

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 6 June 2013

The **SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Atkinson)** took the chair at 10:32 and read prayers.

ADOPTION (CONSENT TO PUBLICATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 21 March 2013.)

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10:34): As it presently stands, South Australian parents who have adopted a child must obtain permission from the chief executive of Families SA or a court to have themselves or their child identified in the media as parties to an adoption. Understandably, this requirement has caused, and does cause, concern amongst some adoptive families. These families, rightly, want to be able to make decisions about whether or not their child appears in the media, for example, in a photograph for the newspaper, just as other parents do.

An application to the chief executive is, we believe, unnecessarily bureaucratic and only serves to make these loving families feel like special cases, unable to make decisions about the welfare of their children like other families do. The fact that failure to seek this approval can result in a fine is particularly perverse.

The government has considered a number of matters relating to these aspects of the Adoption Act and regulations that the member for Morialta has brought to this house. An intercountry adoption parent support group, the South Australian Chinese Adoption Support Organisation, has also been particularly active on this issue. I will be introducing some amendments which aim to enable families to go about their business without being required to seek consent from my department for publication in the media content relating to their family's adoption status.

In 2009, through the National Intercountry Adoption Harmonisation Working Group, under the auspices of the then community and disability services minister's advisory council, South Australia agreed in principle, along with all other jurisdictions, that all Australian adoption legislation should allow parties to a legally completed adoption to give their consent to be identified in the media as a party to an adoption once an adoption order has been granted. The amendment that we will be voting on in this house settles that agreement. In relation to the media provisions in the Adoption Act, the government supports an amendment to section 31 so that:

- any adult party to a legally completed adoption may consent to being identified in the news media as a party to an adoption;
- where the adoption is legally completed, an adopted child can be identified in the news media as such, provided consent is given by the parents or legal guardians of the adopted child; and
- where any child who is placed with prospective adoptive parents but who is still under the guardianship of the chief executive (for example, where the adoption has not been legally completed), approval to be identified in the news media as a party to adoption proceedings must be granted by the chief executive or the court.

The amendment reflects the status of the chief executive as guardian during the processing of an adoption application. The issue with the term 'guardian' is that it may change over time. I am the guardian of many children in this state; another person may be given guardianship of an adopted child—say, a caregiver or a relative—or an adopted child may have lost an adoptive parent, only for the adoptive parent to find a new partner who may seek orders to be considered as a guardian also.

The current legislation had noble intentions, and that was making the protection of an adopted child paramount during very sensitive times. However, in a society where adoption is now much better understood and much more open, it is not necessary for the department to be involved in the decision regarding whether parties to an adoption can be identified in the media. It also had the unintended consequence of upsetting adoptive families unnecessarily. Although this was not

the intention, the government believes that this requirement now only serves to make adoptive families unnecessarily upset.

The amendment we are dealing with in the house remedies this. It preserves the safeguards during the process of changing guardianship, whilst ensuring that once adoption is complete families are no longer required to go through the process of asking for permission from the department or the court for their child to be identified in the media as an adopted child.

A photo in the newspaper, for example, can be determined as appropriate or otherwise by those people closest to the child—their loving adoptive parents. I think we would all agree that it is these people who are in the best position to make that decision. I wish those families all the very best and acknowledge their passionate advocacy on this issue. I commend the amendments that we are putting to those members of the house, and I thank the member for Morialta for bringing this matter to the house.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (10:40): I rise to support this matter. I want to bring to the attention of the house the reasons why I have been very supportive of the member for Morialta over this matter. Some years ago a constituent came to me when they were having trouble with the agency here in South Australia with the process that they had entered into in an attempt to adopt a small Chinese child, a little girl from rural China, to become part of their family in rural South Australia.

Part of the problem was that it got to the point where I believe there was a genuine attempt to prevent this from happening through the agency at the time. Over a period of time we were successful in getting the adoption to happen, but then they ran foul of the agency because this particular family wanted to provide a sibling for their daughter and wanted to go through the process again to adopt another child. Unfortunately—and this is part of the function of the world we live in—this couple found themselves unable to have their own children after many years of trying.

They then went through the IVF program, and that all takes time. By the time that they had come to the conclusion that the only hope for them to have a family was through adoption, and the only hope to have a family through adoption was to adopt an overseas-born child, they were getting on in years. They were in their 40s, and this was one of the reasons why the agency made, in my opinion, life very difficult for them to complete the process.

Indeed, when they attempted to adopt the second child, it became even more difficult than their first experience. They came up against this other problem that they were not able to identify themselves as adoptive parents. Consequently, they were not able to undertake any lobbying, particularly in the public sphere, to change the regulations to allow themselves, and people finding themselves in similar circumstances, to have an easier path.

At the end of the day, we—myself as their local member and that family—remained very frustrated by the whole process. So I was delighted when the member for Morialta raised this matter in our party room because I could see that it was going to overcome one of the issues that I had grappled with a number of years before, or a part of the issue at least. My understanding is that there are a significant number of adoptive parents who have similar situations, or similar experiences, who have been unable to advocate for changes to the regulations to help themselves and other people who find themselves in a similar position.

So it is for that reason in particular that I am delighted to support this measure, and I am delighted that the government has at last come on board. I sincerely hope that there will be a change of attitude in the agency as well. I can assure the house that the little girl, who was successfully adopted eventually and who is now living very happily with a family in my electorate, I generally believe will have a much, much better chance at life than she would have had had her adoptive parents continued to be frustrated in their attempts. I soundly support the motion and commend it to the house.

Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (10:44): I think this is a terrific day for those families who have been grappling with this issue for a number of years. The issue first really came to public prominence in 2005 when there was a rally on the steps of Parliament House where those rallying on an issue were unable to be identified. I do not want to traverse all of that ground again right now because I did so in my second reading explanation.

The point is that this has been a bugbear for those families for at least eight years and for some of them who have been aware of it for longer than that. I am very pleased today, as I know they are, with the contribution that the minister has just made, so I thank her for that. I do not really

have much to refute out of those comments that have been made because everyone has spoken in favour of the bill, which is a very pleasant change.

However, I do think it is worth noting that this probably would not have happened without the advocacy of the President of the SA Chinese Adoption Support Inc., Nigel Holden, and his board and those many other adoptive parents and adoptees, who are children and adults now, who have been campaigning for this and who have written to me in particular. A number of them came into Parliament House a couple of months ago.

I would like to thank those members who took the time to meet with those parents, those adoptees and other people in that community from the Liberal Party and the Greens, who were very quick to jump on board and I commend them for that, and from Family First, Dignity for Disability and a number of members on the government benches who I know have been advocating for this. I am sure they will be pleased to write to their constituents who have been talking to them to share the good news, as indeed will other members who have contributed and independent members of course, a number of whom were also involved.

I am pleased that the Labor Party has today announced that they will support the bill on the basis that they have some amendments to offer. The minister was kind enough to show me a draft of the amendments and I am very pleased to say that the opposition will be supporting those amendments. They would perhaps add to the bill and I certainly think that with the amendments we will have a better situation than we do presently.

I might even go so far as to say that the amendments are valuable in and of their own right. Certainly the opposition has no intention of holding this up and I am pleased to commend the bill to the house. I hope it will pass the other place as speedily as possible, perhaps more speedily than has been done in this house, and I look forward to that passage.

Bill read a second time.

In committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: I have two amendments to clause 3 and I assume that the house would be happy to deal with both amendments together and expeditiously. I move:

Line 15—After 'is a child' insert 'and is not under the guardianship of the Chief Executive'

Line 17—After subparagraph (ii) insert:

- (iii) if the person is a child and under the guardianship of the Chief Executive—the Chief Executive; or

The amendments really just make sure that we have clarification around guardianship of the child and the processes that we go through when an adoption is still in progress, to be absolutely clear about who has responsibility around the release of information to the media.

Mr GARDNER: I indicate that the opposition will be supporting the amendments.

Amendments carried; clause as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (10:50): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

LIQUOR LICENSING (SUPPLY TO MINORS) AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 21 February 2013.)

Ms SANDERSON (Adelaide) (10:51): It is with great pleasure that I rise in support of this bill, and I commend the member for Morialta for bringing this important bill to the house. I think it is a very important issue, that is, liquor being supplied to minors by people other than their own parents. I think that most people agree that parenting should be left to the parents and that if

parents make a ruling for their family on whether their children are allowed to have alcohol under the age of 18, then that is their prerogative as a family. However, when that alcohol is supplied outside their family in a domestic situation, I think they should also have every right to object to that and have some ability to object to that.

The member for Morialta has done extensive consultation and provided lots of information and notes, not only from people who would be affected but from schools, principals, students, and community leaders who are all very much in support of this bill. There is also lots of new research that has been brought to our attention about the effects of alcohol on developing brains. The younger a person is when they start drinking, the more effect it will have on their brain, so I am definitely in favour of reducing the amount of alcohol that is supplied to minors.

Certainly, in the house that I grew up in there was a zero tolerance. My mother was very strict on zero supply of alcohol, with or without her supervision. I think if anyone else had supplied me with alcohol, not only would I have been in big trouble for agreeing to take it when I knew that I could not but my mother would have certainly wanted some redress against the people who had supplied the alcohol.

In one example that was brought to my office, a parent allowed her 15-year-old son to go to his friend's house for what she thought was just a video and pizza night on a Friday after school, only to find that the children were in a games room separate to the house, where there was a fully stocked fridge. There was no adult supervision and the alcohol had been supplied for these minors without the parents of the minors being aware.

This constituent of mine was then called near midnight to pick up her very drunk and disorderly child, who had been put out onto the street which, as we know, is very dangerous. We have had people hit and killed drink walking; we have lots of advertising campaigns. There was no recourse. Her child could have been killed by a car having been put out on that street, or could have ended up with alcohol poisoning, and under the current law there would be nothing that she could have done about that.

Some of the research the member for Morialta provided states that 62 per cent of children aged 14 to 17 are consuming alcohol at some level. Of that group, 35 per cent obtained it from their parents, so we would assume that it was under strict supervision and in minimal amounts. A small number of these got their alcohol through stealing or purchasing from licensed premises, but the overwhelming majority was supplied alcohol by adults who were not their parents or guardians, and it was in a domestic environment. So, I think this is definitely a big issue and something we need to look at.

There are laws already in place in other states; there is legislation in New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland and Victoria that prohibits supplying alcohol to minors in a domestic environment except to one's own child or dependant. The Victorian legislation was introduced in November 2011 and polling revealed that 87 per cent of Victorians supported the law and 91 per cent of parents and guardians supported it. Furthermore, the legislation gives the police an extra tool to break up unruly parties involving underage drinking. In Queensland and Tasmania, the legislation allows parents to supply alcohol to their children; in New South Wales and Victoria, they require written consent.

There are different ways of doing this, but I believe, from talking to a lot of young people who are at school and who do go to school parties, there is a lot of pressure placed on them if they are hosting a party that alcohol should be supplied. That is because everyone else has alcohol at their parties and they feel a lot of peer pressure to do what the norm is. My mother, who was more than happy to be disliked—and there were big arguments—did what she believed was the right thing by having a zero alcohol tolerance. Basically, I was not ever allowed to go to any parties just in case there was alcohol present.

The bill would allow parents the strength to resist the peer pressure of their children and their children's friends, forcing them into supplying alcohol for the sake of their child's reputation. They would actually have a legitimate and legal reason to say, 'No, it is against the law for me to supply alcohol to you.' Depending on any changes to that law, or how this bill might go through, it could be that they can have alcohol at that party if written consent has been received by each of the parents of each of the children who intend on drinking at that party.

I think this a very important issue. There are often binge drinking issues in the media; we see young people who, to me, as I get older, definitely look underage—it gets harder and harder to tell—where they are filmed in the gutter in Hindley Street (or wherever they might be). There are

very strict regulations on licensed premises in the city and they are doing a terrific job of keeping underage children out and away from alcohol because of the severe fines that are in place. What we can see from the research is that most of the alcohol being provided to underage children is actually in a domestic environment by people other than their own parents without, necessarily, the parents even being aware of that situation, nor have they given consent.

I believe it is a parent's role to raise a child; it is not someone else's parents' role to decide what is right or wrong for your child. This gives parents the power to be able to say, with the backing of the law, 'It is illegal for me to supply alcohol to anyone else's children in any situation.' I commend the member for Morialta, he has my full support with the bill and I hope that we can act in a bipartisan way and put this very important legislation through the house because I do not think there could be any argument that it would be wrong to protect our young and most vulnerable.

Mr PISONI (Unley) (10:59): I too stand to support the bill and I would particularly like to congratulate the member for Morialta for bringing the bill to the parliament. When he first brought the bill out for consultation, I was on the Unley High School governing council. The bill was discussed at a governing council meeting and there was overwhelming support by parents for the bill. Parents were saying that, yes, we want support for the decisions we make with our children. We have made decisions that we do not want our children drinking under the age of 18, and if we do allow them to drink we want it to be in a controlled environment with us and not with strangers or other adults who could ply those children with alcohol and take advantage of them.

There were parents of daughters there, of course, who expressed some concern that, if that did happen, it could very well put their daughters in a vulnerable position, and we all know how difficult it can be to prove a situation like that under the current laws, whereas this makes it very easy for a parent to take action against another adult if they have given alcohol to their under-age child. We are talking about children who could be 12, 13 or 14.

When we went to the induction at Unley High School for our daughter, who is now 19, back in 2006 I think it was, we were warned about that period between high school and primary school being the most dangerous and vulnerable for experimentation by young people. Alcohol was listed as being an area of most concern by those councillors and teachers at Unley High School who were informing parents of the change in their children's development and the change they will be experiencing as they move into high school. This was obviously before the Christmas break from grade 7 into high school.

Parents are saying to me that they want support for their decisions as parents. Another area where this will be particularly valuable for parents would be in the after parties that are formed after the semi-formal that happens in year 11 in most schools, and then the formal which happens in year 12. In both those instances, particularly the semi-formal in year 11, you certainly will not see any children who are old enough to drink, but you will see plenty of alcohol given to children, supplied by adults, in many instances without the knowledge of the parents and certainly without the permission of parents.

Of course the mid-year formal, where only a few of these students may be of drinking age, puts even more pressure on those who are not of drinking age to participate in the drinking at after parties. If you look at some of the venues where these after parties are conducted, there is a large misunderstanding by parents and others of just what are the laws. There was one after party where on Facebook they were advertising a \$30 or \$40 entry fee, and that included alcohol.

When I raised my concerns with the superintendent at the Sturt police, and asked questions about whether this was in fact in breach of any licensing laws, he said, 'Well, as matter of fact it is: you are charging for entry, which includes alcohol and that requires a temporary liquor licence.' The parents did not have a liquor licence, and were not aware that they needed to have a liquor licence. The police made it very clear that they needed to have that liquor licence in order for that party to continue, and they were horrified as parents that they were breaking the law.

Consequently more parents with a law in place would not want to break the law and they would be able to have that argument back to their teenage children. Those who have teenage children or recently had them will understand how persistent and how knowledgeable they are of the law when it suits their interest. They will be able to tell their children, 'No, you cannot drink at this party, it is illegal for anybody to offer you a drink at this party, so you will not drink at this party and there will not be alcohol at this party, or the party we are having at our house will not have alcohol.' This is simply a mechanism for parents to make their own choices for their own families.

At the moment, that choice is removed by this loophole in legislation that allows some other adult, who may not even have a connection with your children, to make a decision about their drinking, and that is not right. As a parent, that is your sole decision and your parenting right. I urge members on both sides of the house to support this bill and support parents in South Australia.

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (11:05): I rise briefly to speak and support this bill from the member for Morialta. As the member for the Barossa and as a strong supporter of our wine industry, and to a lesser extent our beer industry, I take strong interest in a matter such as this. We all strive for the responsible use and consumption of alcohol. I strongly support this bill and certainly hope it will gain the unanimous support of this house, because I do not believe there should be a single member in this place who would not agree with it.

Teenage or underage drinking is of great concern to us all, especially the binge drinking, the sickness, the risk to health and the inherent bad behaviour that goes with it. It is sickening to see it regularly on our TV. In particular, we have seen vivid vision of what happens in Kings Cross with the drinking, the loutish behaviour, the collapsing in the streets and young people being carted off to hospital in the ambulance comatose. It is a disgusting situation and I think the community in Australia ought to be taking a lot stronger view about it.

I believe this problem starts as a fad amongst young people, or because of peer group activity, as has been said, which often becomes a very addictive habit. As this bill intimates, this activity often starts with underage people being given alcohol in friends' or other people's homes, without their parents being present and without their knowledge or consent. As always, we can draw on our own experiences and, as the house knows, I do enjoy a good red, but I was lucky not to have had any contact with alcohol in my younger years at all.

