a debate and we want you to support it so that we can show that it is all bipartisan and everything is wonderful; and the opposition must not ever ask any questions about this.'

The Premier said in his letter as well that they have held community consultations by way of community leaders' forums and stakeholder meetings in river communities. The most telling thing about this is in the last bit of paragraph 4, because it says:

These meetings have provided important opportunities to hear the views and concerns of groups and individuals as well as identify areas where all stakeholders are united.

In other words, there must be areas where they are not united. So we are not going to have a bipartisan approach. We do not even know what the government's approach is going to be in relation to all of those various orders.

I have good reason to be sceptical about any consultation that this government undertakes. This government consistently, over 10 years, has held these so-called consultations, whether it be on prescription of the Mount Lofty Ranges, on marine marks or on the Minister for Education's statement yesterday about the fact that the minister was not prepared to listen to what the review process on the amalgamations identified (that is, that they did not want to go ahead with the amalgamations) and the fact that the government was going to ignore that. What that meant to her was that this showed it was an authentic process, not (as it shows to me) that, no matter what the community says in relation to these so-called consultations, the government has already made up its mind and the government is going to do exactly what it decided to do before it established this so-called consultation process.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): I am not sure how that relates to the motion.

Mrs REDMOND: Well, it relates to the letter I got from the Premier yesterday afternoon advising me that this debate would be on today, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr Marshall interjecting:

Mrs REDMOND: I will come back to it. It is hard to know actually what this Premier actually believes or intends. This is a Premier who frequently says one thing at one moment and another the next moment. For example, at 7.20am on 1 November 2011 the Premier was interviewed by Matt and Dave on 891, and, in response to a question from David Bevan—here is the question:

What's the minimum return to the Murray-Darling Basin you want?

And the Premier replied, and this is a quotation from the transcript:

As you've seen, the Goyder Institute report talks about numbers of 3,500 to 4,000 gigalitres necessary to return the river to health. That's our starting point and I've said that publicly on a number of occasions.

Note those words, 'That's our starting point and I've said that publicly on a number of occasions.' One month later, on 1 December in this place, I asked the Premier the following question:

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 gigalitres?

To which the Premier replied:

I thank the honourable member for her question. It carries within it a number of difficulties, that is, I have not promoted a sum of that sort.

So, one month later, after saying specifically on 891 to the public at large, 'That's our starting point and I've said that publicly on a number of occasions,' when he is asked specifically about that in this chamber, he says, 'I haven't promoted a number of that sort.' I have had experience with this minister before he became the Premier, and I know how dishonest his responses can be. No wonder his own side does not trust him. No wonder he is called the 'smiling assassin'. You will be caught in your own web eventually, Premier. People who are loose with the truth always are caught, so you had better remember very closely what you have been saying. Again, the idea that we will have a High Court challenge—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): I am sorry to interrupt, but you are getting very close to disorderly behaviour when you are talking about 'dishonest' and words to that effect.

Mrs REDMOND: Yes, I chose them carefully, Mr Acting Speaker. I will not go any further.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): Yes, well, I am going to choose carefully how I treat them, too.

Mrs REDMOND: I will not go any further. I will move on to the High Court challenge. Again, most people in the public and the media thought that the government was pretty keen on this, even though federal Labor clearly was not. But again the Premier, although gung-ho about a High Court challenge in public, said when I asked in this place, 'What I said was that I would not rule out a High Court challenge.' Very different. But there are two points to be made about a High Court challenge over this river: firstly, we still do not know, in spite of asking on numerous occasions, what the previous High Court challenge cost us; and, secondly, there is the possibility, and indeed I would say the very real probability, that, if a High Court challenge by this state were successful, the other states might simply walk away from the whole arrangements that have been made about this river.

But as for the motion itself, talk about motherhood and apple pie. I went to the bother of looking up 'motherhood and apple pie', and would you believe that in America, in the state of Virginia, on 26 January instead of celebrating Australia Day they actually celebrate Motherhood and Apple Pie Day. Basically, it is a statement of principles with which very few would disagree; and to say that this is a statement of principles with which very few would disagree is an understatement with respect to most of it.

The first point that is made in this motion is that the river is important to all South Australians. Anyone disagree with that? No. I do not think there would be many people in South Australia who would suggest that it is not important to all South Australia. The second point: the river has faced some tough times. Anyone disagree with that? No. The third point: in South

Australia since 1969 we have tried to do the right thing by the river in this state. Yep, no disagreement with that.

The fifth point: South Australia needs to fight for (a) our irrigators' good practices being taken into account, and I am sure that the member for Chaffey and every other member in this place would agree with that; and (b) and that means everyone upstream should be required to match our standards. All of that is uncontested, absolutely uncontentious, a motherhood and apple pie statement; and indeed that is pretty much what we put into the submission that we put to this authority when it went away to redraft the plan.

So what is left to fight about in what is in this motion? Really, that 2,750 gigalitres and whether that is enough. Now, we do not know the answer to that. I doubt whether anyone really knows the answer to that. The new plan, as opposed to the original draft plan, at least seeks to balance the social, economic and environmental factors, rather than simply drafting a plan based entirely on environmental factors. It is at least a starting point. An agreement with a starting point is probably better than another option.

According to federal minister Tony Burke, who was in town yesterday to talk about the plan, once you get over 2,000 gigalitres the benefits of increasing flows tend to dissipate. Indeed, the federal minister suggested yesterday that a figure such as that espoused by the Premier of 4,000 gigalitres would result in flooding. In fact, Scott Ashby, the head of his own department, wrote to the CEO of the Murray-Darling Basin Authority just a few days ago warning that if too much water is sent down it is going to lead to the flooding of hundreds of shacks.

Indeed, this is nothing but something out of Hawker Britton 101 political nonsense. This whole motion is put here just as a political exercise to gain brownie points for the Premier.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (16:10): I indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition. Before I start I want to make it known to the house that I would have otherwise been at the funeral service for Dale Baker in my electorate today. The Premier gave us very short notice that this was being brought on today.

The Hon. P.F. Conlon interjecting:

Mr WILLIAMS: I am going right there, Patrick. The minister responsible for government business in the house offered to give me half an hour tomorrow during private members' business.

Mrs Redmond: As the lead speaker.

Mr WILLIAMS: That is as the lead speaker—during private members' business. I want the house to know that I have always argued, and I will always argue, that it is not the role of the government to take over private members' business time. That is there for the private members. That is why I am here today. I am here today representing my people, and I am sure that Dale Baker would appreciate that I am here sticking up for South Australians.

To follow on from what the leader just said, this is motherhood and apple pie. This motion is construed as being incredibly important to the state. However, there is furious agreement over the importance of the river; therefore, there is furious agreement over this motion. This is simply more political spin. Please excuse my cynicism, but the journey to this point in the debate is littered with spin from this government, a constant drive to extract some political gain from this issue. This debate is simply more of that same continuum.

It is my intention over the next few minutes to expose the spin that has been making us all dizzy over the issue of the River Murray for a number of years, all emanating from this government. Let me first turn to how we got to this situation. It was back in 2008—in fact, it was in March 2008—when a little deal was done up in the car park of Magill Estate winery before the COAG ministers went to dinner. This was hailed as an historic agreement on 26 March 2008.

Mrs Redmond: That's four years ago.

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, that's right. The then premier said in a press release he put out the next day that he was delighted that an independent authority will be established to manage the Murray-Darling Basin. That is what he said—an independent authority. Well, I have to remind the Premier that this is what we have. This is his independent authority. We have had an historic agreement, we have transferred powers. This government and the then minister came in here and said we urgently had to pass legislation to transfer some powers to Canberra—

Mrs Redmond: What? To give us an independent arbiter?

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes—then we would have an independent authority and we would take all the politics out of it and we would have an independent umpire make the decisions. As soon as the independent umpire sticks their head up, what does this government do? It says there is some political mileage to be made out of this. That is what has happened.

The guide to the basin plan was released back in October 2010. It was just as the drought was ending and there was a huge backlash right across Australia. We, in this state, and rightfully so, look at the River Murray from South Australia's perspective, and I totally agree that we have been dealt a bad blow. We have been dealt with pretty harshly by the upstream states. I think they have not shown the same sense of responsibility.

Notwithstanding that, we live in a democracy. The then federal government, your colleagues in Canberra, in response to the backlash to the guide, had minister Tony Burke trot off and get some legal advice. In a statement he made to the house on 25 October 2010, he said:

Broadly the advice outlines that the Water Act:

- gives effect to the relevant international agreements;
- provides for the establishment of the environmentally sustainable limits on the quantities of water that may be taken from basin water resources;
- provides for the use of the basin water resources in a way that optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes;
- improves water security for all uses; and
- subject to the environmentally sustainable limits, maximises the net economic returns to the Australian community.

This is where we are at. The law of the commonwealth has been put into practice but the Premier is arguing from one aspect and the legal advice to the federal minister is that there are at least three aspects that have to be taken into account in drafting the plan. Certainly the environmental outcome is one of the principles, but social and economic outcomes also have to be taken into account. I suspect that this Premier is playing a political game of totally ignoring the social and economic impacts, certainly here in South Australia.

My colleague the member for Chaffey knows only too well the social and economic impacts that have already occurred, firstly, because of the drought and, secondly, because of the mishandling by this government of matters pertaining to the river during the drought. This government may now be throwing away one of the best opportunities this state has ever had to get some significant improvements for the River Murray in this state.

After the federal minister counselled the MDBA, the authority charged with drafting the plan (in fact, there was a change of chairman), a new draft plan was released on 28 November last year. The plan was released on 28 November and this is the press release that the Premier put out on the day it was released. He announced that he was establishing a task force to coordinate South Australia's response. He named a number of ministers and departmental people that it would include and he said:

One of the other things the task force will do is coordinate the scientific and ecological analysis of the plans and consider South Australia's legal rights in relation to this matter.

So it did not take five minutes for the Premier to suggest that they were not going to accept the plan. Indeed, in the same press release his Minister for Water (minister Caica) says, 'We have concerns that 2,750 gigalitres will not be enough to restore the system to health.' Within five minutes of the plan hitting the table that was the default position; that was the first reaction of this government.