Members interjecting:

Mr VENNING: Some would say that I am making up for it, and I am, but I must say with the experience and knowledge to know what the responsible activity is. In my younger years, I was lucky enough not to have any alcohol at all. In fact, I was a teetotaler until I was elected to this house in 1990 at age 44, but by now I reckon I have caught up to the average. I fully understand the pleasures and the powers of alcohol but, as an adult with life experience, I know to be very careful.

It horrifies me even to see parents letting their young children have a sip of dad's beer. I understand this bill does not prohibit a parent supplying or giving permission to another parent or adult to allow their children access to alcoholic drinks. I understand that is the case and I am a bit concerned about whether that permission should be given in writing or something like that. Otherwise, the kid is going to say, 'Yes, dad has no worries. He knows I am here. He knows I am going to have a drink.' How does the visiting parent know that, because you do not expect kids to tell the truth, do you, particularly with the peer group pressure that goes with that, and I question that.

We are sick of the horrific activity that has been happening with many young people binge drinking. It is not so much the red wine that they are drinking, it is these powerful mixes that they put together. I saw it myself last Saturday night. I went into a public bar full of young people, and they were not drinking ordinary red wine or beer, they were drinking these high-powered mixer drinks. Why? Quick fix, quick kick. I just shook my head in disbelief because, basically, they are drinking poison. I think it is very powerful alcohol with a very quick result. One was a jager bomb, which I had once and never again. It was a Red Bull and Jägermeister—a very powerful brew. Why young people drink drinks like that—

An honourable member: Or old people.

Mr VENNING: —or old people. You could say I have the constitution to be able to take a bit of that sort of thing. I just think it is crazy that those sorts of drinks are promoted to our young people. I think it is a nonsense. Without putting myself further into this, I congratulate the member for Morialta. I hope that the house will support this because I think it is common sense and should have been done well before now.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (11:10): I have to say that I love Thursday mornings. It is wonderful being in this place and listening to the stories from across the chamber, especially when there are good numbers here and there are a few retorts. I might be 51 and rather boring now, but I did have a youth, and there is only one instance in which I cannot remember what occurred.

There are a few times when we have challenges in our life, and I have lived through the teenage years and the challenges that presents. I have lived through having kids and their teenage years and the challenges that presents, and I know it is hard. So, I respect the way the member for Morialta has brought this bill before us because it is from a sense of seriousness and a concern about what occurs.

I have seen a lot of things happen in my life—experienced some, witnessed others, shaken my head in frustration at some and accepted some as being well done and showing a level of maturity. I have also lived with the frustration of seeing people get in trouble because of a lack of willingness to accept responsibility. I have seen some terrible effects of what alcohol actually does, not just to younger people but to those in early adulthood who should have been more sensible about what they did, and the pronounced effects on the rest of their life.

We have to give this some serious consideration. The member for Schubert, in recounting part of his own history, and anybody who stands up to talk about this, has to consider it based upon not only their own experiences but what society is going to need in the future. The member for Unley is actually quite sensible when he talks about issues that have impacted and the decisions that he and his wife have made for their children and the way they have acted that out.

In my life, with my kids, we showed a bit more leniency, but we did so from an informed position and a respect for what they were going to do. My son has a personality that challenges a bit more than my daughter's did, I think it is fair to say. There were some occasions when he came home and I was a bit embarrassed about him, but I knew where he was, I trusted the people he was with and I was prepared to allow him to mature in that way.

But my great concern exists where there are parents who, yes, have faith in their child but, when their child goes into a circumstance they do not know enough about and do not ask enough questions about, and the level of adult supervision that might be there is not as stringent as it should be, some kids get into terrible situations. As much as I do not want a nanny state situation to exist, that is where I think there is a reason for this bill to be proposed and there is a reason for it to be supported.

If I can recount one story, my daughter was a boarder at one of the schools in Adelaide (I shall not mention which school it was), and she was attending a formal. She had consumed some alcohol beforehand, and she had advised her mum and I about what was intended to occur. She went to this function and there was another young lady there who was 'out of it'—that is the way my daughter described it to me.

She chose to actually assist her, which put her at some risk of being identified. She was identified and suffered the penalty of actually being suspended from the school for four days, but I respected the fact that she helped out a young kid at a time when that child did need some assistance and at a time when, if that assistance had not been provided, who knows what could have happened.

There are circumstances we have all to face up to. I always try to tell my kids that there will be ramifications for what they do or say all their life; they have to except responsibility for that. Yes, she took the suspension. Did I like it? No. Did I respect that the school did it? Sort of, but I was prepared to enforce the decision it had made. But I know she has come out of it a stronger person, and I hope that the young lady who was assisted actually learnt from that experience and that she has matured from it, too.

There are a lot of words that will be said. I hope that some level-headed sense is given to the consideration proposed by the member for Morialta, and he has done so with an enormous amount of investigation. It is not just a flippant effort to try to deal with an issue that might have only been brought to him by one person: this has been a consistent issue raised with him. He has done the research. The briefing paper which the member for Morialta supplied to the Liberal Party was very conclusive about what has occurred in other states; consultations that have occurred with schools; and the level of support that existed in a wide cross-section of the community for the change to occur.

I think it should be implemented, because it allows us to put in place some steps so that we can give some assurances to the vast number of parents out there who want to ensure that their child is going to be safe, and that when they put them in the care of others, it is going to be understood what the implications are. It is also going to give them a chance to have a discussion between the generations, which I think is really important. The member for Adelaide talked about a decision that her mother made unilaterally; I respect that that has occurred. I suffered a little from

that too. I have hoped that with my own kids I have allowed them to put their case to me, and for the discussion to occur.

I think what the member for Morialta proposes still allows that to occur, and it allows the debate between the parents to occur, in order for everybody to know the implications of what is proposed; what can potentially happen; and what protections are going to be there. But, it will still allow the younger generation to have fun, and that is what it also has to come down to. If you show faith in your child and you put them in a situation where they and others around them can enjoy themselves, they will mature and grow up to be wonderful young adults who will make this state a great state. Well done, member for Morialta.

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr BROCK (Frome) (11:15): I have confessed to a couple of other things, such as speeding fines, so I am going to be very careful today. Firstly, I congratulate the member for Morialta for going forward with this bill and bringing this issue to our attention. As the member for Goyder has just said, he has not just done the research; he has done a lot of research. I congratulate the member for Morialta for bringing up this bill, and the previous bill on the adoption system.

As has been mentioned in this house, we have all done the wrong thing when we were younger. We have all come across a lot of peer pressure, and we have done a lot of things in our youth which may not have been to the benefit of society going forward. The member for Schubert has brought a couple of drinks to my attention that I do not think some of the young people in my area know about, so I really need to warn the member for Schubert to perhaps be a bit careful about what he is saying, and to stay away from those drinks if they affect the member for Schubert so badly.

This bill is a great bill, and I will wholeheartedly support it. I must admit, my own children have gone through that particular period of time, and I now have grandchildren coming up to that age; they are a bit younger at this stage, but they do have a lot of peer pressure out there. When they go to parties, the parents and grandparents need to be very sure that when they go to those locations—I am only picking on parties—that they are going there and they are safe, and that they are not going to consume anything that may be detrimental to their health.

A lot of parents do not mention these things for fear of embarrassment; they know it happens, but they think that if they make it public they are perceived to not be good parents. That is not the case. There are a lot of parents out there and—I think as the member for MacKillop may have mentioned—people go to parties. The parents at these parties are custodians, and if they are going to charge, as the member for MacKillop indicated—

An honourable member: Unley.

Mr BROCK: Member for Unley; I apologise—if they are going to charge for that, then they need to have a liquor licence. People do not realise the consequences and requirements that need to be out there. Peer pressure at schools—I have come across this myself with some friends of mine; their children have gone to parties and have been pressured to have a drink, and things like that, and they really do not want to say no. We have to be very, very careful of what we are doing.

We, as a society, also need to bring to the attention of the public the importance of responsible gambling. The Premier has made it quite clear, in some statements he made recently about the advertising of gambling during sporting events. We also want to be able to cut that out, because that is very attractive and easy to do. To the member for Morialta: I wholeheartedly congratulate you for bringing this to our attention, and I think there should be bipartisan support in this house for a bill of this magnitude. Again, I give you my full support.

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (11:19): I seek to make a contribution to this debate. I wish the member for Morialta well with his motion. I—

The Hon. R.B. Such interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: I will come to that, member for Fisher. I think it is a good idea. The former member for Stuart, the Hon. Graham Gunn, was always reminding us that it is difficult to legislate against stupidity. I think they were wise words, and they often reverberate around the inside of my head when we are thinking about the legislation in this place.

The reality is that, to the best of our ability, we do everything possible, if we are fortunate enough to have children, to educate them from the day they are born until the day we depart, but

more specifically, we assist them to get through those formative years from early childhood through to teenage and into adulthood, which in many cases is extremely difficult. I am sure that members in this place who have children have had difficulties at one stage or another with either alcohol, vehicles or whatever.

Let me say that this bill of the member for Morialta's is around the subject of alcohol. Another subject which really concerns me is the issue of drugs, and that is something that is also an appalling thing in our society and is only too plain to see should you venture out and about around the communities. I currently have a major issue with ice down on the south coast, and marijuana has been around forever and a day. My first experience with marijuana—not smoking it, I might add—

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: No, I've never smoked anything, but my first experience was in 1971 in Wyoming in the United States. I realised how silly you could get on alcohol and how much sillier you could get on marijuana, quite frankly—but that detracts from the subject in the house today.

Members interjecting:

Mr PENGILLY: I beg your pardon? But seriously, the member for Morialta has the very best interests of the youth of today in his heart when he raises this legislation in the house. It is incumbent upon us, as parents, to do all we can to educate our children, but it goes beyond that. The blitz of advertising these days is such that you do not have to drive very far to have alcohol rammed down your throat. This has been around for a long time, because I recall very clearly the fact that, when I came up to boarding school, a bloke called Tim Dean from Kalangadoo in the South-East and I got knocked off for pinching the altar wine in the school chapel. We got in a fair bit of trouble over that when we were about 14, I think.

Kids want to experiment—of course they want to experiment. It is part of growing up to experiment with alcohol, vehicles, unfortunately drugs, sex and everything else that goes with it. That is just part of the process of growing up, and all you can do is try to steer your children through it and hopefully they come out the other end. My view is that the member for Morialta is endeavouring to try to help steer our younger people through a difficult patch in this particular case, and I am hopeful that the government would support this bill of the member for Morialta.

I really cannot see any good reason why they should not support it. We are yet to see as to whether they will come good and offer their support or not. There may well be members on that side that do support it and those in other places have decided that they will not support it. We just have to wait and find out. But, seriously, while you are in this place, if you are in this place for the right reasons, which I feel that most if not all members really are, a sensible and logical step like this should be supported by the entire house and put into place, because only that way can we actually progress.

I heard the member for Schubert earlier, and it is actually a fairly salutary lesson for someone like the member for Schubert, who came in at 44 and had never consumed alcohol because of his upbringing. That is fine; that is no criticism whatsoever. But, these days, as I said, so much is rammed down the throats of our young people, and they cannot get away from it. I know that when I left school when I was 17, we were too young—the drinking age at that time was 21.

We used to have a bloke who we knew in Kingscote when we were kids and he would go and buy us a carton of green death Southwark on a Saturday night and we would sit down at the wharf and get silly on that or go to a dance. They then decided within two months of me turning 21 that they would bring the drinking age down to 20, so that was a bit of a smack, but we actually learnt how to drink. We learnt how to misbehave as well, I might add, and we did some foolish things, but fortunately we got through and we are here today.

I find it rather bizarre, given some of my antics in my earlier years, that I am sitting here pontificating on legislation to do with alcohol now. It is just a fact of life. I commend the member for Morialta for his efforts. I do sincerely hope that the government will support this. I will be very disappointed if they do not and I wait to see the outcome.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (11:25): I rise to make a brief contribution and wholeheartedly support the member for Morialta's bill because I too, like many in this house, have a young family with children spread out in age. I have an older son who is 23, my youngest daughter is 10 and my

middle daughter, just turning 16, is starting to come into the realm of peer group pressure coming into what they call the party scene.

I guess in today's world the young are always looking to be older than what they are; always looking to be part of the scene, if you like, to be invited to parties. Along with the invitation to those parties comes the pressure; the expectation that attending a party is all about having a drink, having a good time and having a dance. That does not apply to all the young ones. It does not apply to all children who are under age.

Sadly, what I am seeing is a growing trend in today's society that there is an expectation that most 15 and 16 year olds do consume alcohol, whether it is attending a party or whether it is attending a formal. One thing I have found particularly with school formals and school socials is that they do bring back memories. My first school social, back in the days at Henley High, had a band that would play and you would always be outside somewhere behind a bush or behind a tree, hiding somewhere—

The Hon. R.B. Such: On your own or with someone?

Mr WHETSTONE: There was some form of expectation that you would be in the bush with a bottle of something to try and put a bit of performance into your night.

The Hon. R.B. Such: Are you sure you were alone, Tim?

Mr Pengilly: Where was Paul Caica?

Mr WHETSTONE: Paul Caica was somewhere in a neighbouring bush. Paul was always one of the great spirits at the school and I must say I do remember Paul fondly because he was a character at the school. In some cases so were some of the other members of this place. There was the expectation that when you went out as a minor (under-age) there was always that reference that when you are going tonight, make sure you have got your bottle of beer or your bottle of wine or your bottle of spirit.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr WHETSTONE: No, member for Finniss, that never came into the equation. Again, it is about parents being responsible. What their parents are like is what their children are like and, potentially, if you promote drinking to your children, in most cases, it is a reflection. If we see parents being responsible with their children, giving them some form of responsibility, giving them some sort of ownership that they are coming of age, I think it can be responsible.

Whether they are under-age or over-age, it is something that usually happens behind closed doors, but what it leads to along the way really does have an impact on how young under-age children, in most cases, behave. I have gone along to a lot of formals, proms and socials and have had to drag kids away from consuming alcohol because they are performing badly. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY (POLICE OMBUDSMAN) ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (11:30): Before I move my motion, I concur with the earlier remarks that Thursday morning is a time to look forward to, when the chains come off and members can speak more freely. I think the time for private members should be extended. I move:

That the Police Complaints Authority (Police Ombudsman) Annual Report 2011-12 be noted.

I do not know whether members have had a chance to read the annual report of what is now the Police Ombudsman, but I think they should. In fact, just taking this issue a bit broader, I do not believe that as a parliament we scrutinise thoroughly the various agencies that are funded via this parliament, and the Police Complaints Authority is one. It reports to parliament, but I have yet to see someone from the Police Complaints Authority front up, or anyone from a lot of other agencies. Members will say that we have the estimates committee process. That process is a farce. It is not a scrutiny process: it is an orchestrated media event—

Mr Pengilly: That's a bit harsh.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: No, it is. It is orchestrated to get a headline on behalf of the government and obviously others: the opposition. It is not an environment in which you can have the sort of scrutiny that they would have, say, in the US Congress or even in the federal parliament,

in the senate. We should move to a system where agencies are brought before the parliament and properly questioned.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: In the Legislative Council, the other place, they have some committees that do some of that sort of thing, but the House of Assembly should be involved in questioning agencies in the interests of ensuring that there is proper accountability and activity.

The reason for my particular interest in this matter stems from my own experience and that of constituents. I appreciate that there have been some changes with respect to the name of what was the Police Complaints Authority, but the changes need to be more than essentially cosmetic. We now have—or we are about to have—an ICAC, but I do not believe that that in itself will address some of the concerns I have with the current arrangements that pertain to the Police Ombudsman.

If members read the report of the Police Ombudsman, I think they will get the sense that it is not really a hard-nosed body that scrutinises what police officers are alleged to have done. In fact, it looks more like a letter from a close relative. The Police Ombudsman, Sarah Bolt, in the introduction to her report, points out that the complaints handling process is set out in the act. She states:

...delineates a relatively close working association with SAPOL for the investigation of police complaints falling within the jurisdiction of the PCA.

She abbreviates the Police Complaints Authority to the acronym PCA. It continues:

This prescribed relationship between the PCA and SAPOL, and the manner in which complaints are investigated pursuant to it, is an enduring criticism of this office and its work.

The PCA is now called Police Ombudsman. She goes on to point out that:

...it deliberately follows the model of 'external monitoring of internal investigation,' rather than creating a truly independent investigative agency.

She continues:

...police have the requisite knowledge and expertise that enables a more effective investigation than might otherwise occur if every matter were investigated by civilians.