I will talk about this High Court nonsense because this government has form. There was a COAG meeting in Sydney on 3 July 2008 and an agreement was made at that meeting. A press release put out by the then premier about that agreement says:

In addition, a significant agreement was reached today for the states to work towards lifting the trading cap on water between regions along the Murray-Darling Basin from—

and it says from 4 per cent to 6 per cent but that is wrong, it should be from 6 per cent to 4 per cent—

by the end of 2009 with a view to complete removal of the trading cap by 2014.

That was the agreement on 3 July 2008. In another press release from the then premier, on 1 December 2009, 18 months later:

The South Australian government today issued proceedings in the High Court to force the Victorian government to lift its restrictive 4% capped water trading barrier along the Murray River system.

Eighteen months later the government has issued a High Court challenge to get Victoria to do what they agreed to do 18 months before. In another 18 months, on 14 June 2011, a joint press release from the Victorian and South Australian governments amongst other things says, 'reaffirms the agreement to lift the 4% annual cap by 30 June 2014'. That is when they announced that the High Court challenge was all over.

Mrs Redmond: How much did we spend on that?

Mr WILLIAMS: I don't know; nobody has ever told us. The minister said he would bring back the information to the people of South Australia but he never has. However, the agreement was struck in July 2008, the High Court challenge was instituted 18 months later, and lo and behold it was all dispensed with another 18 months later, reaffirming the original agreement. We look forward to the Victorians lifting their 4 per cent cap.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: On a point of order, if the Leader of the Opposition was to stop interjecting, the deputy leader might stop yelling.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): I am sure the leader will stop interjecting so that the deputy can be heard in silence.

Mr WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. This government has form—talking about High Court challenges—and it is playing a political game. I reiterate that, as far as the opposition is concerned, this is an important issue for South Australia, this is an important issue for the river communities, this is and should be above politics, and this should be above playing political games—but that is not what this government does. Let me just remind the house about what I said a few minutes ago.

Back in 2008, we had an historic agreement. We were going to appoint an independent umpire. We were going to stop 100 years of bickering. What did the Premier say yesterday? He was quoted in *The Australian* as follows:

We are sick of seeing upstream states, places like Victoria with its open channels, which leak more water than we use in Adelaide. We have put up with this for a considerable period of time and we believe enough is enough.

That is the sort of cooperation that we have seen for the last 120 years. That is where the problems have come from because we cannot sit down and put in place a proper managed system with a proper independent authority and let it do its work. This Premier does not want that to happen. This Premier does not want this to be sorted out because he sees a potential political opportunity. It is shameful, I would suggest, the way in which this government is treating this really important issue. Let me turn to the Goyder Institute, and the Premier in his contribution quoted something that I said about the Goyder Institute. I will fill in the house as to exactly what I did say:

I have a problem with the Goyder Institute because it seems to me that it is the government's scientists, not an independent scientist.

I made that comment because I rang the Goyder Institute as I was invited to by one of their reports—this one, in fact—which states, 'If you have a problem, inquiries should be addressed to,' and it gives a telephone number. I rang the number, and I got a call back 10 minutes later. My request was to talk to the authors of this report because I wanted to clarify some of the matters in it. I got a call back about 10 minutes later telling me that if I wanted to talk to them I had to go through the minister's office. That is why I suggested that the Goyder Institute may well have been the government's scientists.

I am pleased to inform the house that, not long after making that statement on public radio, I got a call from Tony Minns informing me that he would be delighted to buy me a cup of coffee, which he did, and we had a wonderful conversation. He then further invited me to attend the Goyder Institute to be fully briefed by him and some of his people. I can inform the house that I have changed my opinion, and I accept—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: You were wrong.

Mr WILLIAMS: I have changed my opinion, Patrick. Based on the earlier evidence, I was suspicious that it was just the government's scientists, but I now accept that they are independent, and I am delighted with the information that they have been able to give to me. The Premier has made much of the Goyder Institute and what it has done in the report that he handed to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority yesterday, and he put out a press release, in which, amongst other things he said:

The review focused on whether 2,750 GL of additional water, as proposed in the draft basin plan, would secure the health of the River Murray in South Australia.

That is not what the Goyder Institute review did. It did not do a review to see if the plan would secure the health of the River Murray in South Australia. The executive summary in the report titled, 'The expert panel assessment of the likely ecological consequences in South Australia for the proposed Murray-Darling Basin plan: A report to the South Australian government—Final report: 2 April 2012', states:

The South Australian Government sought advice from the Goyder Institute for Water Research on the likely ecological consequences for South Australia of the proposed Basin Plan.

A very different question. Let me remind of the house of the legal advice I talked about that minister Tony Burke got, that it is not just about the environmental outcomes. The Water Act has to satisfy some other outcomes as well—social, environmental and economic.

This is a pretty sound document—there is no doubt about that—but it only asks part of the question, and it does not answer the question, as the Premier suggested in yesterday's press release. Let me read the conclusion of the report:

Overall, there are important benefits identified under the BP2750 scenario—

That is the basin plan 2,750 gigalitre scenario—

that has been analysed. However, for much of the area of the floodplain environmental assets that require medium to high flows, the environmental water requirements are not met. Thus, the ecological character of the South Australian environmental assets, as defined in current water management plans, is unlikely to be maintained under the BP2750 scenario. Between now and 2015, a range of options should be explored that support management of the environmental assets such that their ecological function in the longer term is protected.

So, it does acknowledge that one part of the environmental outcome will possibly not be met—one part, and there is a significant number of environmental outcomes that we are aiming at—but it says that further work should be done. Let me turn back a page and read another quote:

It was not the mandate of the Expert Panel to evaluate alternative ecosystem states for which the assets could be managed for or whether ecological change is unavoidable.

They weren't asked whether it was unavoidable; they weren't asked that question because—and I will give some evidence in a moment that suggests that some of these things probably are unavoidable. If I go back to page 26 of the report, amongst other things, it says:

...while there may be some scope to further improve on the environmental benefits of the proposed Basin Plan using local infrastructure, the Panel believes that the greatest benefits of investing into infrastructure would be to alleviate the current channel capacity constraints upstream. This would enable a more flexible use of the recovered environmental water in South Australia.

That's interesting:

...to alleviate the current channel capacity constraints upstream. This would enable a more flexible use of the recovered environmental water in South Australia.

I particularly read that out, because the debate, to some extent, has been around the fact that you can only deliver so much water into South Australia. The leader talked about this: you can only deliver some much water into South Australia without causing unintended consequences. You can only deliver so much water in South Australia without causing flooding.

If we look at what happened in Queensland a bit over the last 12 months, there is furious debate now as to whether the flooding caused by the overflow of the Wivenhoe dam was a natural event or a man-made event. Now, I wonder why that is? I suggest it is because the cost implications are significant, because if it is a man-made event, I think somebody is going to be paying. If it is a natural event, we accept it.

It is one thing to get a natural flood into South Australia, but it is another thing to ask the government to create a flood which is going to cause damage, and that is the problem that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority has in delivering larger quantities of water into South Australia. We

do not hear the Premier talking about that, but I am absolutely amazed if he has not been advised of it—if he has not been briefed on it—because everybody I have spoken to about this knows about it. Let us not play politics with this. Let us work on the facts.

I want to turn to an earlier paper produced by the Goyder Institute. This is the one that I sought some further clarification on. It was put out in response to the original guide, and it was released publicly on 7 June 2011, so it is getting towards 12 months old. We have heard the Premier suggesting—in some places, anyway—that it was 4,000 gigalitres or nothing. This particular report by the Goyder Institute looked at three scenarios: 3,000 gigalitres, 3,500 gigalitres and 4,000 gigalitres. It talks about meeting the environmental water requirements under those three scenarios, and on page vi of the Executive Summary, it states:

However, these environmental water requirements specify timing, magnitude and duration of flows—he is talking about the South Australian government's environmental water requirements—and these are unlikely to be delivered under any of the Guide scenarios. Even if the timing of flow deliveries were optimised—

The Goyder Institute concluded that even the 4,000 gigalitres scenario would be unlikely to meet the South Australian environmental water requirements. I put it to the house that the South Australian government is in the business of putting up a bit of an ambit claim, and we might question why the government would do that. Why would it put up an ambit claim?

I put to the house another point that is raised on the same page. One of the things that we are going to see as a result of a changed management structure, particularly of our storages, under the new plan regime, is that we will see these man-made high flow events. They will be created by managed releases from storages in places like the Hume reservoir and again I quote from page vi of the Executive Summary of the Goyder Institute Technical Report Series 11/1:

Under the Guide scenarios, it is anticipated that there will be more frequent environmental releases and that this will result in less water being retained in storage.

We will have planned releases simply for the environment. To date, we have only had releases simply to provide water for irrigators.

Consequently, high flows will be less common than now, as these flows rely on spills from storages (when storages are at 100% capacity).

The Goyder Institute is saying that the storages, such as the Hume reservoir and others, will less often be sitting at capacity, and when we get an untimely or heavy rain event with a full storage we get a flood event. It will be less likely that that will happen. A perverse outcome—that is the way I describe it—of managing these high flow events is that we will have less of these very high flow events.

It is these very high flow events that the South Australian environmental water requirements aim at achieving, these natural flood events that get the water right to the back particularly of the Chowilla flood plain, right to the back of those flood plains into the black box communities, an event which lasts long enough to give various fauna time to go through their breeding cycle. That is a perverse outcome and it is something that I think we should consider fairly closely as we go forward.

The same document talks about optimising the flows and is suggesting that, with optimisation, we can achieve most of the environmental outcomes that South Australia has been aiming to achieve. With a full and honest appraisal of the Goyder Institute's work, particularly considering that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority is charged with not just the ecological outcomes, not just the environment, but those other outcomes as well, we might come to a conclusion that is a little bit different from the Premier's that the 2,750 is just not good enough.