Further on she states:

...it is a clear expectation of the Act that the majority of the investigations will be conducted by [the Internal Investigation Section].

I am not happy about that relationship. Once again, it is getting back to Caesar having a look at Caesar. There have been some minor changes but historically even the Attorney could not request or require the Police Complaints Authority (now Police Ombudsman) to investigate anything. If it chose not to investigate something, then that was it; basically that was the end of the matter.

Quite obviously the Police Complaints Authority will get some complaints which are not worthy of investigation. In fact, of the 1,119 complaints received in the year 2011-12, 34 per cent resulted in no further action because some were out of time; some were matters currently before the courts; improper complaints; insufficient interest; anonymous complaints; matters subject to a right of appeal; industrial matters; or otherwise without merit.

That all sounds fine but the big deficiency—and I found this from my own experience—is that they say that they cannot deal with a matter involving police conduct if it has been dealt with by the court. The problem is that a lot of these matters that require investigation have not been dealt with by the court.

In my own case the police officer admitted that he falsified the results of his testing of the laser. I presume he got a letter—I did not see it—from the Police Complaints Authority at the time (the Police Ombudsman) telling him that he was a naughty boy and that he should not do it again. When I followed up in relation to asking what punishment he got for his behaviour, I was told that it was a private work history matter and that I could not be told. In other words, there is no true accountability in terms of a public officer and what he or she has or has not done.

The other aspect—and it was not considered in the court—was the fact that the officer changed the expiation and was in a different location, not only to where he pulled me over but at a

new location. He was even further down the road because he could not fit in this 500-metre vision of my car. There was no camera involved.

When I wrote to PCA and said, 'You can go out and investigate because nothing has changed. You can measure it to see that what that officer said was false; that he was not telling the truth.' They said, 'No, we're not interested', basically. I will paraphrase—'We're not interested; we're not looking at it. The court has looked at it.' Well, the court did not look at that as it should have and so one is left high and dry.

I will use the case of a constituent of mine—I will not use the surname; I will use the Christian name—Max. This case involved a family at Glenelg following their wedding anniversary. The incident resulted in police allegedly assaulting members of that family who came to the assistance of other distressed family members. It went to court and the Police Complaints Authority refused to investigate the case saying that the matters involving alleged police brutality would be considered during court proceedings.

Well, that did not happen. One of the deficiencies in the system is that the police ombudsman and their officers use this excuse that, 'We can't look at it. We don't want to look at it because it has been before the courts.' That is only valid if the court examined that precise point. In many cases, and I have just indicated two and I could give others, that has not always been the case.

I think there should be greater emphasis and a requirement on the police ombudsman to investigate matters relating to police conduct which have not been properly or thoroughly considered in a court action. Just because something goes to court does not mean all aspects of the police behaviour have been examined. I do not think you need to be a senior counsel to understand that.

Essentially what I am saying is that I think the government should—and I call on the Attorney, in particular—have a look at the current provisions as they relate to the police ombudsman. I think there needs to be a review to make sure that it is able to do what I think the public would expect it to do. It is more than just whether a police officer was rude to someone; it has the power and it should investigate other matters in an independent way, in an impartial way, that currently get through the system because there is no proper scrutiny or accountability.

There is too cosy a relationship between the police ombudsman and SAPOL, and I think there needs to be a clear separation. I do not believe it is appropriate to use police to investigate themselves, certainly not serving members of the South Australian police force. It is possible to have other structures and other arrangements in place.

I urge members to read the report. It will not indicate the deficiencies in the current system; they become apparent if you have had first-hand experience, and I am sure that members here have corresponded with the police ombudsman or the former Police Complaints Authority and have not been satisfied with some of the responses. You have no comeback. If they say, 'We are not interested. We are not going to look at it. We don't want to look at it. It has been looked at,' then you have no comeback. Not even the attorney can direct them or request them to investigate a matter.

It is time for a review. If you are going to have a police ombudsman, let's have that organisation that can actually do what people would expect it to do—that is, investigate matters impartially, independently and comprehensively—and not allow the threat of a workload to justify them not carrying out proper and thorough investigations.

Our police force here, SAPOL, is one of the best in the world—certainly one of the best in Australia, if not the best—but it does not mean to say that it does not at times have matters which need to be considered on an independent basis. I do not think we have the mechanism in place. I do not think the new ICAC will do it. You cannot expect the ICAC commissioner to be looking at these sorts of matters, and he or she (it is a he currently) may be able to make some requests under the new ICAC law but I still think there is a lot of deficiencies in the system and the attorney should be able to require the police ombudsman to carry out an investigation if the matter is raised with the attorney. I commend the motion to the house.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (11:44): I rise to speak on the member for Fisher's motion that the Police Complaints Authority (Police Ombudsman) Annual Report 2011-12 be noted and I fully support his motion. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure that as a former police minister you would have seen a lot of these reports in your time, and I think every member of this house should

look at them and should take them very seriously. I also agree with the member for Fisher that any body like this that is making an investigation into any government department—but particularly one as important as the police which has such an impact on people's lives on a day-to-day, month-to-month, year-to-year basis—must have the resources it needs to do its job, must have some genuine teeth when it comes to acting upon the outcomes of its investigations, and must also have some very genuine independence in the way that it operates.

I note that, since the member has put his motion forward, it has been announced by the government that the Police Complaints Authority will be shifted to ICAC, so I wholeheartedly hope that the ICAC will pursue this area of work as it should with resources, with teeth and with independence. With regard to police complaints in general, as a local member of parliament, I receive both brickbats and bouquets for the local police, and I always take what I get with a grain of salt to begin with because, typically, the people who come to complain about the police, may be right or they may be wrong, and it is always very important to hear the police side of the story as well.

I do not mind saying that there have been times when the person with the complaint, in my opinion, has been completely wrong, and there have been times when the person with the complaint has been completely right. I commend Commissioner Gary Burns for his very open approach. He is on the record saying, 'Tell us, let me know, we need to improve. If we've done something wrong, we will get to the bottom of it,' and I think that that approach needs to be taken.

The other thing that is important is there is a very wide range of community views when it comes to policing. There are people out there with a take no prisoners, lock 'em up, throw away the key attitude, and there are also people out there with a very strong view that we are over-policed, we do not need interfering in our lives, just let us get on with it, trust us. Of course, as with most things, the truth is in the middle, but dealing with an issue like the Police Complaints Authority, or even for them to do their job, it is important to put in that framework, that is, there is a wide range of opinions about police.

I think that is particularly true in a country that values its freedom, its citizens and the independence we have in Australia, like we do. I think people in other nations with a far more autocratic totalitarian society would not even think about it. We are lucky to be able to even think about these things in South Australia. With regard to the report, I will touch on a few things. During that year 1,119 complaints were received within the jurisdiction. It is interesting to note that 6 per cent of them (which is the smallest number in any category) received full investigation and 34 per cent, which was the second largest category, received no further investigation. So, 67 of those 1,119 complaints were fully investigated and 380 received no further investigation.

No further investigation is something that the member for Fisher touched on, and it might be because the complaint was lodged more than six months after the issue, the issue was before the court or the issue was considered to be frivolous or vexatious. There is a whole range of reasons why it might not be investigated, one of which is that the person might want to remain anonymous. There are certainly times when that might be completely appropriate, but it does understandably raise alarm bells when somebody wants to make an anonymous complaint.

There is a range of reasons why these complaints might not have been dealt with, and I think it is important, as the member for Fisher highlights, to look into those issues and to be sure that it is for the right reasons and not the wrong reasons that they are not being dealt with and not being investigated, and that there is not any cover-up or lack of resources. In relation to resources, I note that on page 20 of the report the Police Ombudsman, with regard to complaint backlog, said:

Despite the introduction of more efficient complaint handling practices a risk of a complaint backlog is a constant concern. Scant resources, legislative Audit and FOI external review responsibilities, the unrelenting flow of complaints and the complexity of certain matters contribute to the risk of a backlog occurring. Notwithstanding the PCA will continue to closely monitor the situation and attempt to deal with complaints as expeditiously as possible.

Again, I hope that the shift to the ICAC will ease this very important backlog issue that the Police Ombudsman raises. Resources must be given to any authority like that if they are going to do the work that they are supposed to do. On page 21, under the heading 'The year ahead', the Ombudsman makes some bullet points, one of which is 'expand our presence in key country areas of South Australia'.

Of course, as shadow minister for police, I am interested in every page and every line of this report. But as the member for Stuart, I am particularly interested in country, rural and regional

issues, and I do believe that there is room for more resources to be put for further investigation into issues that are raised by way of complaint against the police in country areas.

It is a very interesting issue, too, this complaints by numbers business. Of course, a reduction in the number of complaints might well—and let's hope—indicate an increase in police performance, but it might also be that people feel less inclined to complain, or they believe that their complaint might not be taken so seriously.

I also highlight what seems to be a discrepancy to me; it might be that I have not quite picked up on it. On page 11 of the report, it says that a total of 1,119 complaints were received, but on page 23 of the report, in 'Appendix 1: Summary table', it says that 1,384 complaints were received. There is a note further down the page talking about a discrepancy in numbers, but it is not this discrepancy in numbers. It might be that I have not picked it up, but it might be that some investigation is required there.

Another thing I think is important to point out, and this is under appendix 2, is that of all the different categories of complaints against the police the highest number of all is the category of negligence and/or failing in duty. Again, just harking back to the reasons people might complain, they might complain because they feel they have the right, and that is a very positive thing, and they believe that their complaint will be investigated. It might also be because there is a high level of negligence. I cannot actually tell from the numbers, of course, which it would be. It is also worth pointing out that, while there were 414 complaints in that department for 2011-12, there were 323 of those complaints in the year before, 2010-11. So, for one reason or another, that category is certainly growing.

This is an important report, and it is a very important point the member for Fisher raises. Any internal investigation, including into the police, must be done properly—must be well resourced, must have some genuine authority to act upon recommendations and also must be independent. We in South Australia have the best police in the nation, both by way of a range of indicative measures but also in regard to community confidence. Community confidence in our police is higher in South Australia than in any other nation, and the police are to be commended for that. But, as Commissioner Gary Burns has said, we open ourselves for scrutiny. If we have done the wrong thing, we want to know. If people are complaining about the police vexatiously or without merit, or perhaps for all the right reasons but they are just wrong, the police will fight back hard against that, but the police will also cop it on the chin when they have made a mistake, and that does happen.

In wrapping up, I say, as shadow minister for police and also as the member for Stuart, in a very large chunk of regional South Australia, we are lucky to have the police we have. I thank them for the work they do. But I, in all my roles, will continue to be vigilant, on behalf of the public I represent, to make sure that the police are doing the very best job they can possibly do on behalf of the people of South Australia. The police department is not a department that has the right to go off and do its own thing on its own behalf. They work on behalf of the people of South Australia, they are a service to the people of South Australia, and when they are not serving the people of South Australia appropriately they should be thoroughly scrutinised.

Mr BROCK (Frome) (11:54): I want to quickly contribute to the motion moved by the Hon. Bob Such, the member for Fisher. As has been mentioned in this place previously by the member for Stuart, there are always two sides to a story. I compliment the South Australian police force. I agree with the member for Stuart; I believe that we have the best police force, one which enjoys the highest regard and confidence of the community. That does not mean to say that they are not liable to criticism or that there are issues out there, because there always will be. I do not care who you are or what you are doing: there will always be criticism and we can always learn from it.

As the member for Stuart has said, I also have lots of people come into my electorate office regarding issues with the South Australian police force and they want to make a complaint, and a couple of instances come to mind. We encourage them to put the police complaints form through and the issue that I really do have is that, when that police complaints form is being investigated, on quite a few occasions it has been investigated by the same LSA and the same police station the complaint is being levelled against. That is not true independence, and I believe that moving it across to ICAC will reinforce and further enhance the confidence of the community that any of those complaints will be dealt with independently of the South Australian police force by the ICAC.

There are always two sides to a story and my philosophy has always been to get the other side. I can relate a couple of instances. We had a blitz by outside police coming into our electorate

some time ago and there was a lot of emphasis being put on road safety and vehicles, etc. I agree that we have to make certain our vehicles are maintained and sometimes we do need a bit of a reality check, but a couple of the issues were that people said they were getting expiation notices and being booked for trivial issues like a dirty number plate or a piece of equipment that may have been on the back seat unrestrained by a seatbelt, and things like that. If that was the case, that was very trivial.

I could have easily gone to the media about all these issues, so I had a discussion with my LSA superintendent at the time and he said, 'If you have got proof that this is being done, and there are such expiation notices out there, I will investigate that.' I went back to these constituents and said that we would argue and fight on their behalf if they brought in the expiation notices. Not one brought in those expiation notices. So, whilst we may have issues out there, if there is a real issue and they have an expiation notice, I will be the first—as will the member for Stuart and other members in this house—if it is trivial and unnecessary and really not required, to fight it, but there are always two sides of a story.

What the member for Stuart said about the reports was interesting. There were 1,119 complaints, only 6 per cent were fully investigated and there was no action on 34 per cent. I think that is a real issue. I think we need more action because quite a few of them have come back saying no further action and we do not see the results of those internal investigations, and that is something we really need to understand as elected members of the communities out there.

I would love to ensure, and argue very strongly, that the government, when going forward with the ICAC, if we are going to do this correctly, must provide the correct and sufficient funding. Funding is one issue but they also need to sufficiently and adequately resource the ICAC to ensure that we do not have any backlog, we have openness and transparency and we make certain we do it to the best of our ability as a state and a community.

In closing, I congratulate the new commissioner, Gary Burns. I think he will be an excellent breath of fresh air—with no disrespect to the previous commissioner. Gary has had a lot of time out there and I have had lots of dealings with him and I think he will be very good; and, certainly, he is operationally focused.

Also, I welcome and congratulate the new LSA superintendent in my region (which also covers some of the member for Goyder's area), Scott Denny. I have had some discussions with Mr Denny on two or three occasions now and his philosophy has always been open and transparent communication between the local council, the state member of parliament and the community. I congratulate both Gary and Scott and, hopefully, they will be there for some time.

I want to see Scott Denny, the new LSA superintendent in my area, be there for a long time. Far too often we have had LSA superintendents come in, and be there for a very short period of time and not be able to build up the community liaison. It is about the liaison and the communication with our community; that builds up trust both ways, from the South Australian police force as well as the community. Again, I congratulate the member for Fisher.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mrs Geraghty.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (12:00): I move:

That this house notes the proposal to have councils recognised in the Australian constitution.

Members would be perceptive enough to know that that is a fence-sitting motion. What I am seeking to do is have the issues canvassed in this place. Things have changed since I lodged this motion, but it is a very important issue. Local government is a very important level of government. As I have indicated before, I used to be on Mitcham council in the days when you could be a member of parliament and a councillor at the same time; sadly, that is not allowed any more.

The proposal now, in respect of councils, is limited, essentially, to financial allocation from the commonwealth. I note that a mayor has written to one of the suburban *Messenger* papers making the suggestion that there have been two clear challenges to the federal government making direct financial allocations to councils. I do not believe that is correct. There have been two challenges in respect of the commonwealth making direct allocations: one was essentially in relation to Christian counsellors or workers (whatever the correct title is) in schools, and there was another one in relation to some other matter. However, neither of them had anything to do with

councils, as far as I know. To my knowledge, no one has challenged the commonwealth government providing direct financial assistance to a council.

So the proposal has gone from general talk about some acknowledgement of councils as the third tier of government to being quite specific in relation to the commonwealth being able to provide money directly to councils. There are plenty of arguments both for and against. The original proposal contained, I think, four elements: symbolic recognition; financial recognition (which is now basically on the agenda); democratic recognition; and recognition through federal cooperation. At least two states are opposed to the referendum that will be held at the time of the next federal election, and I think Western Australia has reserved its position.

The case against it—and this would embody the wider issue of the recognition of councils, as it is called, going beyond just the financial recognition—rests on the fact that there have been two referenda in the past, both of which have failed. That may not necessarily be because the concept is wrong or bad, but because Australians are notorious for not agreeing to referenda.

The question of financial recognition raises some issues about the role of state governments and coordination and priority in terms of projects which could be funded directly from the federal government to local government level. In fact, it raises an interesting challenge to the mantra 'We are local' when, under this new proposal, money would be directly channelled—as it has been for a while—to a local government. In other words, Canberra will decide which council will get money for an infrastructure project. That is currently happening. The referendum would formalise that and give it legitimacy in the constitution.