Can I say that I was also told by the Goyder Institute when I was being briefed by them that, indeed, the 2,750 flow regime as per the draft plan is probably equivalent to a flow regime of 3,500 gigalitres in the earlier guide to the draft, and that is because the modelling picked up the fact that, when you water an environmental asset at one point in the river some of that water flows back into the river and can be utilised for further environmental watering downstream, such as keeping the mouth open and removing salts from the main channel. So, the modelling done for the draft plan takes into account the double use of that water, and I have been informed that the 2,750 probably equates to something more like 3,500, which I find really interesting.

I need to talk to the member for Ashford on this matter because I was reading through the report of the NRM Committee of the parliament, and I noted that in its conclusions it states that the proposed recovery of 2,750 gigalitres under the draft basin plan does not provide sufficient water to meet many of the basin's environmental objectives, including the environmental water requirements of South Australia, but a water recovery scenario of 3,200 gigalitres will achieve many of the key targets of the Coorong, Lower Lakes and Murray Mouth. Targets for Chowilla that rely on medium-sized floods in particular, are more likely to be achieved if operational constraints can be addressed. I have already talked about those constraints.

I need to talk to some members of that committee just to see whether they understand that the 2,750 is probably equivalent to 3,500 and whether they have been apprised of that matter. It may well be that the NRM Committee of this parliament is also in furious agreement with my comment that, on balance, this 2,750 may well be a pretty good offer.

I note that the Premier is out there claiming that this talk about constraints in the river is just something that has been thrown up by the upstream states as an excuse not to deliver more water into South Australia. That is what he has been saying, and this is what he said on public radio yesterday morning, I think it was:

Now it's constraints. There is always a reason why, that South Australia can't get the water that it needs to have a healthy river. We don't accept that...

Maybe the Premier does not accept it, but I happen to have a copy of a letter.

Mrs Redmond: You've got the original.

Mr WILLIAMS: Indeed, I do have the original. I have a copy of a letter here from Scott Ashby addressed to Dr Rhondda Dickson, Chief Executive, Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

Dear Ms Dickson

South Australia requests that the Murray-Darling Basin Authority actively manages the current peak flow expected around mid-April 2012 in order to minimise the impacts on shack areas downstream of Cadell.

Mrs Redmond: So, they don't want all that water?

Mr WILLIAMS: No. It continues:

As the flows increase above 60,000 ML/day at the border, the risk of inundation to potentially hundreds of shacks significantly increases. It is therefore prudent to implement operational actions to minimise the risk of flooding, including no enhancement of peak flows.

The date on the letter is 30 March—only a couple of days ago. The letter is signed by Scott Ashby, who is the Chief Executive of the South Australian Department for Water. He happens to be on the task force the Premier set up back in last November. Maybe the Premier is not talking to his task force. Scott Ashby is suggesting that there are constraints and that, if we are not mindful of them, we are going to cause damage. He goes on in the letter to say:

Recent discussions have occurred with your staff about enhancing flows across the South Australian border. While I recognise this is a necessary step towards maintaining the health of the floodplain, a number of major policy issues need to be discussed and agreed in South Australia before enhanced flows events above 60,000 ML/day can occur due to the risk of flooding properties.

Can I tell the house that to meet the South Australian environmental water requirements we are talking about flow events of 80,000 megalitres a day, not 60—80, a third more than what Mr Ashby is asking the MDBA not to send over the border.

I could go on for a fair bit longer. The opposition accepts the motion because we are very serious about the issue here. This government, if it wanted to show its bona fides, would have done something already about Lake Albert, in my electorate, it would have done something about the Narrows. This government is long on rhetoric, is long on playing politics, but is very short on actually doing something to bring a real benefit. It would have also accepted the offer to put some officers into the state MDBA.

Time expired.

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (16:40): I did not hear the entire contribution of the member for MacKillop, and for that I am thankful. I have been very privileged to be a minister for six years. My first interaction with people along the Murray River corridor in South Australia was as the minister for training and

employment, and that was in relation to jobs and the likes within that particular region from a vocational perspective.

I was also down in the Lower Lakes where I was able to rekindle the relationship with the local Ngarrindjeri people. Then, beyond that I was there as minister for agriculture, when I was able not only to witness first-hand the devastation of the most unprecedented drought in anyone's living memory but also to work closely with those communities along the length of the river corridor on a variety of matters that helped mitigate the effects of that drought, effects that we saw really devastate those particular communities.

The government can be proud about what it did to assist those communities, whether it be from the point of view of purchasing a significant amount of water to keep permanent plantings alive, of which I presume even the current member for Chaffey might have been a recipient, a beneficiary, given that was water provided to irrigators to keep permanent plantings alive, to a whole variety of initiatives that the government undertook to—

Mr Williams interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: That's not quite true, but most of the things you say—

Mr Williams interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): Order!

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: Point of order.

The Hon. P. CAICA: —aren't quite true

The SPEAKER: Point of order.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Despite sore temptation, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was heard without interruption. He should allow the minister the same courtesy.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): Well, it's funny you say that because I was thinking exactly the same thing. I will ask deputy leader to come to order.

The Hon. P. CAICA: We can be proud about what we did with our communities, whether it be on the Riverland, the mid-Murray, or the great wetlands of the Lower Lakes and the Coorong, to build resilience into those communities but also to ensure that those wonderful environment assets live to fight another day; and that is what we did.

I know how much South Australians care about this jewel in our crown, but it is not just the jewel in our crown. As the Premier said, it is of vital importance to all people in Australia. It is our most important river system and it is the lifeblood of a large region of Australia. I also know, almost to a person, that South Australians are united in wanting to achieve a plan, a plan that actually delivers on returning this river to a sustainable level of health—despite the contribution that was just recently made by the deputy leader.

I did notice, whilst having a meeting, the leader speaking about the fact that the River Murray is important to all South Australians. Of course, I found it interesting that if it is important for all South Australians why a motion was moved by the opposition with respect to the River Murray levy. If it was that important, all people in South Australia should be paying that particular levy, but, clearly, they are not at one with respect to that particular matter.

We have certainly worked very hard with our communities here, whether they be irrigators, whether they be environmentalists, or whether they be our very good friends, the Ngarrindjeri from the Lower Lakes region, to get to a spot where South Australia would have not just a common voice but a united voice with respect to what we want, what this state not only wants but will demand from a Murray-Darling Basin plan.

Most South Australians—all South Australians, almost to a person—care about this river and want it to be returned to a sustainable level of health. We recognise that, of all the basin states, South Australia has done more than any other state with respect to respecting and responsibly using its waters here, and the Premier highlighted that particular point. The health and wellbeing of all South Australians is inextricably linked to the health of the river, whether it be as consumers of its waters for domestic and productive purposes, from a cultural and spiritual perspective, or simply enjoying the many recreational opportunities the river has to offer.

Despite what the deputy leader says, we cannot—South Australia cannot, this government will not, and the people of South Australia will not—simply accept any plan. It must be a plan that

delivers for South Australia and, as the Premier said, for the basin as a whole, and it must be a plan that is consistent with the objects of the Water Act. The deputy leader talked about the objects of the act and, of course, we know that the primacy of that act is to return the river to a level of sustainable health while taking into account the social and economic impacts of that plan, which is vastly different from what the deputy leader said.

It is not time for yet another unsatisfactory compromise. This is a time to get it right, based on the best available science, and I refute the comments that were made—quite derogatory and impertinent comments—by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with respect to the Goyder Institute and the fine work they have undertaken. We cannot be distracted from our goal by the use of such terms as 'this is a good start' or 'adaptive management' or, indeed, 'we will review it in 2015'. We cannot afford to accept something that the science tells us will not deliver in hope of getting something better later on.

It is just a nonsense argument and I cannot believe it is being promulgated by some representatives of the opposition. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to right the wrongs and address the overallocation that has been undertaken by upstream states and make sure of what the member for Chaffey and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition want—security for their constituents but also security for the environment, because we know that it is not about environment versus irrigators; it is about having a healthy system from which sustainable consumptive use can occur.

If we do not get this right, we will not be thanked by future generations. We will be condemned by future generations who will have to live with the consequences of the decisions that we make today, and South Australia is not going to allow a second-rate plan or accept a second-rate plan, nor should we be forced to accept more than our fair share of the burden of adjustment (a point that the Premier made very well).

We should not be forced to accept more than our fair share of the burden of adjustment in the setting of the SDLs or accept our irrigation communities being actively disadvantaged by the spending of billions of dollars on infrastructure improvements for the upstream states whilst we receive virtually nothing, thus further eroding the competitive position of our producers here in South Australia. We are not going to tolerate that as well. Our past good behaviour and our past practices must be recognised and not punished. In closing, I urge this parliament to unanimously support this motion to send—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: Well, the point I would make, is this: they are going to unanimously support this motion but the attitudes and comments expressed by the deputy leader are, at best, nonsense and, at worst, duplicitous with respect to his true feeling about the River Murray. This motion needs to send a clear message to the South Australian public, to the upstream states and to the federal government that we are united in our desire, and that ought to be matched by a proper, coherent level of messaging, not that which we saw from the deputy leader. We need to be united in our desire for a fair deal for the river and a fair deal for South Australia, and we will not accept second best.

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (16:49): I rise to speak on this matter not because the River Murray is now in my electorate but because it was when I had Goolwa in my area. In fact, all I have now is part of the catchment at Currency Creek, which of course drains into the river. I think it is beholden on every member in this place, and might I suggest every member of the parliaments of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the federal parliament, to stop squabbling and to get on and fix this problem.

No-one knows better than the member for Chaffey about losing touch with people because he absolutely wiped out a cabinet minister in the last state election, the Hon. Karlene Maywald. She lost her seat because she lost touch with the people, and this is what this is about today. Let me go back and talk briefly about Goolwa. I came into this place in March 2006 and immediately had Goolwa as part my constituency. I took it over from the former premier, the Hon. Dean Brown.

I went into a situation of drought that was affecting Goolwa and winding it down. I do not think that I have ever seen a greater display of human spirit than I saw in Goolwa and the surrounding areas during the time of that debacle, and this is what people are forgetting about. We can sit here and we can spat and argue and they can do it across parliaments across Australia, but start thinking about people.