One of the concerns is that it shuts the state government out of the equation and, I believe, does not allow for the necessary oversight and overall planning in relation to issues. It lends itself very much to the potential for severe pork-barrelling, because you will be able to have a federal government of whatever persuasion saying they will give money to a particular council for a swimming pool. It does not take into account what the overall needs and requirements of a particular state may be. That is one of the concerns about this modified proposal which is going to be put in September.

The referendum itself is costing \$50 million. I would love some of that money to go on some basic facilities in my electorate for people in terms of footpaths, bus shelters and so on. Councils in South Australia are spending \$1 million on the yes campaign, and I do not think that is appropriate. That is a concern I have in respect of this issue.

Rather than tinkering around with a constitutional provision that allows Canberra and bureaucrats in Canberra to decide which council is given a bag of goodies, it would be better to address the fundamental issue of the funding of councils. Councils cannot do what they are charged with under the current funding arrangements. They cannot fund the infrastructure that is needed by relying, in the majority of cases, on rates from properties. They are not going to get the necessary money to maintain roads, bridges, or whatever, as a result of property taxes and parking fines.

I have argued in this place, and I still argue, that local government should get some prescribed allocation, whatever the appropriate percentage is, as part of the growth taxes—income tax, GST, whatever. State treasurers resist that like the plague because they do not want local government to be funded in that fundamental way. I think if you are fair dinkum about local government being able to do what it is charged to do, it cannot keep relying on getting property taxes from little old ladies and other people, as well as parking fines from others. That is the core issue.

If you are going to have a provision in the constitution relating to local government, it has to be a proper, thought out, well-delineated provision, not this sort of Mickey Mouse approach where bureaucrats in Canberra will be able to dish out money to their favourite councils. You can imagine what will happen. We do not have the same issue here. We have people, certainly from political parties, involved in councils here, but in New South Wales it is quite apparent that some councils are labelled 'Labor' councils and 'Liberal/National Party' councils.

What is going to happen if this referendum gets up is that you will have a government that is pally-pally with their party mates in that state and they will be dishing out grants directly. The state government will have no say in it. They will be dishing out money for projects in particular councils where the people who dominate that council happen to be in the same political party as the government that is in Canberra.

I think this current proposal does give rise to concern. Local government it is too important to be just allocated money through some backdoor mechanism from Canberra directly. It should be considered up-front in a total way. The other concern I have is that once you lock in something like this it becomes even harder to reform local government. We need to reform state and federal government as well, but that is almost impossible because, once you lock them into a constitutional framework, you have Buckley's of reforming them in any fundamental way.

I have used this example before: why do we need 12 senators, for example, to represent each state? It is just not justified. In fact, the honest senators—and I am sure they are all honest—will tell you that they do not actually have to do much as a senator. You can still keep the nexus and the ratio, but you do not need 12 senators in each state to do that. That is just one minor example where you will not get reform because it is very hard once something is locked into the constitution.

That applies, as I say, at state and federal level, and what we are doing now is locking in local government in a financial way with the commonwealth, and it will make it even harder to bring about what I think is necessary reform in local government. The council where I live, Mitcham—just outside my electorate, because the boundary changed—just spent \$18,000 on a review by consultants to look at how many councillors and how many wards they should have.

Surprise, surprise! They have rejected the consultants' recommendation which was to reduce the number of councillors from 13 to 11 plus the mayor. The consultants also recommended that there be three wards instead of six, and that has been rejected, so \$18,000 down the gurgler. The same council spent \$50,000 on legal fees and other associated costs to find out that they already had the power to block off a road so that the people in Craighburn Farm will almost certainly be incinerated come a major bushfire because they will not be allowed out, except through very limited exits. There is \$68,000 on two little projects.

What you need in local government, I think, is a reduction in the number in the metropolitan area. I think we should leave the country ones as they are. We do not need 19 councils between Gawler and Noarlunga. We do not need 19 mayors with 19 PAs and 19 cars and all that sort of thing, but all that reform process is going to be hindered if this referendum gets up. I am not saying we should have one council. I do not know, and that is why I have always argued for an independent inquiry.

It will be even harder to get reform in councils. We cannot even get councils to share when they could do a lot more sharing than they currently do. Some of them share environmental officers, some jointly tender, but a lot of them do not cooperate in the way they could or should. What is going to happen now with this constitutional provision is that there will be less opportunity to bring about fundamental reforms that will help ensure that councils are efficient and effective but still retain their local connection. That is one of the fundamental objections.

We see in the media mayors coming out saying, 'Support the yes vote.' One country mayor said that rates will go up if this referendum is not carried. As I said at the start, no-one has ever challenged the allocation of money from the commonwealth to councils now; no-one has ever done it. There will still be money allocated to councils. It will not automatically result in an increase in rates. This process that currently exists, which seems to work, will not be stopped. It will not prevent federal bureaucrats allocating money to councils. That is a furphy, a red herring, that should be dismissed.

I conclude by saying that I do not think there has been a strong case made for what I call a mickey mouse approach to funding councils. If you are going to do it, come up with a proper, decent proposal which is discussed in the community, which enables councils to do what they are charged to do and to be funded properly. At the moment, they are basically the poor relation, getting more responsibilities put on them by state and federal governments and they do not have the financial base to sustain it and to carry out those tasks.

I think this current proposal is grounds for concern and I am not convinced that the public should vote yes. It will be hard to get it up, because it has been left to the last minute; it has not been properly articulated; the public knows little about it; and you have two state governments, New South Wales and Victoria, publicly opposed to it and Western Australia currently weighing up its options. I do not think the chance of it getting up is all that good. There will be \$50-odd million down the gurgler, plus all the money spent by councils around Australia. What they are trying to do is get a few crumbs so they can afford projects, and that should be done in a better way, not through this current Mickey Mouse proposal.

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (12:15): I wish to contribute to the motion by the Hon. Dr Bob Such that this house notes the proposal to have councils recognised in the Australian constitution. Formal recognition of local government in the Australian constitution is a key objective of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), strongly supported by the South Australian Local Government Association (LGA).

The 2009 High Court case, *Pape v Commissioner of Taxation*, renewed doubts over the federal government's powers to directly fund areas that are not mentioned in the constitution, such as local government, and this has provided the impetus for the ALGA to again seek recognition of local government in the Australian constitution. The case has focused significant attention on the question of funding for local government, particularly on legal impediments that may exist due to the lack of formal recognition of local government at the federal level through the constitution.

The federal Australian Labor Party has committed to a referendum to include appropriate recognition for local government in the Australian constitution at or before the next federal election. In August 2011, the federal government formed an expert panel on the constitutional recognition. The expert panel was asked to identify options for the constitutional recognition of local government and to report on the level of support for such recognition among stakeholders and in the general community.

The expert panel released its discussion paper on 22 September 2011 for public comment by 4 November 2011. Four options were identified for recognising local government in the constitution: symbolic recognition, financial recognition, democratic recognition and recognition through federal cooperation. All South Australian councils have passed motions endorsing the move to achieve financial recognition of local government in the Australian constitution.

The expert panel handed its report to the federal government in December 2011. The panel concluded that the financial recognition of local government, which would formalise the power of the commonwealth to directly fund local government, is the option most likely to gain the support of the general community from all sides of politics. In response, the Australian parliament appointed a 12-member joint select committee to inquire into changing the Australian constitution to provide financial recognition of local government.

Following the findings of the independent expert panel, the committee has been charged with investigating the potential success for a referendum on this issue. The preliminary report of the joint select committee was published on 24 January 2013. The committee recommends that the Australian government hold a referendum at the same time as the federal election. The committee supports the expert panel's proposed form of words for the amendment. It proposes the following amendment to section 96 of the constitution:

...the Parliament may grant financial assistance to any State or to any local government body formed by State or Territory legislation on such terms and conditions as the Parliament thinks fit.

The South Australian government supports initiatives to strengthen the relationship between governments and to provide clarity of powers between all three spheres of government. The South Australian government has indicated its support in principle for the recognition of local government in the Australian constitution. It has maintained its position consistently in discussion with both the LGA and the expert panel.

While this government supports that this house notes the proposal to have councils recognised in the Australian Constitution, we will await the federal government's consideration, including that of the referendum and how things pan out in the next federal stage in the coming weeks. As previously stated, we will properly consider the implications of any Constitutional amendment on the interests of the South Australian community as a whole, not just the government sector or individual councils.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Goyder is just returning to his seat.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (12:20): I was temporarily distracted; I apologise, member for Ashford, I should have been listening more intently to your wind-up.

Mr van Holst Pellekaan: It is in *Hansard*.

The Hon. S.W. Key: Read it tomorrow.

Mr GRIFFITHS: No, I was listening before that; it is just that I was distracted temporarily. I will put on the record that, indeed, I worked in local government for 27 years, so I do have some level of background on this.

I recognise that the Adelaide City Council, for example, was established in 1840 and was the first municipality in Australia to be established. I did listen intently to the member for Fisher's contribution and I was intrigued, given his motion, what the words were going to be. I know it stems back to things he has said for a long time about numbers of local government authorities, particularly in metropolitan areas. I was intrigued because, as I understand it, there have been two referendums in the past: 1974 when 52 per cent of the people voted against it; and 1988 when 67 per cent of the people voted against it.

There has been some discussion about the appropriateness of the financial transfers. I am aware of a High Court challenge that has actually occurred on this and that is, as I understand it, part of the reason for why the actions have been taken. There was the original intention for the four key areas that were being looked at, but from the advice I was provided with last week, where a bill was introduced for it in the federal parliament, indeed to provide for it, the proposed law stated, 'A bill for an act to alter the constitution to recognise local government by stating that the commonwealth can grant financial assistance to local government, including assistance for community and other services.' People will then be asked to put a 'yes' or a 'no' in the box on that.

There has been a lot of media on this in recent times, with people ringing the radio about that, and print media. Alexander Downer had an interesting article in *The Advertiser*; Matthew Abraham, well-known ABC journalist; the *Messenger Press* has published some information about this, but, indeed, since the 1974-75 financial year, there has been across Australia, from the federal government to local government, some \$38 billion worth of funds that has been transferred.

In the current financial year alone there is \$2 billion worth of funds that is transferred from the federal government to local government via the Grants Commission which makes the allocation of those funds, based on two criteria, as I understand it: one is more of a population base and one is with regard to road length issues across those council areas too. It has been very contentious, it is fair to say.

The opinion of the states is varied, there is no doubt about that. Some have expressed some reservation without a firm position; some have said 'no'; the Labor Party in South Australia is saying yes. I am aware that federally, as I understand it, the proposal for this referendum came about as a result of discussions that occurred post-2010 federal election between the Prime Minister and the Independents about the forming of government situation and a commitment that was given to them at that time about this being a future referendum question.

It has been the result of two committees of investigation federally in that time since. In the last one, David Fawcett (who is the senator for South Australia and a former federal member for Wakefield) was on that committee and I met with him and talked about that process and what was going to occur and they had been around the whole nation actually talking to different groups and getting submissions. I think at that stage there were about 500 submissions lodged: 250 or thereabouts coming from local government across the nation; 250 from business or individuals; and the opinion was a bit varied in relation to businesses and individuals, whereas local government, of course, have a very strong position on this.

Like the member for Fisher, though, I am rather intrigued in the \$1 million that has been allocated by the 68 councils of South Australia to support this. As a person who worked for so long in local government, and for probably 20 of those years worked on budget issues within those councils, I know how finely balanced it is each year to provide services at a reasonable price. So, it is a lot of money for a collection of councils to come up with as part of the message that they want to communicate to people.

Some people are upset by that and some people will probably recognise that it can occur. It is tied into the fact that federally \$50 million is committed to this effort, which is an enormous amount of money. I understand that part of it is for the communication of the message behind the reason for the referendum to occur and not just the total absorption of the costs that will be part of that, but \$50 million is big money, no matter who you are. It can provide an enormous range of services and infrastructure across the nation and in the individual communities, so it is a significant investment to make and it has to have a very sound basis.

I heard in my local government days, when in Canberra for a Local Government Association conference, Professor Dean Jaensch, who spoke quite passionately in support of this—that is my recollection of what he was doing at that time—and I know that he has held this position for some time and is respected across all sectors on the historical perspective and

information he brings to issues. It is an issue that will divide people a bit between now and 14 September. It will be interesting to see what is the result.

The member for Fisher referred to the fact that Australians traditionally do not support referendum changes. I think only 14 have been supported and a much larger number than that have been rejected in the past on any issue on constitutional change. It shows indeed that our forefathers, who in the late 1890s in developing our constitution overwhelmingly did a great job, because it has served us well in that time. As a nation we have grown since then, so in the 115 or so years since it was near being finalised, and in 1901 when Federation occurred, has there been a chance for review?

What resources does it take to ensure that review puts in place the best possible form that will ensure that Australians are serviced in the way they should be? I note that this motion is based purely on the fact that this house notes the proposal to have councils recognised in the Australian constitution. On that basis I am prepared to indicate that the opposition acknowledges that and supports the intent of the specific wording of that motion. It will be interesting to see the vote held on this.

The member for Fisher was quite strong about his concerns about the costs and the timing and his push for an amalgamation of councils to occur in the future. Australians are the people charged with the final decision on this. I have to believe that democracy and its principles are very strong and that they are the ones who will get it right. Clearly in 1974 and 1978 they voted against it. It will be interesting to see what the current generation of Australian voters actually say.

Mr BROCK (Frome) (12:27): I would like quickly to contribute to this. Thank you to the member for Goyder for advising us of the wording of the motion going before—is that the referendum question?

Mr Griffiths interjecting:

Mr BROCK: That is good, because one of the issues I had was that we are going to a referendum. I also congratulate the member for Fisher, the Hon. Bob Such, to note the proposal to have councils recognised in the Australian constitution. We are discussing something here and we are noting the proposal; however, we did not know the wording of it. I am glad I have that wording now because it influences my thoughts. I respect councils because I think they are a very integral part of our communities.

I have made quite clear in this house and everywhere else that councils are the closest to the people in regional areas. They know and feel what is happening in their communities, and that is no disrespect to the state governments, but certainly in the rural areas we understand closely and passionately what are the concerns and issues confronting people out there, and the councils themselves are living in the streets, and so forth.

For the South Australian Local Government Association to spend \$1 million from state councils as part of this proposal I find very intriguing, because as a person who has spent nearly 20 years on local councils, the last six years in my previous role as mayor of the Port Pirie Regional Council, I find that it is a lot of money as I know how hard it is out there for councils to balance their budgets. They have ever increasing overheads, specifically with the road infrastructure, which was fixed up many years ago by state governments but with no maintenance, and now councils are wearing that impost.

One of the things I find intriguing, as the member for Fisher has indicated, is that no-one has challenged the right—the member for Goyder said there is a challenge there—or really said that the commonwealth cannot give money directly to local councils. In fact, as the member for Goyder indicated, they already do that with the commonwealth grants for communities.

Those grants are worked out on various scenarios, including the social and economic situation of each council, unemployment, income and so forth. So, that is already done. Councils get road grants through the federal government to go towards road infrastructure. Just recently, the Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council in my electorate was successful in getting \$410,000 from the Regional Development Australia Fund. The Independents in the federal government got some money put into that fund for regional infrastructure projects. The council got \$410,000 towards repairing the Rattler Trail and also repairing some bridges on the Rattler Trail and on the Riesling Trail.

Even my own council in Port Pirie was awarded just over \$2 million for a waste management facility and, due to various issues or reasons, they had to give that \$2 million back.

That money was given to build a waste transfer facility, but they did not end up getting that money, so the ratepayers themselves now have to come up with that \$2 million. Again, there is money coming through from the commonwealth. The Port Pirie Regional Council now has a \$5 million application before the Regional Development Australia Fund to upgrade the CBD area.

Everything is working fine at the moment but, when the referendum is held, it will be interesting to see the wording, which is very important. I will be looking very closely and with anticipation at the results of the referendum. As the member for Goyder said, in 1974 and 1988 there was a rejection of the referendums. In closing, I will wait for the results of the referendum, but I am concerned that \$1 million of ratepayers' money in South Australia was spent on this referendum. I also reinforce my belief that local councils are an integral part of our communities and I will support them in whatever way I can.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Pengilly.

AUSLAN

Mr BROCK (Frome) (12:32): By leave, I move my motion in an amended form:

That this house strongly urges the state government to investigate and implement Auslan as part of the education curriculum in South Australian schools and that Auslan become an optional language for students from preschool upwards.

Late last year—that is, 2012—a very dedicated father of two children, Mr Dallas Schmidt, spoke to me in my office regarding his concerns about people who have a hearing disability not being able to communicate with others and, in particular, young children with their peers. Dallas has a hearing disability, but with the aid of suitable hearing aids he can hear sufficiently to hear what his children are communicating to him and to communicate with the outside world.

I must also mention that Mr Schmidt's children have very good hearing at this stage. However, when Mr Schmidt removed his hearing aid while he was having a shower one day, all of a sudden it dawned on him that he was experiencing total silence, and hence his concern as to how people with a hearing disability, no matter how small, can communicate, especially if they have not learned sign language. As a result of these discussions, Mr Schmidt arranged a petition signed by 1,937 people, which was presented to this chamber late last year.

I have endeavoured to ascertain the number of children in South Australia who are affected by impaired hearing, and the only information I can get at this stage is from 2004. That report stated that there were approximately 800 children suffering from known hearing impairment. I must emphasise that it is 'known', and I will elaborate on this a bit further. Of these, it was reported that about 72 per cent of children under 17 years with hearing aids had a mild to moderate loss in their better ear. It is okay for those people who are fortunate enough to be able to, firstly, afford to have their hearing aids, but what happens to the 72 per cent of those people who may not have that ability and have no hearing in their other ear, as was mentioned in this 2004 report?

Children starting school have to cope in a strange, new situation with lots of other new children and new rules to learn. Self-esteem in the primary school years depends on how well children manage the learning tasks of the school, how well they do at sport, how they look, how they feel and making friends with other children. Young children's self-esteem can be affected by their physical and hormonal changes. Most importantly, how they look and how they think affects how they finish up in their life.

Whilst the parents of these children will go to whatever lengths to allow their children to be able to hear some form of conversation, it does not substitute the joy of being able to communicate with other children and also with adults. Parents and caregivers play a major role in working with school staff to develop educational programs for their children. It is very important that you take the opportunity to contribute at all stages of your child's education, although you can choose if and how you would like to be involved.

People might ask: what could a parent possibly offer trained teaching staff? The answer to that is they can make a very significant contribution. They know their child better than anyone. They spend more time with their children and have the opportunity to observe them in a greater variety of situations than any doctor, teacher, psychiatrist, counsellor or therapist. Their views about their children's development are vital. They also know if their child is not hearing adequately, although their child may not be making that public.

Even before your child enters school, you have had years of experience as your child's first teacher. Prior to school entry, many of the skills a child has developed since birth have been taught

by parents and caregivers. The parent will be the most consistent teacher of that child, as schoolteachers will come and go. The parent is a valued and essential member of the educational team.

The rate of children's speech and language development can vary, depending on the child. Some children will develop certain skills quicker than others and some children will be slow to develop certain skills compared to their peers, even if there are no related problems.

It appears that most of the schools in South Australian that teach Auslan are located in the metropolitan areas and there are very few in the regional areas. I will elaborate later about how well a school in my electorate has done.

We, as a state and also as a country, state that education is very important to every child in Australia. Now, the federal government is placing greater emphasis on a new generation of educational standards. I certainly agree that the educational curriculum is a major issue that affects every child's success later in life.

There would be numerous young people who may have a slight hearing impairment and the teachers may not be aware of the issue because of embarrassment to the child and/or the parents. In the meantime, this student will go through the course of education and not be fully able to hear and understand the subjects, which may result in insufficient learning to be able to enjoy the opportunity for fruitful employment.

They may also feel isolated from society and turn to behaviours that may increase their chances of facing legal issues further in life. If Auslan or sign language is made available to those schools who have students with this issue—and that could be at any school—and the schools that have teaching facilities are promoted, then that child will have an increased opportunity in life.

I would just like to make a comment on one of the schools in my electorate which brought this to my attention—the Crystal Brook Primary School. I was there recently at the launch of a BER for their gymnasium. We sang the national anthem, which is usually sung by voice. On this particular occasion, every student—and I reinforce, every student—at that school did the national anthem in sign language.

I found that very intriguing because you go to other schools and there might only be one class that is actually being taught and understands sign language. I congratulate the teacher at this particular school. That teacher had the whole school understanding and communicating with everybody. They have five or six students in that school who have some issues and, certainly, every one of those children know Auslan and sign language.

I would also like members of this house to close their eyes and try to understand how isolated a blind person feels; that is, being able to hear but not see. We really cannot understand that. If a person with a vision impairment closes their eyes, it is the reverse; they can still hear. A person with a hearing impairment does not hear all the words and they cannot communicate with anybody. For a person who has impaired hearing, it is the opposite; they may be able to see, but cannot hear.

We as a country encourage our students to learn a foreign language which may or may not be of benefit later in life; however, we appear not to strongly encourage our students to learn sign language, which I believe is more productive in our own community's wellbeing, and provides a better future for those affected with this disability. This is an issue which a lot of people put at the back of their minds; however, I strongly believe it is time that we look more deeply into issues that may be experienced by a minority section of our communities.

I also believe that, as a state, we need to offer this service to people who are experiencing this sort of disability and residing in rural areas more so than we are now. We cannot and will not be able to implement this sort of assistance to these people immediately, and no-one is asking for that; however, we can provide financial assistance or resources. We can put money into these issues, but above all, we need people to be able to carry out the services.

This means we need to start training people who will be able to deliver this service, and that will need to start well and truly before we will be able to offer this language to people who may want to take up this service in the future. I would strongly ask that serious consideration be given to commencement of this, with a view to train people who will be able to provide this service on a wider offering at a later date.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12:41): The government is happy to support the amended motion that was put forward by the member for Frome. We agree that it is important that students are able to communicate with one another, regardless of their first or even second language.

The decision about which second language is taught in South Australian government schools is a local one, and is made by the principal, in consultation with the governing council, staff and the wider community. The background languages of the students are usually taken into consideration when making decisions about which language is chosen.

The South Australian government supports the diversity of languages offered in our schools, including Auslan, and the rights of local school communities to choose which language is offered according to the needs and interest of students. The broad range of languages taught in South Australian schools addresses local community and national priorities for language learning.

South Australian languages policy schools follows the Australian Curriculum: Languages, due to be completed by December 2013, which provides flexibility for students to select the language taught locally. Auslan is recognised as one language within the Australian Curriculum: Languages, and is included in the list of languages likely to be developed, but not yet approved, in the third phase of language-specific frameworks.

Final recommendations regarding which languages will have their own framework or specific curriculum are still to be made by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority for endorsement by ministers of Education across Australia. Even if Auslan is not developed as part of the Australian curriculum, government schools will still have the option of offering Auslan curriculum under existing state guidelines that recognise the rights of local school communities to choose which language is offered according to student need and interest.

The department currently provides a range of opportunities for the teaching and learning of Auslan that are exemplary in comparison with the other states and territories. Klemzig and Brighton primary schools have a Centre for Hearing Impaired and teach Auslan to all of their mainstream students as a second language.

The Centre for Hearing Impaired at Brighton, Elizabeth Park and Klemzig primary schools provide weekly Auslan classes for interested families and community members, and Auslan is taught at Windsor Gardens Community College, where it is offered as a subject within the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE) in years 11 and 12. In 2012, there were nine students enrolled in SACE Auslan. The centrally located special education resource unit provides additional support across the state for children and students in preschools and schools who use Auslan as their first language and the language through which they learn.

Of the total number of students with verified hearing impairment receiving support from the department's regional support services, only 67 students use Auslan as their primary means of communication. I will be very pleased to ask my department to provide the member for Frome with details on Auslan, how it is included in the South Australian education curriculum and if that might be expanded. I am also happy to ask my department to remind schools that Auslan is an option for their second language program.

Mrs GERAGHTY (Torrens) (12:45): I, too, would like to speak on this motion. Auslan is the language of our deaf community, and I would like to talk about how this language is an integral component of teaching and learning at our Klemzig Primary School and, as the minister has mentioned, it is also taught at Windsor Gardens Vocational College.

I might say, I have had an interest in sign language from about the age of 17, given that my brother-in-law was born without any hearing at all. Just by way of background, Auslan is the sign language of the Australian deaf community and the term Auslan is an acronym of 'Australian sign language', devised in the early 1980s by Trevor Johnston, although the language itself is actually much older.

Auslan is related to British sign language and New Zealand sign language. The three have descended from the same parent language, and together comprise the British Australian New Zealand sign language family. Auslan has developed alongside the advancement of the deaf community in Australia, and in 1982, the newly formed regulatory body, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters, gave Auslan a sense of legitimacy. Trevor Johnston gave this language of the deaf greater validity when he developed Australia's first Auslan dictionary in 1989.

Auslan's grammar and vocabulary, if we want to talk about the structure of it, is quite different from English. It is a natural language that is developed organically over time. Its grammar and vocabulary often do not have direct English equivalents, and vice versa. It is difficult to sign Auslan fluently while speaking English, and while I undertook some classes trying to do the two together, it is very different because the word order is different and there is often no direct sign-to-word equivalent.

A two-handed manual alphabet identical to the one used in British and New Zealand sign language is integral to Auslan, and it is a fascinating way to communicate. This alphabet is used for finger spelling proper nouns such as personal or place names, common nouns for everyday objects and English words, especially technical terms for which there is no widely used sign. Finger spelling has been introduced into certain sign languages by educators. In many ways, finger spelling serves as a bridge between the sign language and the oral language that surrounds it.

Auslan began to emerge as a language of instruction for deaf students in secondary schools in the 1990s, mainly through the provision of interpreters in mainstream hearing schools with deaf support units. Since the 1992 enactment of the federal Disability Discrimination Act, sign language interpreters are also increasingly provided in tertiary education. Today, there is a growing number of courses teaching Auslan as a second language, from an elective language subject offered by some secondary schools such as Windsor Gardens to a full-time diploma at TAFE.

I am proud to say that for many years Auslan has been offered as a first or second language (whichever is preferred) for hearing impaired students at Klemzig Primary School. I have seen and I have spoken in this house about how the Klemzig Primary School language program has empowered the students attending its Centre for Hearing Impaired. The centre achieves this through oral and sign programs in a language-rich environment. School teachers of the deaf provide the support necessary to allow deaf and hearing impaired students to access the primary school curriculum in their preferred language, be it English or Auslan.

The program is carefully structured to encourage students using Auslan as their first language to develop fluency in English as their second language. All students—deaf, hearing-impaired and hearing—learn Auslan as a LOTE (language other than English). Auslan classes are also provided to staff and parents to support excellent communication throughout the school community.

Klemzig provides an extensive range of services including: the Auslan Early Learning Program for hearing-impaired preschool students (and I was at the preschool just recently) and children of deaf parents; individualised speech and language programs; audiological support; social skills programs; and transition programs. Deaf and hearing-impaired students are educated with their hearing peers in bilingual classes. These classes are staffed by a team including a mainstream teacher, a skilled teacher of the deaf and deaf adults acting as positive role models to build the self-esteem of students. The school values small class sizes and structures to allow for individualised attention.

The fact is that all children, but especially those with a hearing impairment, attain greater success when they are immersed in challenges within a supportive, caring and language-rich environment. The new bilingual building at Klemzig—which is absolutely fantastic, I have to say—will provide the school with the environment to enable all students to develop successful communication skills that meet their social, emotional and educational needs.

Having had a long history and talked many times with people about Auslan, I have heard many stories that children with a hearing impairment, including those with no hearing, should have a cochlear implant. That would be lovely if it worked for all children, but where there is a nerve missing, as was the case with my brother-in-law, or there is some other problem, a cochlear implant is of no benefit.

My brother-in-law was born deaf; I have known him for a long time, since I was about 16 or 17, and there is nothing available to give him hearing, but I have to say that he is a really happy confident man who lives a full and happy life. Although sign language is not something that he uses these days—because we have our own family way of communicating, and I am very proud of him—Auslan is the means of communication for many people.

I recall a young girl at Klemzig Primary School who could hear. There was nothing wrong with her hearing, but she had had a tracheotomy for a medical condition, and the only form of communication for that young lady was Auslan. It was important that she learnt to communicate very early in her life so that if they were able to repair whatever the damage was she would be up

with her peers. You have families with hearing members and non-hearing members, and those families need to communicate with each other, and Auslan is that form of communication for them.

I want to congratulate Klemzig Primary School and Windsor Gardens Vocational College. I think they do fantastic work. In fact, we had the Queen of Sweden visit Klemzig Primary School specifically because of their reputation and the work they do around hearing-impaired students, so I am exceptionally pleased to support the member for Frome's motion. I hope that people who continue to say that a cochlear implant is the only way we should try to assist hearing-impaired students or adults think again because there are many aspects around loss of hearing and there are some people for whom a cochlear implant is never going to be of any benefit.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Treloar.

PORT PIRIE SMELTING FACILITY (LEAD-IN-AIR CONCENTRATIONS) BILL

The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Small Business) (12:55): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable the introduction of a bill forthwith.

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

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

Motion carried.

The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Small Business) (12:57): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to regulate the variation of conditions and application of laws relating to lead emissions in respect of a smelting facility at Port Pirie; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Small Business) (12:58): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is important for many reasons—it is essential to securing the continued prosperity of the Port Pirie community, it is essential to improving environmental outcomes in and around Port Pirie and, most importantly, it is essential to ensuring continued investment aimed at further improving the health outcomes for the children of Port Pirie.

Nyrstar's Port Pirie facility is one of the world's largest primary lead smelting facilities and the third largest silver producer. It is an integral part of the fabric of the community, having been a mainstay of the regional economy during continuous operation for more than 120 years.

The operation directly employs more than 850 people, or around 17 per cent of the working population of the town. It incorporates a lead smelter and refinery, a precious metals refinery, a copper plant and a zinc plant.

In 2012, Nyrstar Port Pirie produced significant amounts of commodity grade lead, zinc, silver, copper cathode, gold and sulphuric acid. For the record—158,000 tonnes lead metal, 31,000 tonnes zinc metal, 3,000 tonnes copper cathode, 13.8 million ounces silver and 56,000 ounces gold.

In 2011, Nyrstar and the South Australian government began discussions to determine the best way forward for the company's Port Pirie smelting facility in the expectation that new licensing arrangements with the Environmental Protection Authority would require additional investment to transform the existing operation.

During 2012, the state government established the Port Pirie Transformation Taskforce to work with the Nyrstar and commonwealth and state agencies to determine the best way forward to deliver certainty to the company and a long-term future for Port Pirie. Under the leadership of the Port Pirie Transformation Taskforce, the federal and state governments agreed to a range of measures to support Nyrstar's transformation proposal because of the regional significance of the facility for Port Pirie's local economy and workforce and because the employment of modern smelting technology would result in significantly improved environmental health outcomes for the community.

The state providing regulatory certainty is a cornerstone of this agreement. Without that certainty the investment in the transformation would not happen and the benefits would not

realised. Put simply, this bill provides that regulatory certainty. I seek leave to have the remainder of the second reading explanation inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

The progression of the Transformation into execution is dependent on the successful completion of feasibility and engineering studies, expected by the end of 2013.

The company is expected to make the decision to invest in the transformation in early 2014.

The Transformation would result in the smelter's existing and aged facility being replaced with modern, state of the art and proven processing technology. Technology transformation will result in the Port Pirie facility significantly improving its environmental performance, as well as enabling the company to be more flexible in the recovery and delivery of a broader range of products into the metal market.

A transformed facility, supported by operating licence certainty, provides a long-term, sustainable future for the facility and the Port Pirie community.

Assuming that the Transformation is completed as expected, the project should move into construction in 2014, with commissioning of the new plant by early 2016.

The Bill does two key things.

Section 4 provides that, for a period of 10 years following the date on which the EPA sets the maximum lead-in-air condition in the operating EPA licence for the completed project, the EPA may not vary that condition except in circumstances where the variation has been either approved by the Manufacturing Minister or where the company has consented to the variation. This section relates only to any conditions of the EPA licence that set the maximum permissible concentrations of lead in air in Port Pirie.

Section 5 modifies the law of the State to the extent that any requirement that would have the effect of reducing the maximum permissible concentrations of lead in air at licensed locations in Port Pirie does not apply, unless a determination is made by the Manufacturing Minister that a particular law or authorisation does apply. The Manufacturing Minister may only make such a determination in one of two defined circumstances; 1) either the company has consented to the making of the determination, or 2) the Manufacturing Minister has undertaken consultation with both the company and, where the requirement arises under an Act, with the Minister to whom the administration of the Act is committed. Section 5 operates from the commencement of the Act for a period of up to 4 years, and then, if the defined project completion date is achieved during that initial period, for a further 10 year period.

The provisions of the Bill have been constructed to provide an appropriate level of certainty necessary to ensure that Nyrstar and its investors can commit to the massive investment to achieve the Transformation.

This Bill is designed to ensure that decisions in relation to lead-in-air conditions for a transformed Port Pirie smelting facility are made on the basis of a triple bottom line assessment of all relevant matters—taking into account and achieving a balance between environmental, social and economic factors.