One person who will remain forever ingrained in my mind is a good friend, Henry Jones, and his wife, Gloria. Henry knows the river inside out. Henry was nearly crippled by it. I had businesses in Goolwa crippled by it. I had tourism businesses and all sorts of businesses crippled by it. I had farmers crippled by it. The member for Hammond is now there. I went through as the member at the time, and it was a life experience to go through what happened down in that area—to see the river dry up to become a trickle and to see the human spirit hang in there, but also to see what happened between the people and the groups and the organisations down there who had immense pressure on them. The community organisations and the council had spats; let me tell you they had spats.

However, they resolved to keep Goolwa going. Now, it is not in my electorate so it is not doing anything for the next election for me, I can tell you. I very much doubt whether it will come back in the redistribution; and, for the record, I intend to be here after the election in 2014. However, I digress. I mention people like John and Lyn Clark of the Southern Alexandrina Business Association. I will not be able to get in all names in this short time, but I mention Keith Parkes, councillor Jim Davis and Randall Cooper.

Randall Cooper had a passion for the river as deep as the river is at its deepest spot. These people were at their wit's end. They tried everything to keep their businesses going, their families going. They went out and worked. There is some passion that needs to be injected into this debate instead of political rhetoric, and these things need putting on the record. I can remember the day we had the rally down at the Goolwa Aquatic Club with thousands of people. I got up to speak, and I think that the member for Hammond spoke as well that day.

There was an absolute passion and commitment of the people of the area and the wider area of the river who came to that rally on that day to keep their town and areas alive while the river was dying. They hung in there. The Goolwa Regatta Yacht Club kept sailing on not much more water than would be in a bathtub. They kept it going, and these are the people who want this parliament and the other parliaments I mention to get it right, to stop fooling around, to stop arguing and squabbling and doing media spins—the whole lot.

I think it is most important that this message gets across loud and clear. They want it to work. I am sure that the member for Chaffey will have a few words to say in a moment. He is there where it comes over the border, and he knows as well. I had the privilege of serving the bottom end where it was crucified. I mention Neil Shillabeer from Meningie. Neil used to come over regularly. Then we had the Tourism and Boating Authority meetings—which I think are still going, I am not sure—chaired by Dean Brown out on Hindmarsh Island.

The Chapman family watched their livelihood die. They watched hundreds of boats leave the marina. They kept people working and paid people to keep them going after the nonsense they put up with over the Hindmarsh Island Bridge. They have spent a huge amount of money down there, and they employed people and they kept it going. These meetings were great. The government officers who came to those meetings—from the Department of Transport and Department for Water—worked their backsides off to try to keep Goolwa and the area going. They did everything possible to keep the waters navigable.

It goes on. The South Lakes Golf Club gave up their water because they could not use it and they sold their entitlement to water to keep their golf course going through other means. I remember meeting with them at the golf club and they were just about in tears over where it was going, this famous golf club. They are a terrific group of people and they all deserve to get far better than what they are getting at the moment.

Droughts come and droughts go, and this drought was a shaker that changed the face of the nation for many years, and it will happen again. I do not know—and I have heard what the Premier has to say. I do not share his political colours but I think his heart is in the right place on this matter. Whether they are Labor premiers, Greens premiers, Liberal premiers, prime ministers or whatever—for heaven's sake, get it right this time, because no community should have to suffer like they have suffered through that drought.

I can recall quite clearly the depth of animosity that the Goolwa community at one stage felt for their council. The council thought they were doing the right thing. They were trying their hearts out. The community thought they were doing the right thing, and it created enemies out of generations of friends. That is a sad thing that happened. That is why it is so important that this time we get this thing right and whatever comes out of it in the end remains to be seen.

It was mentioned earlier on about the turtles. I saw them scrubbing these turtles and getting the worm off them so that they could live and get their legs out again, and then the community effort in what happened with the clean up on the river. Jan (my wife) and I went down there one day when they had a massive community clean up and cleaned all the rubbish out of the river that had not been seen for 150 years probably. It was an amazing event. The spirit of that community in Goolwa shone through. The spirit of the community got them to where they are now where they have water back again; it is marvellous.

Bob Brown said it would take eight years to fill the river and it filled in six months; that was another furphy. We have all these so-called experts who would not have a clue about nature. Those of us who actually live with nature know how it works. Of course it was going to rain again and, of course, they are taking water out up at the top end. They do not think they are doing anything wrong, and maybe they are not. Who am I to judge? But maybe they are, too. So this is where it has to be put right.

I have watched with interest Mr Craig Knowles, who was on the television last night. It was good to watch him instead of a few others. I noted with interest what he had to say. I noted that federal minister Tony Burke said that if we do not get it right, he will go back and try to get it right again. I suggest that Jay Weatherill, Isobel Redmond, Mitch Williams, Michael Pengilly, Tim Whetstone, Michael Wright—none of us know how to get it right, but we might have a chance if we get our heads around it and do it properly and start thinking about the people and livelihoods on that river.

My daughter lives at Loxton now and they visit and use the river regularly, so I have learnt a fair bit about it. She is a constituent of Mr Whetstone, and she did vote for him; she freely admits that. There is much to be said. I just wanted a few minutes, but I really wanted to emphasise the fact that the people of Goolwa and those areas that I used to represent suffered enormously and tragically, and I have no doubt that one day there will be a book or something written about what happened there. It needs putting on the record. I say to the Premier and everybody involved in those leadership positions: for heaven's sake, do all you can to get it right. No-one ever should have to go through again what they went through in those 10 years of drought.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (16:59): I rise today proudly wearing an 'I Love Murray' shirt because I think it is relevant in today's climate. I have a message first to the Premier. When you are going to present South Australia's case to the Eastern States, you have to be factually correct. To say that South Australia extracts only 7 per cent from the River Murray is incorrect. The Eastern States do not extract 93 per cent, so in presenting your case you must be factually correct.

Members interjecting:

Mr WHETSTONE: I am not wrong, I can assure you. We extract 7 per cent but the Eastern States do not extract 93 per cent. Do your homework, Premier, because if you go over there and make incorrect statements they will blow you away. Premier, I do support a plan. I support a plan for the health of the river. I support a plan for sustainable food producers and communities but in supporting a plan there has to be a balance; there has to be a balance at whose expense?

Day after day we hear this number of 4,000 gigalitres; 4,000 gigalitres is a political spin number. The 4,000 is based around science; science is a model that is put there because the science is modelled on the science. Let's face it, when we went through the last drought the scientists said that it was going to take 20 years for the Lower Lakes to recover and it took four months. We still have a few water quality issues in the Lower Lakes but it took four months, it did not take 20 years, so it goes to show that modelling is not always the answer.

The South Australian government has refused to sit inside the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's tent to give advice and to present South Australia's argument. Why did we refuse that? Because it is political, that is why we refused it. We should be in there representing our case. The Goyder report was released only last week. Funny how it was released just in time to present to the MDBA's Adelaide community meeting—the timing! That should have been presented to the authority weeks ago so that we as South Australians had our best case put forward, representing all of South Australia not just representing a political slant or spin. It is absolutely outrageous.

Today we hear the government saying, 'It's not fair, it's upstream's fault.' It is not upstream's fault. Upstream irrigators have some of the best practices in Australia, just like we do, but we have set a benchmark and that is what we need to be arguing, not saying that we are the best and they are the worst. That is totally wrong. Premier, you are shaking your head. You have

not been out and had a good look; let me assure you that you have not. I live there, I practise it, I preach it, I love the river, I love producing food and I know what is going on.

Premier, the High Court challenge seems to be a secondary focus that the government is presenting to the electors out there. Elector-land is saying, 'The Premier is fighting for South Australia.' A High Court challenge is not going to solve the problem. If there is a High Court challenge it is not going to put water back in the river; it is not going to solve the environmental catastrophe that we have been through; it is not going to help food producers get more security for their irrigators or more certainty for communities. Premier, you have to have a real look at what is going on out there; again, it just seems to be so political. We are focusing on all the political issues, we are not focusing on a healthy, working river.

Ten years ago South Australia was regarded as the envy of the basin. We had water security, we had continuity of supply, we had good government practice, we had negotiators going to the table and getting us a good outcome from negotiations. In 10 years we have become the laughing stock of the Murray-Darling Basin. We go to the Eastern States to negotiate a deal and we come back with our tail between our legs. I will highlight a couple of examples.

Today, as we speak, irrigators' carryover water has been spilt from the Menindee Lakes as a flood mitigation release. Those irrigators invested heavily in their carryover water. Some of those irrigators had to sell their allocations and live on carryover water so that they could continue practising irrigation, yet the government went over to the Eastern States and negotiated our carryover water to be first to spill. Why did we do that? Why did the government accept a first to spill negotiation? After all, it sits on top of the commonwealth environmental water holder—why? The first water to spill should be from a commonwealth environmental water holder for the benefit of the environment and yet the water minister is saying, 'We will not compromise.' That is the first compromise.

Last year irrigators were stuck on 67 per cent—absolutely outrageous—and one of the worst decisions that any government could have ever imposed on any community or industry. The government did that because they were carrying over 160 gigalitres of water, government water that was purchased at inflated prices for nearly \$60 million. They went into the water market and they paid almost 21 per cent above the market price.

Mr Pederick: Why would you do that?

Mr WHETSTONE: Why would you do that? The outcome was that irrigators had to go into the market and compete with the government at inflated water prices—up to 21 per cent above market price. Premier, I was in the water market; I know what was going on—do not shake your head because you obviously do not.

Again, we look at the number. I do not want to talk about the number but I do want to talk about constraints. The minister said on radio two mornings ago that we needed to address the constraints. The constraints are towns, they are levee banks, roads, bridges, causeways, shacks—how are we going to address those issues? Are we going to move them? Are we going to pay them out and send them away? How are we going to address those constraints?

Premier, you have obviously been in touch with some of the irrigators in South Australia of late, and you have offered them a deal. You said you are going to put critical human needs into the equation of the SDLs. You told them that, perhaps, SA Water might contribute 20 gigalitres of water into the plan, you told them that you might contribute 20 gigalitres of water from environmental works and measures, and perhaps you will give up 20 gigalitres from the Water Industry Alliance. Really? Does anyone else in South Australia know that? Have you been transparent about how you are going to do that? This was really all about a photo opportunity. It was nothing else. It was political spin at its best.

When this plan is eventually implemented and the commonwealth gives each state its bucket of water, the South Australian government needs to be clear when they say, 'We want your support for this plan, South Australians.' Who will get the share of the water in the competing interests? Will irrigators get their fair share? Will SA Water get its fair share? Will the environment get its fair share? To date, there is no transparency in any of that and what we are seeing seems to be a political exercise, and does not seem to be about the outcomes.

The outcomes are about sustainable rivers and sustainable communities producing food. Everyone in this chamber sits down to a breakfast, a lunch and a dinner, and they expect clean, safe food, and most of that food comes out of the Murray-Darling Basin. There has to be a balance

in this plan, and you say that 4,000 is the number without actually knowing exactly what the impact will be—it is yet to be determined. Premier, what will 4,000 gegalitres mean to the South Australian food producers and their communities? Has the Goyder Institute done a social and economic report on that?

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (17:08): I, too, rise to talk about the Murray-Darling Basin plan and what could be the outcome for South Australia. There is one thing we need to worry about, and it is not just numbers; it is salinity levels. At the moment, salinity in Lake Albert averages 4,800 EC, which is far too high to use for stock and domestic, and far too high to use for irrigation systems, and these systems have been out of place in some cases for six years—unusable. These people have been forced to cart water in and, then, yes, through commonwealth and some state money, but mainly commonwealth funding, some emergency pipelines were put in. Now with the extreme SA Water price rises, it is becoming unviable for people to water their stock or grow their crops, and people are now seeking to put extended pipelines through to Lake Alexandrina.

We on this side of the house certainly know how important the River Murray is to the state because pretty well all of us connect to it in some way. My properties connect to it with a just-in-time pipeline from Taillem Bend—the Keith pipeline. But we saw how committed the government was not during the process when the Murray-Darling Basin Authority requested staff to get on board to prosecute this state's case. What was the answer from here? 'No, we're not going to send anyone. We don't think it's that important that we need to send anyone to prosecute the case.'

It was the same effect when water was being negotiated under former premier Mike Rann and the former member for Chaffey: they could not negotiate enough water just to keep the Lower Lakes through. There was a time when I was almost begging former minister Karlene Maywald because we needed 30 gegalitres for Lake Albert—30 gegalitres.

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I know it was low; I know water was low, but during this time there were people on high-security water allocations getting 95 per cent of the water out of the Murrumbidgee, so there would have been water available. Victoria and New South Wales just laugh at us and at the ineptitude of this government in securing water flows for the state. We have seen the flawed effect of the proposed Wellington weir that was going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars. From memory, I think there was a forecast of about \$125 million, but then it just would have gone on and on and on.

The only thing that would have saved the Wellington weir if it had been built and needed topping up every year—and it could have sunk about a metre a year—was the fact that there is plenty of limestone around; that is the only thing that would have saved it if they were going to build it, but what a flawed concept. What a flawed concept—that a government could have thought of just cutting off a huge community south of Wellington.

Mr Venning: How much did they spend?

Mr PEDERICK: Well, they spent about \$14 million on the access roads, and they are roads to nowhere.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: That's right—the roads to nowhere. Obviously, there were some heavy negotiations with the Withers and MacFarlane families on what they needed to accept to get those deals through and get those roads in place. Thankfully, someone saw sense and suddenly realised that the Wellington weir was not a viable alternative.

I had a meeting with former minister Maywald because salinity was getting so bad that they were concerned about the Taillem Bend offtake, and in front of a representative from SA Water I asked the minister, 'So, what's this going to cost?' They said, 'Early costings are about \$75 million,' and then they asked me, 'What do we do with the salt?' and I replied, 'Well, you're going to have to work that out.'

I now refer to the bunds that were put up over time down through the Lower Murray and Lakes, the first of which was the Narrung bund at the Narrows that went in between Lake Alexandrina and Lake Albert; 20 per cent of that bund is still in the water. It is silted up, it is disgusting—it is absolutely disgusting. To my knowledge, all these bunds were put in with the money to pull them out given to the South Australian government. But they haven't used that money to pull these bunds out.

Mr Williams: But they've used it for something else.

Mr PEDERICK: They have used it for something else—paying public servants or whatever. They have just put it into general revenue to eat up cash that was given to them by the federal government and the MDBA. Part of the reason that Lake Albert and the region have almost become a wasteland is that no-one on the other side cares—no-one on Labor's side cares. That bund should have come out.

We have the same issue with the bund at Clayton. The Clayton bund removal is like the ad, 'The beer when you're not having a beer.' This is the bund when you are not having a bund. Yes, the majority of the bund has come out, but there is all the wash and silt at Clayton that is still in there and causing grief to the community; it can be removed.

Then we have Currency Creek. Currency Creek is the sleeper; this is the bund that is underwater, so nothing is seen, it is hiding and we do not have to worry about it—and that is how the government looks at it. We hear all this clap-trap, as we did when we asked for the pumps to be lowered for Adelaide and were told that it could not be done—well, hang on, have you heard of engineers? It can be done.

There are at least two companies, such as Dynamic Dredging at Mannum and Frank Henderson, and there are probably more (but I will get into trouble if I name too many companies because I may miss someone out), that can mount a long-arm excavator on a big barge out of Mannum. They can go down and dig out all this underwater soil and silt. It can be done: it is just about commitment to the job.

In fact, I have dealt with and I have sent the inquiry through to Andy Dennard at minister Caica's office about a government bund at Jervois where the contractor got the approval from the government to fix up an issue and suddenly someone looked at the costing and within three-quarters of an hour, the approval was pulled.

Mrs Redmond: Spend the money on something else.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes—spend the money on something else, and this is how this government operates. Some of us, like myself, took the time to travel up through the northern basin to see how it operates. I flew up over Cubbie Station and there are about 22 other big properties up there that, at that time several years ago, harvested a lot of water. I talked to graziers on the flood plain who only got about 20 per cent of the water that they used to get because of the harvesting up in the north.

Then we went through the southern basin. I remember an interesting trip with the members for MacKillop and Chaffey, just to see how things operate. It was a very good trip, just to get a good idea of how things work. We saw the Snowy River scheme. I do not think the environmentalists would let us build a scheme like that in this day and age.

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Absolutely. It just gives you an overview of what has happened with the overallocation of the river and the pillaging that has caused the problems in the southern system. We have had communities absolutely slaughtered, whether you are in the tourism sector especially below Lock 1 or whether you are trying to get water on the River Murray swamps where \$30 million has been invested and we are going to have to spend at least that and maybe double that to get them back into a real, productive capacity.

We have had massive chunks of river slumping happen. We have had complete pump stations fall into the river. We have had people—as the member for Finnis rightfully said—absolutely dismayed at what was happening down at Goolwa, and there are many competing interests. Obviously, some people wanted bunds; some people wanted to float boats. They would have floated them on raspberry cordial, but we on this side said, 'No, we have to move on. We have to have a freshwater recovery for the river.'

I mentioned briefly before the inequity in allocations. We were on 18 per cent allocation here one year and yet on the Murrumbidgee—95 per cent, no worries. How does that help and how does that work out? One thing I do want to extend on is the constraints, and Tony Burke actually summed it up pretty well yesterday. Federal water minister, Tony Burke—

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, the Labor federal minister—he said that you exponentially lose positive outcomes above 2,000 gigalitres of environmental water returned to the river because of the constraints. What happens is you get overbank flooding and losses. You get losses that do not get the environmental outcomes where you want them.

What I say is that we need to make a start. We need to make a start for all the communities along the river, all the communities that derive water from the river, because I know, from someone who lives in the area and relies on a just-in-time pump, that things need to happen. A High Court challenge will kill this deal because we have a Premier and a government who do not understand that calling for 4,000 gigalitres is just what the Eastern States want, because they just want a trigger to kill the deal and that is exactly what will happen.

We on this side do want the best outcome from the river but sometimes you have to get going while you have the opportunity. If you kill the opportunity and then you do not have any outcome, that is the worst outcome that we in this state could have, because the Eastern States will do anything to switch us off.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (17:18): I am pleased to rise to talk about this issue. This is without doubt the most important issue facing regional South Australia and has been for many years now. We must get this right. This is a key issue for the electorate of Stuart, for the very important towns of Cadell, Blanchetown, Morgan, Murbko and that district right on the river are in the electorate of Stuart but, of course, we can never forget that 95 per cent of the people of South Australia draw water from the Murray. Of course, in Stuart that includes the Mid North areas and the city of Port Augusta, and that same logic applies to most of the electorates, most of the people we all represent in this house. If there is any one person here who does not take this issue very seriously, you are not doing the best you can by your electorate. It is a critical issue for our whole state and, of course, for our nation.

Given the short amount of time that we have available, I would like to draw people's attention to the Natural Resources Committee report because I have been very actively involved, as have the other members of that committee, in putting that report together. I am pleased with the work that we have done, I am pleased with the outcomes and pleased with the recommendations, so I draw people's attention to that specific report.

Looking at the broader issues, we all know that there have been 100 years of overallocation of water; that is no-one's fault. We just started off running things the way they were done at the time but, like so many things, as we get smarter, as time goes on, we realise what is going on and you change, you adapt, you improve. It is true of every single one of us in every aspect of our lives; it has got to be true of our state and our nation when it comes to how we manage this river system.

One of my biggest concerns about this issue is the whole 'us and them' aspect that is coming out of this Murray-Darling Basin plan and out of the Murray-Darling Basin arguments—the whole us and them, environment versus economy, short term versus long term, upstream versus downstream and on and on and the focus on this number, this 2,750 gigalitres, should it be more or should it be less? I support the member for Chaffey in his very strong and loud call to say the very first thing we need to do is find out where water savings can be made.