Control remains with the EPA to set the initial lead-in-air limits during the period (up to 6 months) following the project completion date. This is to allow the EPA to consider the operating performance of the asset post-commissioning, to ensure the limits are achievable on a sustainable basis. However, when the EPA is setting the initial lead-in-air limits, the Bill stipulates that the EPA will afford both the Company and the Manufacturing Minister the full opportunity to consult with the Authority. This is designed to ensure, not only that the environmental factors are considered in setting the limits, but also that the potential for significant social and economic impacts and benefits, for Port Pirie and the region, are taken into account.

Similarly, when the Manufacturing Minister is making decisions under both section 4 and section 5, the Bill requires that the Minister considers a full spectrum of relevant matters, including any submissions from the Company and the relevant Ministers of the Crown, relevant medical and scientific information, the international standards relating to lead emissions, and of course any potential impacts on the Port Pirie community as well as the potential impacts on the Company.

When the Transformation is complete, many direct benefits will flow to the local community, the region and to the State as a whole. It will give rise to a range of important benefits—economic, health, social and environmental benefits.

Summarising firstly health improvements expected to result from the Transformation:

In the health area, the key benefit of a successful transformation is that emissions of lead will be significantly reduced (along with emissions of other pollutants like sulphur dioxide and carbon dioxide), increasing the number of children with blood lead levels below the National Health and Medical Research Council's guideline from the current level of 77.8 per cent of Port Pirie children tested in 2012 to at least 90 per cent. With ongoing emissions reducing, the work of cleaning up the contamination that has built up over 120 years can have a greater impact.

Most importantly, continued commercial operations will ensure ongoing funding for the Targeted Lead Abatement Program to address health risks in children with elevated blood lead levels, that is being developed by the State and Nyrstar. This program will drive additional reductions in blood lead levels and is expected to further increase the number of children meeting the guideline from 90 per cent to 95 per cent.

And now the economic benefits of the Transformation:

The jobs of thousands of people depend on the facilities continuing to operate. Direct wages and salaries paid to these individuals total around \$270 million each year. Much of this goes straight into the local economy. Much of the rest ripples out into the wider economies of the State and the region.

Nyrstar's value add contribution to South Australian Gross State Product (GSP) is around \$518 million per annum. It contributes some \$1.6 billion to the value of South Australia's economic output, including an average annual contribution to exports of around \$755 million.

The technological transformation of the Port Pirie smelting facility is consistent with the move towards an advanced manufacturing economy for SA, as the technology employed will be state-of-the-art.

Nyrstar Port Pirie will continue to pay taxes of just over \$100 million per year.

There will also be clear benefits in terms of reduced impacts on the environment

Following the Transformation, the Port Pirie facilities will give rise to less emissions of lead and other metals.

Emissions of sulphur dioxide will also be reduced.

The Transformation will result in improved energy use through recovery of energy from the smelting process; heat will be converted to steam, resulting in significant electricity cogeneration and consequent reduced load on the existing state electricity grid.

The transformed facility will have a smaller carbon footprint. And potable water use will be more efficient.

And, of course, the Transformation will result in a number of important social benefits.

The company supports its community through a wide range of programs and initiatives. Between 2007 and 2012, Nyrstar spent far in excess of \$4 million on community programs.

Their primary focus is to support initiatives that deliver the health improvements for the community.

Specifically to date these initiatives have included sponsorships for breakfast programs within schools and child care centres, assistance to community support agencies such as Uniting Care Wesley, donations to local organisations, community events, and educational health promotions targeting young children and those disadvantaged in the community.

Nyrstar also supports organisations that focus on supporting those with disabilities in the community, helping to deliver a better quality of life.

The regulatory certainty provided by this Bill is a necessary precursor to the company deciding to invest in the Transformation project. If for any reason the project does not occur, there is every likelihood that Nyrstar will be forced to shut down the Nyrstar Port Pirie site. Closure of the site would have impacts and consequences that are extremely serious.

The first impact is that unacceptably high levels of unemployment would occur. In short order, some 850 people directly employed at the site would lose their jobs. Modelling has determined that the jobs of some 2,500 others depend indirectly on successful ongoing operation of the Port Pirie smelter and associated facilities. Over time these people also would lose their jobs. The local economy would suffer significantly, and the economy of the State would be seriously affected. Social disruption in the town and adjacent region would be extensive.

But probably the most serious outcome would be that, as the company would no longer be operating in Port Pirie, the operation would no longer be able to contribute to the necessary ongoing funding to clean up the lead contamination in the town that has built up over 120 years. Governments would be left as the only source of such funding.

The Port Pirie Smelting Facility (Lead-In-Air Concentrations) Bill is squarely aimed at providing the necessary regulatory certainty for Nyrstar to invest in the Transformation which will unlock those benefits for the local community and the broader region.

I commend the Bill to Members.

Explanation of Clauses

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

3—Interpretation

This clause inserts definitions for the purposes of the measure. Important definitions include:

- *maximum lead-in-air condition* which is defined to mean a condition of the relevant environmental authorisation that specifies the maximum permissible air concentration of lead at a location or locations in Port Pirie specified in the relevant environmental authorisation; and
- *project* which is defined to mean the redevelopment of the plant by the Company to transform it from a primary lead smelter to a poly-metallic processing facility by replacing the existing sinter technology with enclosed bath smelting processing technology and the carrying out of associated works; and

- *relevant environmental authorisation* which is defined to mean any environmental authorisation under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* applying from time to time in relation to the Company's operations in connection with the plant.

4—Provisions relating to reduction of maximum lead-in-air condition by Environment Protection Authority

This clause provides that Environment Protection Authority may not, during the period commencing on the project completion date and ending on the commencement day (both of which are defined), vary a maximum lead-in-air condition in a way that would have the effect of reducing the maximum specified in the condition unless the Environment Protection Authority has consulted with the Manufacturing Minister and the Company.

This clause then provides that, during the prescribed period (which is defined), the Environment Protection Authority may not vary a maximum lead-in-air condition in a way that would have the effect of reducing the maximum specified in the condition.

However, the Manufacturing Minister may approve a variation of a maximum lead-in-air condition (in which case the above prohibition does not apply). Certain procedural requirements apply before the Manufacturing Minister may do so.

In addition, the Company can consent to a variation of a maximum lead-in-air condition.

It is also provided that nothing in the prohibition above—

- applies to a condition of the relevant environmental authorisation other than a maximum lead-in-air condition; or
- affects any requirement for the Company to take reasonable and practicable measures to prevent or minimise any environmental harm that may result from its operations in connection with the plant.

5—Maximum lead-in-air condition not affected by other laws of State

This clause modifies the law of the State so that a relevant requirement is taken not to apply to the Company during the prescribed period (but only to the extent that the relevant requirement has the effect of reducing the maximum permissible air concentrations of lead at a location or locations in Port Pirie specified in a condition of a relevant environmental authorisation). In addition, an exception to subclause (1) is provided for so that the modification of the law does not apply to the extent that the Manufacturing Minister determines, by notice in writing to the Company, that a particular law or relevant authorisation specified in the notice should not be so modified, or should only be modified as specified in the notice. Certain procedural requirements apply before such a determination may be made.

A *relevant requirement* is defined to mean any requirement applying (whether directly or indirectly) to the Company under—

- a law of the State; or
- a relevant authorisation,

that would have the effect of reducing the maximum permissible air concentrations of lead at a location or locations in Port Pirie specified in a condition of a relevant environmental authorisation.

6—Immunity provision

This clause provides that no act or omission undertaken or made by the Manufacturing Minister or any other person engaged in the administration of the Act with a view to exercising or performing a power or function under the Act gives rise to any liability (whether based on a statutory or common law duty to take care or otherwise) against the Manufacturing Minister or other person or the Crown.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Hamilton-Smith.

[Sitting suspended from 13:01 to 14:00]

QUESTION TIME

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS' DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNAL

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:01): My question is to the Attorney-General. Given that the Attorney-General is now the only person with the authority to allow the Alex Mericka complaint against the Premier to proceed before the Legal Practitioners' Disciplinary Tribunal, when will he make a decision on this matter?

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:02): I don't necessarily accept the premise of the question, and I will consider the matter if and when I need to.

RED-LIGHT CAMERAS

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (14:02): My question is to the Minister for Road Safety. Minister, would you inform the house about what the government is doing to improve safety and wellbeing on South Road near the Richmond Primary School?

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety) (14:03): I thank the member for Ashford for her question and acknowledge her vigorous advocacy to improve road safety in her electorate. I am pleased to inform the house the government will install a red-light camera at the pedestrian crossing on South Road servicing Richmond Primary School. The site has been assessed by the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure as being a suitable location. The design for the site has commenced and the installation is scheduled for later this year.

Investigation of the site found that more than 40,000 vehicles passed through the pedestrian crossing each day and many of these vehicles are heavy transport. The school council and the member for Ashford have made convincing representations for a red-light safety camera at this location. Parents and children attending Richmond Primary School did not feel the pedestrian crossing on South Road was totally effective in its own right to ensure safety on such a busy road.

In March this year I was informed by the member for Ashford that Richmond Primary has a teacher on crossing duty every morning and evening, as the school believes it is too dangerous for the children themselves to be acting as crossing monitors. The duty teacher wears a high visibility vest and carries a mobile phone or memo book to record any traffic incidents which are then reported to SAPOL. The member for Ashford advised me that many of the incidents are missed, as protecting children at this busy site is the teacher's priority.

Red-light speed safety cameras enforce detection of both red-light and speeding offences and improve the safety of intersections by deterring drivers from running red lights and speeding. Additionally, evaluation of red-light camera enforcement in Australia and overseas has shown it is clearly effective in reducing casualty crashes at intersections. The vigour with which the member for Ashford has prosecuted the case for a red-light camera at this location is recognised in the outcome she and the Richmond Primary School community have achieved. The presence of the camera will enhance the safety of young people crossing this busy section of South Road for years to come.

RED-LIGHT CAMERAS

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (14:04): Supplementary, sir—

The SPEAKER: Yes.

The Hon. R.B. SUCH: —to the Minister for Police. Will there be warning signs on both sides? I notice that with some of the cameras, which I fully support being introduced. Will they have signs on both sides in all cases with these new cameras?

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety) (14:05): Yes, they will, and I agree that the deterrence is not only in the fact that the cameras are there but that drivers are actually aware of their presence.

SOUTH ROAD UPGRADES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Is it the case that the government's South Road, Torrens to Torrens upgrade project involves building a new intersection at Hawker Street?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:05): I am advised yes.

SOUTH ROAD UPGRADES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:05): Supplementary, sir?

The SPEAKER: Yes, supplementary. I am intensely interested!

Ms CHAPMAN: I am sure you are.

The SPEAKER: You can have as many supps as you like on this.

Ms CHAPMAN: My supplementary is to the same minister: does the government plan then intend to build an underpass under its new intersection at a later date?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:06): I think that the question is probably hypothetical. I think what she is asking is: are you going to upgrade the intersection of Hawker Street and South Road and is there a plan for an underpass at the intersection in the future? So, therefore, if you upgrade the intersection now and then dig an underpass later, are you going to dig it up and therefore waste taxpayers' money? I think that is what she is trying to get at.

The reality is that we are doing a very complicated piece of engineering work. The Grange Road/Port Road/Outer Harbor lines need to be grade separated to allow the free flow of traffic. We need to ensure that, as the ramp comes up heading towards Hawker Street, traffic can flow easily into the suburbs in a safe way and not push the problem a bit further north. So, the intersection will be upgraded appropriately.

There are a number of plans for other parts of South Road. That work is continuing. When that work is finalised and the government makes a decision about whether or not it should proceed and what sections should proceed next, we will make it available to the public.

The SPEAKER: Supplementary?

Ms CHAPMAN: No, sir. I was hoping to have another question as you were looking toward me.

The SPEAKER: If you are not going to ask about Hawker Street—member for Florey.

QUAD BIKES

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (14:07): My question is to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Can the minister inform the house about what the government is doing to address the dangers associated with the unsafe use of quad bikes in South Australia?

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:07): I thank the honourable member for Florey for her question. Members may or may not know that the honourable member for Florey has been quite a campaigner on this issue and, indeed, the honourable member raised this very matter with me at a meeting, about which I cannot say much, some weeks ago.

At that very important but confidential meeting, she suggested I turn my mind to this, and I did indeed do that. I spoke to Safe Work Australia to ask them how significant this problem was, and I was advised that there have been seven quad bike fatalities in Australia so far in this calendar year. Four of these deaths were in a work environment and others were in the context of recreational use. Last year, there were 19 fatalities across the country.

There have been a number of instances, I was disturbed to hear, where young children have been killed or seriously injured after being carried in an unsafe fashion on a quad bike. These incidents were traumatic for the families involved and obviously shocked local communities. Last month, again at the instigation of the member for Florey, through SafeWork SA I issued a warning to South Australians about the dangers of quad bikes through their unsafe use. Unfortunately, on the very same day as that warning appeared, SA Ambulance crews were called to a serious quad bike crash at Gillman.

It is clear that quad bikes have claimed far too many lives in this state and have caused many more horrific injuries. I recognise that quad bikes are used properly and safely on a daily basis on thousands of rural properties across this state. They are an important tool on a working farm. However, too often, the risks associated with their use are not properly respected.

The South Australian government supports the proposed federal initiative QuadWatch that will bring together industry, manufacturers, users and governments to improve quad bike safety. At the state level, SafeWork SA has been working with other Australian regulators to develop strategies and control measures to address the risks associated with quad bikes. These measures include the mandatory wearing of approved helmets, a rider training course for farmers, and guidelines for experienced operators.

I am pleading with South Australians to take the risks seriously and to take all necessary steps, particularly in the case where young people are operating a quad bike, because one death is one death too many. Can I again thank the member for Florey for asking this very important question, and the government will continue to work with regulators to ensure that we address the dangers of quad bikes in South Australia.

SOUTH ROAD UPGRADES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:10): My question again is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Will the minister release the unpublished South Road Planning Study, north-south corridor development plan and any other business cases involved with the proposed South Road projects at Darlington and Port Road, given that the media has reported that the Premier is willing to publish these reports?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:10): Mr Speaker, I think I have said in the parliament before, when the state government commits to which part of South Road it wants upgraded, I will release the reports.

The SPEAKER: A supplementary, yes.

SOUTH ROAD UPGRADES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): At least we know they exist, thank you. My supplementary is again to the same minister. When the opposition applied for access to the project assessment report and the final decision concepts concerning the South Road Planning Study in February this year, why was a response received that identified that no final report had been prepared?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:11): I assume because it was the case that it had not been prepared, and I assume it was the case that it had not been completed; but I will go and check and come back to the house with a thorough answer for the leader. I will check to see whether she wrote to me and corresponded with me about that issue.

SOUTH ROAD UPGRADES

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): A further supplementary, sir.

The SPEAKER: Yes, a further supplementary, if it be a supplementary.

Ms CHAPMAN: I certainly hope that you will be favourably inclined to assess this as such. The supplementary is to the same minister. Will the government now release the 28 documents it refused the opposition access to in April this year regarding the South Road Planning Study?

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I struggle to understand what that is supplementary to. The answer involved no 28 documents.

Mr Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Unley is called to order and will be seated. I will hear the member for Elder.

The Hon. P.F. CONLON: The point I make, Mr Speaker, is there was no reference in the answer to 28 documents, so how is it supplementary to that answer?

The SPEAKER: Can the member for Bragg assure me that the 28 documents are, how shall we say, cognate with the ones to which she was denied access?

Ms CHAPMAN: Indeed, sir. I will read the supplementary again, if you like, but it specifically refers to the South Road Planning Study, so we are talking about the same study.

The SPEAKER: I am inclined to be with the member for Bragg on this one. Minister for Transport.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban

Development) (14:13): The member for Bragg's question presupposes that the government did refuse the release of 28 documents. I do not know if you would put a—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I'm sure you do. I do not know on what basis those documents were refused. I will go and check and come back to the house with an answer.

MODBURY HOSPITAL

Ms BEDFORD (Florey) (14:13): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Can the minister inform the house about current work being carried out at the Modbury Hospital as part of its redevelopment?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:14): The member for Florey is a champion of the Modbury Hospital and is in constant contact with my office and has a very keen interest in the Modbury Hospital, and I would like to acknowledge that fact.

The government is carrying out improvements at Modbury Hospital. This work, combined with a continuing major upgrade to the Lyell McEwin Hospital, has delivered a much-needed increase in healthcare services to the fast-growing northern suburbs.