Do not just say of the environment or the economy that one is going to have to miss out more, one is going to have to miss out less, upstream versus downstream. Let us find out where we can find extra water by being more efficient, by being smarter, by getting on with the job and then perhaps everybody can absorb slightly less of a hit. Ideally the environment and the economy can get on quite well and communities and society can get on quite well. That is what we are all here for. That is what we all want in the longer run, regardless of the issue at hand.

The first place I would start to look at is evaporation losses, storage and delivery improvements, and metering at points of extraction. We are all aware of what goes on upstream. We should be proud of the way we have dealt with this issue in South Australia. We are not perfect. It is not to say that there cannot be more done in South Australia but, goodness gracious, there should not be much of a burden that we have to pay until those sorts of losses, those sorts of inefficiencies are dealt with and improved, wherever they happen to be. If we have any room to improve them in our state, we should and, where other states have room to improve them, they should as well.

Rather than make it upstream versus downstream or one state versus another—I could not care where the opportunities for improvement exist. Wherever they are, that is where they should

be dealt with. We should make our whole Murray-Darling system as efficient and useful as possible with water and then, once we have done that, figure out, if we still need to make cuts, what they are and how they need to be shared.

We have a very proud history in South Australia of dealing with water. I think irrigators often unfairly bear the brunt of public opinion. Certainly, they are the people who take water out of the river but they use it for food production which is very important. They do not just use it to go swimming in or just waste it. They use it for a very good, very important purpose that supports the Riverland region, that supports our state, that supports all of Australia. Let us not just assume that if you are an irrigator you must be a bad person who takes too much water. Our irrigators do it for the right reasons and they do it very well and very efficiently.

The other thing that is important to recognise here is this is not just about theories and philosophies: this is about real life. This is about people's real-world experiences. I can tell you I have a very good friend who has a farm. This friend is fourth generation. His son and daughter are fifth generation in the Lower Lakes. He has been brought to tears by seeing hundreds of dead calves over recent years. The older cattle are smart enough to go away. They know not to drink the salty water, they figure all that out, but calves cannot figure this out. The water was, at the time, too salty adjoining their property. Not only is there an economic loss, not only is there a market loss, not only is there a social loss—this is about real people's lives.

Exactly the same is true well upstream in the Riverland area. I would be terribly disappointed if there is a person in this house who is not familiar with the really catastrophic impact that the drought has had on many people's lives. The pulling out of generations of permanent plantings is a devastating issue, well beyond the economic impact and theoretic issues that are debated here. This is about people's real lives.

I believe that the section of the river in between, that mid-Murray area from Blanchetown down to Wellington, in my opinion, is where people have really been hit hardest, and they are the people who have probably got the least amount of publicity. They are the people who have had the least recognition, but to me they are the people who have had the least opportunity to find other incomes. That is not to say that there is no opportunity, but these people have been hit harder than any others in our state.

I was devastated to hear stories about the stress of those people, including, unfortunately, suicides, and including, unfortunately, people who do not leave their homes. Even now, a couple of years after the river has come back, a couple of years after, on the surface, everything is all okay—as far as most people in Adelaide would suggest—the impact on real people and real communities will not go away overnight.

I am pleased that things have improved, and I am pleased to know that there is more water in the river, but we cannot just say it is all over. As many speakers here have already said, we cannot just assume that we have good salinity levels in most places at the moment (certainly not Lake Albert) and problems still exist. In most cases we have got good river levels, so it is all okay, we will not worry about it.

There will be good and bad times with regard to river flows in the future. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to fix this. It is not an opportunity to help just the environment and it is not an opportunity to help just the irrigators. Again, it cannot be an issue about one versus the other: we are either going to care for water and the environment or we are going to give the water to the irrigators. That is such a naive, shallow view of this whole issue.

Firstly, there are many, many more people involved in this issue than just irrigators. There are graziers, tourism operators, the building and construction and maintenance industry, retail and hospitality, dairy, fishing, boating, property values, and many others and—

Mrs Redmond interjecting:

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN: —as our leader says, people from Adelaide, who are not directly impacted but whose lives benefit from the fact that we have a healthy River Murray with businesses and communities that they can visit for their own recreation. None of these things need to be at the expense of the environment.

I think of the environment versus economy in terms of an honesty issue. You do not go about your business achieving as much as you possibly can and if you have time left over you decide if you can be honest. You go about your business honestly and then achieve as much as you can. We all have environmental responsibility. We all must be responsible in regard to

whatever we do well beyond the River Murray with regard to the environment and then achieve as much as we can as well. I cannot accept that there is going to be a 'one or the other' argument.

This broader Murray-Darling Basin debate is getting far too complicated as far as I am concerned. There is state versus state and threats of High Court challenges. Some people are coming to the table with 20 targets and others coming to the table with another 20 targets, so you can have a really good argy-bargy. Well, do you know what I believe? I think there is a very simple philosophy, which I know many of my colleagues here agree with, and the member for Mount Gambier touched on earlier today; that is, you start with a very simple principle: the river is healthy from the mouth up.

If we have salinity targets for the two Lower Lakes (and of course consider the Coorong as well) that would be a tremendous starting point. We then add on metering. Every single extractor anywhere in the Murray-Darling Basin must have off takes metered at the point of extraction. I reckon three-quarters of the targets that everybody is arguing about (this versus that) would be taken care of by addressing those two targets.

So, I say, Premier, on behalf of our state: please get on with the job. I urge you to concentrate on those two targets, and I urge you to get recognition for our state for the water efficiency achievements that we have made over the last 40 years.

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (17:29): I rise very briefly to speak on behalf of my constituents, particularly the constituency of Mannum, which I think is one of the most lovely parts of my electorate. Mannum has been through pretty tough times, as we would all know. The exodus of so many dairy farmers along the River Murray swamps was really felt by the community, very much so. When you go there today and see that beautiful land now, in many cases wasteland and samphire flats, it is a disgrace. All the hyperbole and hype at the time were wasted because we need to protect this area, and it was so productive. The jobs that have gone, the productivity that has gone, have really affected that community.

Of course, with the drought, people found their pumps out of the water, high and dry, and I have some constituents whose pumps were a kilometre from the water. They were, for a while, digging extra trenches but eventually they gave in. After much discussion, the minister eventually put in a separate system from SA Water to connect these people, particularly along the Purnong road. There were probably 30 to 40 houses there that were totally stranded without water for months. We take this for granted, but these people did not have water in their homes and what they did have was dirty and filthy and you certainly could not drink it. It makes you wonder how reliant these people are in this area on the river.

We continually talk about the Narrows. I have been there with the member for Hammond and had a good look at this. I cannot understand it. It is not an engineering miracle to get down there and remove those bunds. I have a very good friend—in fact, she was in the house a week ago—who owns a brand-new barge built for this purpose, and it is sitting idle. You can put a large excavator on it and float it anywhere you like, and a couple of swipes with a 20-tonne excavator would get rid of most of the bunds. But: no, with the cost of hiring it, and everything else, they are just not interested. It has all been too quiet, and I cannot understand it.

A lot of this bund is below the water line and you could have a big excavator sitting on the barge, with another barge to cart it off. I am sure if you just freed it up the extra flow of water would carry it away, anyway, but nothing is being done. I cannot understand why the equipment stands idle and we have the bunds remaining in Lake Albert. How crazy is it: we have the river in flood and Lake Albert is a salty cesspit. I cannot understand this. Surely, there has to be a way to cause a flow through Lake Albert to return it to its natural estuarine environment.

We have heard mentioned today the Narrows in Lake Albert and also the Clayton bund. It is all still there and, really, I cannot see that it is a big deal. We are not talking millions here: we are talking thousands to remove this.

Mrs Redmond: They've got the money.

Mr VENNING: They have the money, so I don't know why they haven't done it. Also, we heard about Currency Creek, and I have heard that mentioned before as well. That is a bit of a sleeper, as the member for Hammond said. Because it is out of sight, people do not talk about it. As I said, this constituent has a new barge which is ready to start tomorrow if someone wished to speak to her. The person who owns the excavator would be happy to get it on board in a matter of an hour or so. It has its own power and it could go anywhere you like to do the work on the river.

Also, tourism in Mannum took a big hit during this period, particularly the houseboats. We saw the tourism industry all but dry up. Even though the houseboats still could operate, in a limited way, tourists just kept away in droves. We tried like mad to keep the publicity going and say to people they could still get on a houseboat and have access to the Murray, but they just assumed that the whole Murray, particularly below Blanchetown, Lock 1, had no water at all. It was not the case. They really did take a hit.

People who own the slipways certainly took a hit because the slipways, too, were high and dry and it became very difficult for them to be able to reach the boats to get them up onto the slipways, particularly for one good friend of mine, and that is Ron Greening who owns Greening Landing. He is a marvellous fellow. What a wonderful family they are. No-one knows the River Murray more than Ron Greening. In fact, he does the navigation and all the plotting for the Boating Industry Association of South Australia and the latest River Murray navigator, that beautiful book, is all Ron's work. He regularly surveys the river.

Ron found his marina almost inoperable, as did the Chapman family on Hindmarsh Island. I went down there one day and, with the member for Finnis's approval, we had a good look. I could not believe how it was affecting these people financially. It really put a glitch in the planning they had made over many years and they took a real backward slide. So, South Australia needs to make a stand, I believe, because so many good South Australians rely on the river for their livelihood and good quality of life.

What is the answer? We have heard so many people talk about this, but it comes back to the same basic line. South Australia needs to stand united for a better deal for our state. We should all be able to agree on that. We need to remind the other states of the efforts we made back in the late 1980s and 1990s—and I was here during that time—to get rid of the wasteful leaky drains and open channels. We spent millions, particularly on those schemes. There were two or three schemes and they soaked up millions of dollars under the Liberal government. We stopped the leakage and we now have all our irrigation systems in pipes—no evaporation. What thanks do we get for that?

I was here when we did that. We did it because it was the responsible thing to do, and what do we find now? We are going to be penalised because we are not wasting that water so we are going to lose that water anyway. What was the incentive in that? What is the reward in that? Absolutely crazy. This is a hopeless situation. It has become state versus state, and we knew this right back when prime minister John Howard made his first comments about this. He was dead right when he said, 'The only answer is to set up a fully independent River Murray authority. Forget where the state boundaries are, and here is \$10 billion to start you away.'