The current redevelopment to the Modbury Hospital is concentrating on expanding the capacity of the emergency department to provide extra critical care services to the area. At the same time, an additional 190 car parks will be built to increase the capacity of the car park and address a longstanding issue of parking availability for public and staff. The final 53 car parks are currently being constructed and are due to be completed in July.

The government committed to expanding the emergency department at Modbury Hospital as the existing unit was not big enough for the number of patients requiring care. It also required an upgrade to increase patient confidentiality and comfort. Work began in December 2012, and full clinical capacity in the new emergency department will be completed by December 2013, with some further final works being completed by March 2014. The emergency department will have 40 treatment spaces at completion, with specific treatment areas for children and patients with mental health concerns.

I am told that the current phase of this work will be complete by the end of June, by which time the capacity will increase to 19 treatment spaces, which is two more than the pre-project number. Work completed to date includes a new discharge transit lounge located at the front of the hospital; a new security room, which overlooks the waiting room of the emergency department; new staff amenities; and offices. The safe treatment of patients has been the priority whilst renovations have been carried out. All members of staff are to be commended for the way in which they have continued to provide high-quality care while these important improvements have been made.

The SPEAKER: I'm sorry I didn't see the Minister for Health immediately. I was just checking that the member for Kavel wasn't inciting uproar on the opposition and, of course, he was not. The deputy leader.

SA POWER NETWORKS

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:16): He has been on his best behaviour, sir; I can attest to that. My question is to the Attorney-General, as the Minister for Planning. Is it correct that SA Power Networks has told the government it will require six new substations in the inner suburbs to accommodate the development projected in the Inner Metro Rim Structure Plan?

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:17): I do not have any present knowledge about such a matter. Whether or not SA Power Networks have done work on that topic, whether they have communicated with the other part of the department about those matters, I do not know. I have no particular knowledge of that but, if the honourable member has anything in detail that she wants to share with me, I would be happy to have a look at it.

SA POWER NETWORKS

Ms CHAPMAN (Bragg—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (14:17): Supplementary: will the Attorney at least report back to the house to confirm whether that is the case or not?

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Planning, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Business Services and Consumers) (14:17): I undertake to the house that, if the honourable member wants to be particular about what her question is and show me whatever it is that she is concerned about, I am happy to have a chat to her about it.

INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION ADVOCATE

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (14:18): My question is to the Minister for Small Business. Can the minister update the house on the work of the Industry Participation Advocate?

The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland—Minister for Manufacturing, Innovation and Trade, Minister for Small Business) (14:18): I can; and I thank the member for Reynell for her question. The government established the Office of the Industry Advocate in February this year to provide recommendations on local participation and procurement. The office has also been tasked with advocating for local companies within government to promote local firms winning contract opportunities. For example, I can update the house that the office has been advocating for RPC Pipe Systems with regard to the Port Wakefield pipeline project. This advocacy has delivered benefits to that firm, which has 80 skilled employees at Lonsdale.

On 13 April 2013, RPC contacted the member for Reynell to report that Leed Engineering, the prime contractor to SA Water engaged to design, supply and construct the infrastructure, was considering using imported pipe. RPC have advised that they were a significant support contractor in Leed Engineering's tender. This work was valued by RPC at \$3.6 million and involved the supply of 43 kilometres of high pressure, 375 millimetre diameter Flowtite GRP piping. The matter was referred to the Office of the Industry Advocate by the member for Reynell.

The Office of the Industry Advocate then contacted SA Water on RPC's behalf. SA Water confirmed that its contract signed with Leed Engineering included pipes supplied by RPC Pipe Systems. Then, after speaking directly to RPC, SA Water escalated the matter to senior management, who immediately began direct discussions with Leed Engineering in order to resolve the matter. A number of discussions were held between the parties. Over the next couple of days, the Office of the Industry Advocate stayed in contact with SA Water to ensure the matter was being actioned.

On 23 April, SA Water then confirmed that Leed Engineering would in fact be delivering the project in line with its contractual obligations using RPC. As the house will already know, the Auburn to Port Wakefield via Balaklava project is one of the most significant water pipeline projects in Australia, showcasing advanced manufacturing, engineering and construction capabilities. RPC Pipe System's General Manager, Andrew Sarich said:

The project has been a tremendous boost to RPC Pipe Systems and to the confidence of our people. We have been able to employ 20 extra skilled staff and have stepped up production to a 24 hour operation.

He then continues:

The vision of SA Water, the South Australian Government and the Office of the Industry Advocate, Ian Nightingale and his team, were instrumental. The long term support of our local Member for Reynell, Gay Thompson, and the positive working relationship we have built with South Australian based civil engineering and construction group, Leed Engineering, are greatly valued.

There are significant multiplier benefits as well with additional business and growth opportunities flowing through to our raw materials supplier in Mount Compass, to local freight operations and to other local goods and service suppliers.

Congratulations to the member for Reynell for her advocacy on behalf of this company in her electorate. This is a win for RPC. It is also an indication of the interventionist role that the Office of the Industry Advocate is playing to maximise the return to South Australian suppliers from government contracts. I call on all members of the house to take the opportunity to refer matters such as this to that office. The general office email address is oia@sa.gov.au and the phone number is 8226 8956.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:21): My question is to the Minister for Disabilities. How many Disability SA clients are currently in South Australian hospitals awaiting delivery of home support packages?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:21): The short answer is: I don't know exactly. That figure changes—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Well, that figure changes from day to day. What I do know—

An honourable member: Have a guess.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: No, I'm not going to guess.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Sorry; it is an important issue that is worthy of more than a guess, quite frankly. The issue is that—

Mrs Redmond: We thought it might be an educated guess.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Heysen to order. The member for Taylor.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: I haven't finished yet.

The SPEAKER: The minister hasn't finished, I'm sorry.

Mr Goldsworthy: He hasn't started yet.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Kavel to order. The minister.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: There are a number of reasons why there are people who are in hospitals waiting to be released at home or in care. Just this week, for example, a case was brought to my attention. In that example, the reason the person had not been discharged yet was that we could not find an organisation that could provide the necessary care required for that person. So, there is a whole range of reasons why people need care. The people would be among 21,000 people to whom we provide services, and I am happy to provide the member with more details.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Supplementary, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: You've got rather a good run coming up. I don't think you need a supplementary.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I do, sir.

The SPEAKER: The member for Taylor.

SCIENCE RESEARCH

Mrs VLAHOS (Taylor) (14:23): My question is to the Minister for Science and Information Economy. Can the minister inform the house about state government support for our scientific researchers who are starting out on their careers, particularly those in our universities and other research organisations in South Australia?

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy) (14:23): I would like to thank the member for Taylor for this very important question. There is a great deal of excellence going on in our universities and institutions. We have outstanding scientists in South Australia, people like Professor Tanya Monro at Adelaide University—

The Hon. J.J. Snelling: Hear, hear—a great South Australian!

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI: An outstanding South Australian—Professor Karen Reynolds from Flinders University, Professor Peter Langridge, and there is also outstanding work going on at the Centre for Cancer Biology. I visited them just recently, but when I became Minister for Science I caught up with our Chief Scientist, Professor Don Bursill—another outstanding South Australian—and we had a discussion about the challenges that early career researchers face as they embark on their careers.

He made a very important point: that it can be very challenging to establish yourself as a researcher. It is hard to get grant funding, for instance, for projects when you are competing against already established academics and, as an early career researcher, you do not always have the connections to the end users of your research—the businesses that turn your research and discoveries into products, so that commercialisation process.

So we were very keen to support and send a very strong message to early career researchers to assist them to overcome these barriers and, in fact, incentivise behaviours that would assist them to make connections. I had the pleasure just recently of attending the Early Career Researcher Network that was established by Professor Don Bursill. I had a chance to meet with a number of them and they were being addressed by Professor Tanya Munro. So, it is a very helpful and very practical network; it is a way of engaging with these early career researchers.

That is why I am very pleased to report that the state government has just awarded brand-new Catalyst Research Grants to support outstanding young researchers to work with an industry partner or projects of strategic importance to the state, and this is the incentivising kind of behaviour that we are seeking to encourage. I was delighted to present these grants to three of our excellent early career researchers. Briefly, I would like to congratulate the following: Dr Philip Visintin of Adelaide University, who will work with local industry on research into geopolymer concrete, which is a greener alternative to regular concrete.

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon: That must warm your heart.

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI: Yes, I am a big fan of concrete. Dr Thomas Barclay—it's very important.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: It's genetic.

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI: It is genetic. Dr Thomas Barclay of the University of South Australia, who will work—that was an interjection made by the member for West Torrens.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for West Torrens to order.

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI: Dr Thomas Barclay of the University of South Australia, who will work with South Australian biotechnology company Vaxine and Colorado State University to improve drug delivery systems that will help to treat diseases like tuberculosis. Finally, Dr Carol Maher—and this may interest all of us—from the University of South Australia, who is working with Country Health SA, the Heart Foundation and software developer Portal Australia to develop a Facebook app that is designed to encourage people to be physically active. These new grants are worth a total of \$75,000 and are awarded through the Premier's Research and Industry Fund. I have to say, we had a fantastic response to this idea of this catalyst program—

Ms CHAPMAN: Point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it is four minutes and five seconds now.

The SPEAKER: The member for Bragg is right again. The member for Morphett.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:27): My question is again to the Minister for Disabilities. Why has the unmet need category 1 waiting list for supported accommodation grown from 306 before the last state election to 535, as of the most recent figures, with 144 people in the high or intensive care subcategory?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:28): Can I have the second part of the question again?

Dr McFETRIDGE: Why has the unmet category 1 waiting list for supported accommodation grown from 306 before the state election to 535, as of the most recent figures, with 144 people in the high or intensive care subcategory?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Over that period of time the figures actually do fluctuate and to get a—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: They fluctuate, and to get a true picture you need to look at the trends rather than just two points, and it is quite misleading just to provide the two figures. The reason that people are in high care is that the reality is that people are living longer, we are saving more lives, there are people in more care and, as a result, we actually have more people in care.

STRATHMONT CENTRE

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:29): My question is again to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. When will the 26 remaining clients residing at Strathmont go into community accommodation, as per the Premier's commitment?

Members interjecting:

Mrs Geraghty: Ask Brokenshire. How often do you go there?

Dr McFETRIDGE: A few weeks ago, actually. I was out there a few weeks ago, and then we went out to Salisbury Downs, where I used to live—

The SPEAKER: The member for Morphett—

Dr McFETRIDGE: Thank you, sir.

The SPEAKER: —will not respond to the disruptive efforts of the member for Torrens, whom I call to order.

Dr McFETRIDGE: I will repeat the question for the sake of the house: when will the move of the 26 remaining clients residing at Strathmont into community accommodation be completed, as per the Premier's commitment?

The Hon. J.M. Rankine: As soon as we will.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:30): I thank the honourable member for the question. My understanding—

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Education will not provide the answer; I call her to order. Minister.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: My understanding is that the people will be relocated as soon as practicable. Partly, the reason is that we are trying to ensure that we have the consent and support of the families. The process of engagement and consultation with families is continuing and, as soon as those processes are finalised, we will seek to move them as soon as we can. One thing we have committed ourselves to is ensuring that people leave the facility either once they have found alternative accommodation or their families are able to care for them.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:31): My question is again to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. What is the government doing to assist city homeless shelters cope with the increased demand since the closure of the Byron Street Centre, and will funding be made available to help these centres cope with the demand?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:31): I can advise the member that, in this year's budget, as has already been announced, the government has committed itself to an additional year of funding for the homelessness strategy, both commonwealth and state. This means an additional \$17.2 million will be spent on homelessness through 97 programs to meet the needs of the homeless. In terms of Byron Place, I am actually meeting with a number of organisations next week to discuss their needs and work out how we can assist.

HACKHAM WEST COMMUNITY CENTRE

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:32): Again, my question is to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. Can the minister advise why the government has cut \$25,000 from the Hackham West Community Centre in Hackham, which offers programs aimed at assisting with youth at risk?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:32): That is not correct. We were actually asked for additional funding; we declined the request for additional funding. I also need to advise the house that we were also advised by Southern Junction Housing (which is the organisation) that they were supported by the council. My understanding is that the council is ceasing its funding because the proposal is not sustainable.

PAEDIATRIC HEALTH

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:32): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Will the government employ full-time paediatric neurologists so that the families of the 600 children with refractory epilepsy (that is, uncontrolled with medication) are able to access to suitable in South Australia rather than having to travel interstate?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:33): I will double-check but, yes, my understanding is that that has happened. I will double-check with my department. It certainly was the plan to convert that position from being basically a locum service into a full-time consultant paediatric neurologist, but I will double-check.

MINDA AQUATIC CENTRE

Mr SIBBONS (Mitchell) (14:33): Can the Minister for Recreation and Sport inform the house about the upgrades to the Minda Aquatic Centre?

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL (Mawson—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Recreation and Sport) (14:33): I thank the member for Mitchell for the question; obviously, a lot of people in his electorate would be using the pool at Minda, as would those of the member for Bright, whose electorate Minda is in and who is a long-term supporter of Minda as well.

The Hon. C.C. Fox interjecting:

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL: As is the member for Morphett.

The Hon. C.C. Fox: Yes; we are supporters together.

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL: Exactly. It is a facility that looks after 1,500 South Australians with intellectual disabilities; it does a great job, and has been doing that for 115 years. It is an organisation that is opening itself up to the outside world as well, by encouraging people to come in to use facilities like the pool. The Office for Recreation and Sport has put in \$200,000 for an upgrade of the pool area, and Minda has put in \$500,000.

It is a tremendous facility for people who have intellectual disabilities—there is a big, wide ramp to allow easy access—but it is also being used by people in the local community. I was pleased to be at the opening last week with Rodney Fox, of course, a shark attack victim 50 years ago.

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon: A shark attack survivor.

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL: Well, he was still a victim—he's got a big scar to prove it, but he did survive, otherwise he wouldn't have been there. It's the 50th anniversary this year, and he was quite pleased to be in the pool and away from the sharks, I think.

Rodney is a good example of someone who uses the pool for his own rehabilitation. We all know that if you are in the pool, it takes a lot of weight off your body and you can do a lot more exercise than you can if you're trying to run around the streets of Brighton, for example. Rodney has some hip problems, and he said that it really helps him remain very active. For the three or four days before he was there at the opening of the pool, he had been out off the Great Australian Bight diving in a cage with sharks. These days, the only time he wants to come face to face with them is from inside a cage, but he finds it much better to be down at Minda and swimming around the pool there.

I want to commend everyone who is involved in Minda. As I said, it is a great organisation, and I really like the way they are bringing their master plan together. They are going to have housing there for people to come and live in mixed-use housing so that people will come into the precinct and it will be much stronger. As I said, it has been going since 1898 and just continues to grow.

MCLAREN VALE AND DISTRICTS WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:36): I must concur with the minister about his comments on Minda: they are doing an excellent job. My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Can the minister commit to maintaining the current level of funding at the McLaren Vale and Districts War Memorial Hospital, given that funding for the hospital ends at the end of the financial year and it is now 6 June?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:36): I will double-check and come back to the house with what our proposals are for next year's funding.

The SPEAKER: Member for Reynell—again.

BUS SHELTER PROGRAM

Ms THOMPSON (Reynell) (14:36): Thank you, sir. My question is to the Minister for Transport Services. Can the minister update the house on the progress made in installing new bus shelters along metropolitan bus routes?

The Hon. C.C. FOX (Bright—Minister for Transport Services, Minister Assisting the Minister for the Arts) (14:37): I thank the member for Reynell for her question, and I would like to congratulate her on her success in advocating strongly for her electorate, which actually has the highest number of new bus shelters established by this fantastic program.

The Hon. S.W. Key interjecting:

The Hon. C.C. FOX: No, it's true, although you were a pretty strong advocate yourself—a very robust discussion there. The new bus shelter program was established three years ago by this government, and it committed about \$5.2 million over a four-year period to build new as well as upgrade existing bus shelters to benefit commuters across Adelaide. The investment has complemented the broader modernisation of our public transport network.

The initiative involved the development of a sustainable partnership with local government to build these bus shelters and provide more comfortable, functional shelters for all passengers, particularly the aged and people with disabilities, ensuring compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

It might be of interest to the members of this house to know that there are approximately 8,100 bus stops in the Adelaide metropolitan area, and we have an estimated 3,500 shelters. The majority of those shelters are owned by the council, following a transfer in 2004, so councils are co-funding this program by procuring and installing the shelters and undertaking all the associated works. I would like to thank the great majority of councils for being extremely—

The Hon. L.W.K. Bignell interjecting:

The Hon. C.C. FOX: I said 'the great majority'—for being extremely helpful in this process. In the second year of the program, regional councils were also eligible to submit applications, and in total 118 metropolitan applications and 24 regional applications have been assessed and approved. Additional funding will be made available to selected councils for another 22 shelters.