That was the answer, there is no doubt about that, because we are never going to agree. You speak to the rice growers. I have a cousin who is a rice grower in Griffith who gives me chapter and verse about us down here. We have heard all the rhetoric about leaving it to the market, because we know that the grape growers could afford to pay more for the water, and so we were going to give it to the grape growers and take it away from the rice growers; yet look at what has happened now. We find that the grape growers cannot afford the water.

Schemes that rely on the river, particularly the BIL scheme, are all up for some review. We are certainly living in difficult times, and it is time that we all spoke with one voice and realised that the only solution to this is to have one common voice and to forget the state boundaries. I want to commend very much the deputy leader, Mitch Williams, who has had a difficult road with this, and also the member for Chaffey.

It has not been easy because, when you have a large length of river—and I am in the middle of this—we cannot all quite agree because our constituents have different demands. Can I say that, to the credit of my colleagues, we have come up with a consensus. It has not been easy, but the Liberal Party works best when its individual members are plugging for their constituency and coming up with a common resolution. I look forward to the next few days when we get this together because, again, I think the Liberal Party will deliver the goods.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel) (17:37): I rise to make a few points in relation to the motion. I really want to support everything that the leader said in her contribution, particularly initially focusing on really the strategy that I think is behind this motion. This is, as the leader said, Hawker Britton 101. I sat in this house in the period between 2002 and 2006 and listened to then premier Rann call on the opposition to join with the government in a bipartisan manner to support a whole range of things.

What do we see here? We see not a new Labor government, we see just the same old Labor government—mark 2, rebadged—rolling out the same old strategies that we have seen for the last 10 years. There is nothing new in this new premier; nothing new in this supposedly revitalised government. They are tired, they are lazy, they are out of ideas and the South Australian public are certainly starting to realise that in a big way.

I have some understanding of these issues relating to the Murray. I lived and worked in the Riverland for three or so years, and I lived and worked at Murray Bridge for about 18 months. Over a period of five or so years I lived and worked in those Riverland and Murrayland communities. I met and married a girl from the Riverland, and that marriage has endured 26 years tomorrow week.

Members interjecting:

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I knew that would bring some interesting comments. My wife still has family in the Riverland. Her father worked a fruit block, as did her uncles, and her brother is still involved in an industry related to primary production. So, my connection through that allows an understanding of how vitally important the Murray River is to that region, right through the Riverland, from the border, through the Murraylands and into the Lower Lakes.

We have heard speakers on this side of the house, particularly the deputy leader, the shadow minister for water, give a thorough outline of a fair percentage of the issues that are important to South Australia relating to the Murray River.

I want to focus on a couple of parts of the motion that the Premier has moved. It mentions the central role of that the River Murray plays in the lives of all South Australians, including primary producers, local businesses, holiday-makers and Aboriginal people. I worked in the Riverland for a major banking corporation here in Australia, and we made lending decisions on the ability of primary producers and associated industries to access water from the river. We had many primary producers, fruit blockers, businesses and you name it banking with us, and the manager of the bank leant money on the basis of those people's access to water out of the river. I am stating the obvious here, but access to satisfactory levels of water is absolutely vital to the wellbeing of those Riverland communities, as well as those of the Murraylands and Lower Lakes.

The Premier talks about holiday-makers. As I said, I worked and lived in the Riverland and married a girl from the Riverland. Some of her family is still living in the Riverland. We enjoy going back to the Riverland for our holidays. It was only in the latter half of last year that we hired a house in Renmark for a few days and enjoyed the attractions of the Riverland. I am not sure whether my wife necessarily is encouraging us to go back because while I was there I called in to the local motorbike dealership and bought a brand-new motorbike when I was up there.

Mr Pederick: You enhanced the economy.

Mr GOLDSWORTHY: I have put a fair dent in the cheque book, I can tell you, and helped the local economy. But that takes me to quite a serious point. In talking to the member for Chaffey, the region has not recovered from the effects of the drought. I got talking to the people who own and operate this motorcycle dealership—and they are into other areas like boating and so on—and the conversation went along the lines of the impacts of the drought and how the region is recovering. In talking to the member for Chaffey, the region still has a long way to go to get back to where it was prior to the drought.

In this place we need to be fully aware of the ongoing issues of that region as a consequence of the drought. I visited the region during that devastating period where I saw once magnificent, flourishing orange orchards that had been starved of water through decisions to cut back water allocations. They had died off and they were pushed up in massive heaps to burn off. It is going to take those producers a long time to recover and get back to where they were previously. It is important, I think, for the house to be aware of the ongoing issues as a consequence of the drought in the region.

The member for Hammond also spoke about the effects of the low river levels in the Murraylands around Murray Bridge and so on with the slumping of the banks and that vehicles disappeared into the river. I believe one of the worst decisions taken was promoted by the previous member for Hammond, who obviously bore the brunt of his decisions, in withdrawing the irrigation of those flats between Murray Bridge and Jervois, all that good dairying country.

I have family friends who live at Woods Point, which is a small community between Murray Bridge and Jervois. They were involved with the dairying industry and, from talking to them, the

idea promoted by the previous member for Hammond in terms of withdrawing irrigation licences along those flats has had a serious impact on the dairying industry through there.

When I lived and worked at Murray Bridge there was a big milk factory in that region, and obviously the prosperity of the milk factory relied on the prosperity of the dairying industry. I understand that that is in serious decline as a consequence of the actions of the previous member for Hammond, and we certainly know what happened to him.

We want a state that promotes and enhances a food industry that flourishes, so we need this Murray-Darling plan to be worked through in a consistent, structured manner so that it delivers the water required for our food industry to prosper. I believe South Australia has had and continues to have outstanding opportunities to be the premier state in Australia in relation to food production, but people need security of water and a satisfactory level of water to achieve that.

Mr HAMILTON-SMITH (Waite) (17:47): I do not want to repeat arguments already put to the house by previous speakers, but I do want to make a few simple points on the Murray. My first point is that, as we know, this issue has been with us since Federation, and there has been no real resolution to the problem of how we share (to use the words of the Premier earlier) this resource.

The second point I want to make is that it was a great shame that in January 2007, when the Howard Liberal government announced a national plan for water security to save the Darling, that it did not receive the unanimous support of the state Labor governments. The Bracks government in particular played wrecker with that proposal, with, I must say, some support from the former premier (the former member for Ramsay), which did not help the cause of the Murray. We had an opportunity to get a real result, and we let it slip through our fingers and that was a great opportunity lost.

My third point has to do with the absolute sham of the July 2008 memorandum of understanding through COAG, announced here in Adelaide by the former premier (the former member for Ramsay), where we were told the problem had been solved because all our powers had been handed over to the commonwealth and they would now broker a solution. I happened to be leader of the opposition at that time, and I produced a paper on that very proposal that slammed the living daylights out of it. I said then that it was complete and utter nonsense and that we would still be here arguing it in 2011—and where are we? Here, arguing the point. I think that what we heard at that time from the Labor government, of which the current Premier was a part, was nothing more than spin.

Now, of course, we have the Murray-Darling Basin plan before us. I must say I look at the motion and I find myself agreeing with most of it, and I think the Premier has taken a very clever political stand. It is basically a stand which is all things to all people. We want 4,000 gigitalitres for the environment; we want all of the environmental lobby to be happy and we will not accept a gigitalitre less; and, by the way, we want all of our food producers and irrigators not to have to give up a single gigitalitre. I think the Premier wants to keep all of the irrigators and food producers happy and, of course, he then wants to keep all of the environmentalists happy. It is an all things to all people position.

I find myself agreeing with him in many ways. We would all love that. I am sure there wouldn't be anyone on this side who wouldn't rather have the optimum of water for the environment and not have to give up a single thing. We would all love that but, ultimately, I think the question that the Premier will have to answer is—and I respect his goals here, and I think his goals are admirable—is South Australia prepared to torpedo any agreement at all and deliver nothing if it does not get those two things I mentioned a moment ago? Are we prepared to scuttle the entire agreement, because I know Premier Baillieu and other states upstream—and there are more of them than there are of us—are taking totally different standpoints.

I would urge the Premier to start looking at how we could reach a compromise here. The Premier has made much of the deal that was done between his government, the union and Business SA over shop trading hours. He has made much of the deal that has been done to save Holden's. I think what we need here now is a deal. We need an agreement. It may be that the goals the Premier has set can ultimately one day be achieved, but not today. It may have to be a staged process. We may have to accept something short of what we really want for the moment with a view to achieving our full goals and objectives at another point down the track.

That would mean, rather than holding this up in the courts and having the states fighting each other, and the states fighting the commonwealth, and everyone arguing as we have since 1901, an approach where some premiers got together and said, 'Look, let's agree to this part of

what we want now, and let's put back on the table the rest of what we want for a further decision, three, four or five years from now, and allow time for irrigators and environmentalists, all along the river, to get their head around what we are achieving today so that we can achieve even more for both the river and for irrigators tomorrow.'

I think we need some pragmatic thinking about how we stage this, because while I think the Premier's goals are worthwhile, I do not think he is going to get everything he wants. The nature of these things, and he knows this being an industrial lawyer, is that at the end there needs to be give and take on all sides, and I think that is where we are going to need to finish up.

There are few more important decisions before this parliament, and we must get it right, but I also agree that the worst possible outcome would be no outcome at all, so I urge the Premier to adopt a very pragmatic approach in how we get to the objectives that he has set. I think we all agree with those objectives but we might not agree with the journey on how to get there. We might need to be more clever about how we set out upon it.

Mr BIGNELL (Mawson) (17:54): I rise briefly to support this motion and to commend and congratulate the Premier and the water minister for the stance they have taken on this issue. The people of Mawson and the people of wider South Australia expect us to stand up and fight for South Australia's rights on this argument. We heard from people on the other side who mentioned that this is not about 'us versus them'—but it is 'us versus them' because it is our people, people like the McLaren Vale grape growers and winemakers who, for 40 years, have controlled how much water they use on their grapes, and have really restricted usage, and they have done that because it is the right thing to do by the environment, and they have done that for 40 years. It really hurts them to look at people in New South Wales and Victoria who are using a lot of water to grow grapes that are then causing a glut in the wine industry, when they are actually producing good quality wine in McLaren Vale.

The member for Schubert mentioned the restraint that the growers have shown in the Barossa as well. People have done the hard yards in South Australia under this cap for 40 years, and they have done it to do the right thing by the river and the local environment. It is time for us to say to the other states that we want our fair share.

[Sitting extended beyond 18:00 on motion of Hon. J.W. Weatherill]

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (17:55): I rise today to make a contribution to this debate, viewing it from afar as the member for Flinders, and, living as I do on the bottom end of Eyre Peninsula, I am probably as far removed geographically from the river as anyone in this state. As an electorate and as a peninsula, we have not been connected to the River Murray for a long, long time—most of the history of this state—apart from, of course, Madam Speaker, your own home town of Whyalla, where the Morgan to Whyalla pipeline was installed to service the growing town of Whyalla and the steelworks that were established there.

Apart from that, we have not had any connection to the River Murray until quite recently, in the last half a dozen years or so, when the Morgan to Whyalla pipeline was extended out to Iron Knob, where iron ore mining was taking place. In the last half a dozen years or so, that pipeline has been extended to Kimba, joining the reticulated scheme on Eyre Peninsula into the River Murray. All of a sudden, the Murray became of vital interest to those of us who lived on the Eyre Peninsula.

That pipeline was extended at a time of drought, and many people, including the former member for Flinders (Mrs Liz Penfold) queried that decision and whether it was a reasonable solution to Eyre Peninsula's water problems to join us to the River Murray which was, as I said, at that time undergoing quite severe drought, which became known as the millennium drought, a period of some 10 years or so of below-average rainfall. We have now become committed to the River Murray, and the Murray supplies around 15 per cent of Eyre Peninsula's water. All of a sudden, the health of the river is of great interest to us.

Living a long way from the river as we did, it was with some surprise that I first visited the town of Renmark in the seat of Chaffey, way back in the 1970s as a schoolboy. Coming from dryland wheat country, I was absolutely overwhelmed by the orange orchards, particularly, and the other permanent plantings that the blockies had established there. The quality of the fruit that was produced in that little orchard I visited was quite extraordinary. Picking oranges off the tree and just peeling off that thick, beautiful skin and biting into a magnificent Riverland orange was a joy, a treat and a surprise to me.

I did not get the chance to visit the river again until I joined some friends and travelled on a houseboat.

Mr Whetstone: Hear, hear!

Mr TRELOAR: Yes, on the River Murray—once again, from Renmark.

Mr Whetstone: Good tourist.

Mr TRELOAR: Good tourist, yes, and I enjoyed my time in the seat of Chaffey. It was before I met the current member for Chaffey. We did enjoy our time, and once again I was fascinated by this magnificent stretch of water that winds its way and drains a significant percentage of south-eastern Australia, covering four states (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia).

One could not help but be impressed by the majesty of the river in those days and also the mighty river red gums, of course. I also spent a little bit of time at Murray Bridge and learned to waterski with some relatives there. Of course, the river is a bit different down at that bottom end and it is not so much the stately red gums but more the willows, which, as an introduced species, have taken hold, and I think they add something to the river in itself.

There have been some interesting points raised. The most important thing to come out of this is the need to find a plan that works for all states, but particularly for South Australia. It is not, as the member for Stuart highlighted, an environment versus industry debate. Both environment and industry can complement each other. Both have requirements from this river, and there are social requirements as well. The plan needs to achieve all those things. It is not an easy thing to do, but in fact all three can be complementary. They do not need to be at odds with each other.

We do support the motion that is before the house today. I am pleased to be speaker No. 10 for the opposition. I think it is significant that relatively few members on the government benches have spoken on this, despite the fact that each and every one of them is so reliant upon a healthy river system, and no doubt their constituents are also very reliant upon the River Murray and the health of that system for their wellbeing.

Mr Williams interjecting:

Mr TRELOAR: Yes, that's right. As the member for MacKillop points out, as long as it comes out of a tap, everybody is happy, but as we all know it is not that simple. It has to come from a healthy, sustainable river system. Often irrigation practices are questioned, and I have seen in Victoria and New South Wales open channels and flood irrigation that we are all well aware of and familiar with.

A significant portion of the water extracted for irrigation, particularly in the southern part of the basin in the Eastern States, actually goes to irrigating pastures, and it surprised me that there are many pastures in northern Victoria in particular that are simply flood irrigated. I find it quite extraordinary that there are open channels and flood irrigation still occurring in the second decade now of the 21st century. The challenge I think will be for those Eastern States irrigators to modernise their practices and ensure that their practices are world's best, because Australia prides itself on being at the forefront of agricultural development and world's best practice. There are opportunities, no doubt, for irrigators to make improvements.

I understand from what my colleagues tell me that, here in South Australia, we have practices that really are at the forefront. We have made great leaps in the last four decades in the technology and the systems that we use to maintain our irrigation here in South Australia. We are more reliant, I think, on permanent plantings here than probably the other states are. They tend towards annual crops, such as rice and cotton and irrigated pasture.

There has been much criticism of rice and cotton as irrigation crops. I guess they could argue that it is an opportunity crop, whereas here in South Australia we really do need to secure that water for permanent plantings because the orchards and the vineyards are essentially what South Australian irrigation and Riverland irrigation are all about.

I urge the government to consider all that has been said in the house today and all the submissions that have been made and to take them seriously and come up with a plan that effectively manages the river to a point that has not been done in the past. We have an opportunity now to get it right for the coming decades. I think the challenges will be greater in the future than they have been in the past. It is not about managing the river so much as coping with the river.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Minister for State Development) (18:04): Can I thank all honourable members for their contributions and for the acknowledgement of those opposite that they support the motion, although I must say it was a novel way in which they chose to support the motion, committing their party to supporting the resolution which says that 2,750 gigalitres is not enough and then spending most of their contributions saying that 2,750 gigalitres is good enough. So, that is perplexing but, nevertheless, we will take the support where we can get it.

Can I say there are some things that probably need to be corrected about the record. The honourable member just made, I think, a reflection that not many of those on this side of the house spoke. We have one voice on this matter and it is reflected by the position that I have consistently given. I think it is appropriate that those opposite be given time to explain their position which has been one where they have publicly questioned and prevaricated in relation to their attitude to the Murray-Darling Basin plan.

Indeed, a number of our members have made contributions through the Natural Resources Committee of parliament, through the very able report prepared by the member for Ashford, the member for Torrens and Mr Gerry Kandelaars, the member in the other place. Of course, a number of members have made contributions in that debate and even on other occasions in support of the River Murray and in support of the plan, so I do not think that is a fair summary of the extent of the support, in relation to which we are truly united on this side of the house.

I do need to correct a very egregious error though. It was said by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Goyder Institute and, in particular, Dr Minns, told him that 2,750 gigalitres equals 3,500 gigalitres in terms of the translation. We have actually been advised by the Goyder Institute and Dr Minns that the communication was that 2,750 would equate to about 3,250 in relation to the present plan. So, the reflection on the members of the Natural Resources Committee, who made some positive remarks about the importance of that number, of course, do not then flow.

Can I also respond to the remarks that were made by the Leader of the Opposition about my position—and it was repeated by the member for Waite—about the allegation that I had promoted a number of 4,000 gigalitres and that was 'not a drop less'. It has never been what I have said and I have consistently said the same thing. It has always been made clear that we will be guided by the science.

I made it clear that the best available science was the Goyder report which had indicated 3,500 to 4,000 gigalitres was required, but we also made it clear that we would undertake further analysis of the science underpinning the draft plan and we would be guided by that science. That is why we released the latest Goyder report as soon as it has been available to us. In relation to the answer to the question that the Leader of the Opposition referred to, which is contained in *Hansard* on 1 December, my answer to her question about 4,000 gigalitres was:

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 gigalitres of water will be necessary to return the river to life.

So, we are now going back to the Goyder Institute and relying upon their further, more refined science.

One thing I do agree with the member for Waite about—and at least his contribution had some semblance of a chain of reasoning to it—is that this is an incredibly important issue and it should be approached with some gravity, rather than as an opportunity to create a travelogue about the River Murray or, indeed, misrepresent the government's position or make some spurious points which do not bear on the central questions at stake here, which are contained in the resolution.

Remember what we have done here. As soon as we had the report, we commissioned the Goyder Institute to carry out some analysis of it. We established the Premier's Basin Plan, we established a legal task force, we published the Goyder Institute's work as soon as we had it. It was released on the very day that parliament considered it and it was made a final report. We got the provisional report on the Friday, the final report on the Monday and we released it to the public on the Monday.

We are debating now the principles which will guide the government's response. This is a completely open and accountable process designed to inform public debate on an issue of

extraordinary public importance, yet our approach is being demeaned and somehow minimised as not being genuine.

I am grateful that the house has chosen to support these principles. Can I reflect back to a time when the house, under the leadership of the Hon. Rob Kerrin, back on 25 February 2003, came together in relation to the Adelaide Declaration. All members of parliament—a number of them here who are present members of parliament—came together and made a declaration in not dissimilar terms to the one that we are making today.

On that occasion there was a sense of unity of purpose, which would serve us well in the current debate. I certainly will be taking forward the interests of this state in the submissions we make to the authority and in the representations that we make to the federal government about the future of this mighty river.

Motion carried.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (18:11): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr WILLIAMS: The Premier just informed the house that I was in error, apparently, when I suggested that Dr Tony Minns told me that 2,750 gigalitres, as proposed in the draft basin plan, was equivalent to 3,500 gigalitres in the guide. When I made that comment, I was working from memory. If the Premier tells me that he has contacted Dr Tony Minns and has been informed that the figure is 3,250 (the 2,750 in the plan being equivalent to 3,250 in the earlier guide), I accept that I may have been in error there, and I wish to make that point and correct the record.

At 18:12 the house adjourned until Thursday 5 April 2012 at 10:30.