To date, 162 bus shelters under the year 2 program have been installed, with the remaining two due for installation by the end of 2013. Funding applications for the 2013 round of the current program have recently been requested from councils, and the funding will be allocated by August. It is anticipated that more than 190 requests will be made by council.

The installation of around 700 new disability-compliant bus shelters all across the Adelaide metropolitan bus network is a clear demonstration of the investment this government is making in a modern, safe, comfortable and reliable public transport network for the commuters of Adelaide.

GM HOLDEN

Mr ODENWALDER (Little Para) (14:39): My question is to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. Can the minister please inform the house about the coordination of assistance provided to Holden workers?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:40): Thank you Mr Speaker, and I would like to thank the honourable member for his question, and I am also aware of his strong interest in the automotive industry and allied industries and also his empathy for the industry and its workers.

Many members in Little Para and surrounding electorates of Napier, etc. have a strong interest in the motor plant at Elizabeth. In fact, my own father worked at General Motors for over 20 years.

The Hon. L.W.K. Bignell: The member for Chaffey worked there.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: At Woodville?

Mr Whetstone: Yes.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: So I have first-hand experience of how important Holden's is to the area. When Holden's announced the loss of 400 jobs, the government moved in quickly to support the families and the broader community. We established a taskforce which has local, state and federal government representatives, union and Holden representatives to ensure that we coordinate the various programs available to support the affected workers and their families.

Holden workers have a range of skills; skills which are transferrable to other manufacturing environments and other industries in South Australia. One of the key things of this taskforce is to ensure that we don't lose this expertise.

Advanced manufacturing is highly significant for the economic and social prosperity of northern Adelaide. Two of the state's most advanced sectors, automotive and defence, are concentrated in the northern Adelaide region. We want to make sure that the skills which we lost to Holden's are not lost to the region.

At the regional level, I chair the Northern Adelaide Regional Collaboration. The collaboration includes state and local government CEOs, senior commonwealth officials and representatives from universities and the not-for-profit sector and, importantly, representatives from business. The collaboration is well placed to leverage the already strong advanced manufacturing base and assist in the expansion and creation of new and high-value jobs in this sector to ensure that people who leave Holden's employment can actually find new work.

While this occurs, we want to make sure that Holden workers and their families are properly supported so they can get back on their feet quickly and be in a position to transition into these new positions in the parts manufacturing area. Therefore, the taskforce is responsible for coordinating career planning events, identifying training opportunities for further skills, and identification of alternate employment opportunities.

I attended the first career planning event with the Premier on the weekend along with my colleagues the member for Hartley, the member for Taylor and the member for Ramsay.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: That was enough. There were no members from across there though.

Mr Whetstone: We didn't know.

Mrs Redmond: You didn't invite us. Had we been invited we would have been there.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO: Which I did, I contacted your office; we did so. Mr Speaker, the event was designed to ensure that workers and their families are aware of the various opportunities available to them to get support services. and it was well-attended. I look forward to updating the house further as the work of the Holden taskforce progresses.

GM HOLDEN

Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (14:43): Supplementary, sir: the minister talks in his answer about the northern Adelaide Regional Collaboration which he chairs. Can the minister advise how many times that collaboration has met in the last 12 months?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:43): I can advise that the collaboration has met twice since I have been minister.

TAFE SA

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:44): My question is for the Minister for Further Education and Skills. Can the minister advise if TAFE SA has plans to close its childcare centres?

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy) (14:44): There is no secret that, a while ago, TAFE declared that it was going to move out of the business of providing child care. The member would be well aware of that. He is also well aware of the fact that TAFE is now an independent statutory authority. He supported the legislation that enabled that to happen. So we will continue to work closely with TAFE and with families.

TAFE SA

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:45): Supplementary question: did the minister's office approve those changes?

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy) (14:45): Excuse me, sir. Could he repeat the question?

The SPEAKER: Yes, he asked: did the minister's office approve those changes?

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI: Which changes is he referring to? There are a number of TAFE campuses. If he is happy to furnish me with more information, I am happy to get an answer.

TAFE SA

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:45): Supplementary question: the minister just explained the policy for child care closures, and I am asking whether the minister's office—

The SPEAKER: What is the question, member for Unley?

Mr PISONI: The question is whether the minister's office, her office or the previous minister's office, approved that change of policy?

The SPEAKER: And what change was that?

Mr PISONI: The removal of childcare centres from TAFE.

The Hon. G. PORTOLESI (Hartley—Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills, Minister for Science and Information Economy) (14:46): So, thank you, sir. He has just answered the question which he asked me a moment ago.

Mr PISONI: Point of order, Mr Speaker. The minister is obviously entering debate, sir.

The SPEAKER: No, that is not a point of order, and you are warned for the first time. Minister, do you have anything to add? No.

ADELAIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr PISONI (Unley) (14:46): My question is to the Minister for Education and Child Development. Will the eventual new zoning of Adelaide High School include all students currently zoned for Black Forest Primary School?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:46): I thank the member for Unley for his question. There has been no decision made.

LYRUP PRIMARY SCHOOL

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: Oh my god!

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:47): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes, that is—

The SPEAKER: The member for West Torrens is warned for what appeared to be a blasphemous remark.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I take blasphemy very seriously. That was not a blasphemous remark.

Mr WHETSTONE: My question is to the member for West Torrens. Following my conversation with the minister about the closure of the Lyrup Primary School, can he now explain why the government has removed playground equipment purchased by the community fundraising from the site and what does the government intend to do with this community asset?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:47): I received correspondence from the member in relation to Lyrup Primary School and raised those questions with the department because I know that he was very keen on what could be done with that site. I was advised that the equipment was distributed to other schools.

LYRUP PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:48): Supplementary question: does the government have further plans to remove other assets from the site, given the school site is yet to be put out to public tender? There are concerns from the community that the removal of infrastructure will impact on the viability of that potential sale.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:48): The member for Chaffey spoke to me yesterday in the chamber about this school. I am seeking advice. The member for Chaffey yesterday indicated he would like to see the school gifted or made available for purchase to local community groups. The government is amenable to that. I am not aware of any asset program for the school but I will get a detailed answer to him. We agreed yesterday that he would send me some correspondence on it and then I would deal with it. I think it has been less than 24 hours, but we will get some answers to him very soon.

MURRAY RIVER FERRIES

Mr VENNING (Schubert) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr VENNING: That is a good point. Can the minister provide an update on his future plans for the Murray River ferries in South Australia, given that the Murray Mallee and Local Government Association have recently provided the minister with a ferries options paper seeking state government support in developing a five-year timber hulled ferry asset replacement plan?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:49): I thank the member for Schubert, my good friend, for this question and tell him that he only has 13 minutes to wait when all of these questions will be answered in the budget process. I did, however, point out to the local councils in the area that the state government historically took the ferry service from local councils because they were not keeping them—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You want a bridge built?

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The Liberal Party has just announced that they are going to build a bridge in place of ferries. A very expensive process—hundreds of millions of dollars, so we'll put that into the budget.

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Sorry; I thought you were the shadow transport spokesperson.

Ms Chapman: With the previous government.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Okay.

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Transport will not respond to interjections.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: She is very persuasive, sir, so it is difficult. I have spoken to local councils and I have asked them for many options, including ones about funding models. The councils are adamant that they are set on an outcome that they would like to see, but I can assure the member for Schubert that I am well aware of the issues, and he will have an answer in 11 minutes.

LYRUP PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Education. Minister, why did you say that the playground equipment was distributed to other schools when the builder was given salvage rights and it is now located in his backyard?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:50): Because that is the information that I was given by the department. If that is not correct, I will certainly go and check and come back to the member.

SPEED CAMERAS

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:51): My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. How much money has the government budgeted for the point-to-point speed camera system installed on the Dukes Highway, and how much will that provide to the state's coffers per annum?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:51): I don't have the information at hand. I will get back to the house.

SPEED CAMERAS

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:51): Supplementary, sir.

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: It is all to do with the last question, but I can't help that he can't answer it.

The SPEAKER: Now you are really cribbing on your own list. Anyway, go on.

Mrs Redmond: Please sir, I want some more.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. I will see if he doesn't know this part. Why were Coonalpyn and Ki Ki selected as the destinations for the implementation of this technology?

The SPEAKER: That is not a supplementary, but I will come back to you. Member for Flinders.

SOUTHERN EXPRESSWAY

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Why is it that the government is able to use a temporary on/off ramp for the Southern Expressway duplication at Majors Road but will not provide the residents of Sheidow Park and Trott Park with an on/off ramp to access the expressway after construction?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:52): I think the question is two-pronged. I thank him for his question and his keen interest in the Southern Expressway, not to do with Flinders.

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The Minister for Education is warned a first time.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The reason the state government is expanding all the bridges—was the question about on/off ramps or bridges?

Mr Treloar: On/off ramps.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I don't have the answer at hand about why that on/off ramp is being closed, if it is being closed. I will find out and get a detailed answer back to the house.

CLARE DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr BROCK (Frome) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Can the minister please advise: are there any moves by Country Health SA or the health department to reduce any of the current services at the Clare hospital and, in particular, Kara House with the palliative care ward?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:53): Certainly not that I have been advised, but I will double check with my department and get back to the member for Frome with a definitive answer.

The SPEAKER: I was so intrigued with the member for Hammond's supplementary, I now wish to hear it.

SPEED CAMERAS

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:53): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your lenience. My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Why were Coonalpyn and Ki Ki selected as the destinations for the implementation of the point-to-point speed camera technology?

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety) (14:53): Mr Speaker, I will take that question on notice and return to the house.

The SPEAKER: Words I thought I would never say: the member for Finniss.

CLARE DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:54): Supplementary, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Supplementary, I am sorry.

Mr WHETSTONE: To the previous question to the Minister for Health and Ageing, can the minister explain if the current offers of redundancy packages—

The SPEAKER: No, that is not a supplementary to a road matter at Ki Ki and Coonalpyn. The member for Finniss.

Mr WHETSTONE: I was actually denied the opportunity for a supplementary to the Minister for Health and Ageing.

The SPEAKER: We will come back to that. The member for Finniss.

SOUTH COAST DISTRICT HOSPITAL

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Health. How will the minister provide medical professionals at the South Coast District Hospital should the government fail to negotiate an amicable contract agreement with the current medical practitioners?

The SPEAKER: It is hypothetical, if the minister wants to answer it.

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:55): I am more than happy to take it—in the way we normally do: go about recruiting medical consultants and medical officers to work in our public hospitals. The health department does have some expertise in employing doctors and nurses. It is something that they are rather good at.

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey.

RIVERLAND HEALTH SERVICES

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:55): Thank you, Mr Speaker—supplementary. My question is to the Minister for Health and Ageing. Can the minister explain if the current offers of redundancy packages within the Riverland health units will affect front-line health services, how many packages are on offer, and are these positions being replaced?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:55): I will have to get some advice from my department on this particular issue but, normally, when a redundancy is offered to a position it is because the position has gone. As to how and whether it will affect front-line services, I will get an answer for the member for Chaffey and get back to him.

VICTOR HARBOR ROADS

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Can the minister advise the house of any plans it has to redesign or realign the Adelaide Road/Welch Road/Waterport Road intersection at Victor Harbor?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (14:56): I will go back and check my correspondence to see what correspondence the member sent me on this vitally important issue to his electorate. I have nothing at my fingertips, but I will check and get back to and cooperate with your electoral office—as I always do.

PATIENT ASSISTANCE TRANSPORT SCHEME

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (14:56): My question is to the Minister for Health. Why are post-operative Kangaroo Island residents being told that they will not be reimbursed a claim for a plane fare to return home, even though the surgeon says they must fly and they are being forced to go on the ferry?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:57): I am not aware of that happening but, if it is, I point out to the house that I recently announced a review of PATS and am looking forward to receiving a report from that. I understand there have been issues that have been brought to my attention by a number of members, particularly the members for Giles, Frome and Mount Gambier. They have brought to my attention a number of issues, particularly with regard to the difficulty or length of delays in people getting reimbursed sometimes. If the member for Finniss can provide me with the particular details of the people who have been told this, I would be more than happy to get back to him with an answer.

PATIENT ASSISTANCE TRANSPORT SCHEME

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (14:57): My question, once again, is to the Minister for Health. Why must a person who has had a laryngectomy (removal of the voice box through throat cancer) be forced to travel on the ferry and connections both sides (a total of 4½ hours) when motion sickness can be life threatening and they have been told that under PATS they cannot fly?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs) (14:58): Again, if the member for Finniss can provide me with the details of the particular patient, I will be more than happy to get back to him with an answer.

SPEED CAMERAS

The Hon. R.B. SUCH (Fisher) (14:58): My question is to the Minister for Police. Following the earlier question and response relating to point-to-point cameras on country roads, is there any plan to introduce them into the urban arterial road network, given that other countries are going down that path, rather than the snapshot mobile cameras?

The Hon. M.F. O'BRIEN (Napier—Minister for Finance, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety) (14:58): My understanding is that, at this point in time, no, because the efficiency, if you like, of the arrangement relies in part on a significant distance being travelled but also on the absence of side roads leading into the area of road which is under point-to-point supervision. I will return to the house, but my understanding is: no, at this particular point in time.

SA POWER NETWORKS

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (14:59): My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Has the state government offered to assist SA Power Networks in accessing land in the Glynde area to construct a substation instead of the planned site which is, as I understand it, in a suburban street and its development will impact on adjoining residents?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (15:00): I thank the member for Goyder for his question. I think it is fair to say that the amount of pressure that the member for Hartley is putting on me and the government about this substation is getting to the point where it is a bit intense. Alas, SA Power Networks are seeming to dig their heels in. I am doing my very best to try to find an alternative site. Unfortunately for us, we do not own these assets anymore and we do not own—

Mr Hamilton-Smith interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Waite is called to order.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: We have given SA Power Networks alternative sites, as have other interested bodies. The problem is this: all the power that the energy minister once had to direct SA Power Networks, where to build their infrastructure, how to do it, was gone when we sold our assets. While the member for Waite, who supported the sale of our electricity assets, says 'also our liabilities', I think the residents who are affected by this substation will find cold comfort in

his words today. I think it is important to note this is what happens when the government takes its hands off the levers of some of our most important utilities, like our power assets. I wish—

Mr PISONI: Mr Speaker, point of order.

The SPEAKER: If it be a point of order.

Mr PISONI: The minister is entering into debate.

The SPEAKER: Yes, the minister is entering into debate. Thank you. Member for Kavel.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel) (15:02): Right on the knocker, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. Can the minister advise if there are any plans to improve the intersection at Main South Road and Panalatinga Road in Happy Valley following its ranking in the top 10 worst intersections in the state as part of the RAA's Risky Roads study recently?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Kavel will be heard in silence. Minister for Infrastructure.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Housing and Urban Development) (15:02): Sir, when the puppet master speaks we all listen in silence—the man with his fingers on the strings. We are now seconds away—

The Hon. P.F. Conlon: And Tom, the only one we fear.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: And he's the only one we fear! We are seconds away from the second reading speech of the Appropriation Bill, Mr Speaker, so all will be revealed soon. I think it is fair to say we are taking very seriously transport and road infrastructure in this budget. We have seen a number of announcements already, and I think we consider all these intersections very, very seriously, and we do as much as we can within existing finances.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FAMILIES SA EMPLOYEES

479 Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (4 December 2012).

1. What are the details of the travel expenses incurred by Families SA employees in 2011-12, including itemised costs and purpose of individual trips?

2. What are the details of the proposed travel expenses budgeted for Families SA employees in 2012-13, including itemised costs and purpose of individual trips?

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE (Wright—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for Multicultural Affairs): I am advised:

That as part of the care for the children and young people placed in care some travel is inevitable, including intrastate travel of both staff and children from country regions to Adelaide for medical appointment, connecting children and young people with families and relatives living interstate etc.

Similarly staff development and training also require some intrastate travel.

For the financial year ending 30 June 2012 this amounted to some \$205,603.58.

The budgeted amount for the 2012-13 financial year has been set at \$208,000.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH SURVEY

483 Mr MARSHALL (Norwood—Leader of the Opposition) (4 December 2012). How will the absence of APY lands data from the South Australian Aboriginal Health Survey affect SA Health's capacity to measure progress made under the Council of Australian Government's National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health Outcomes?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs): I am told:

The Council of Australian Governments agreed to six targets for closing the gap in indigenous disadvantage, as specified in the Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement. Two of the targets are to close the life expectancy gap within a generation and to halve the gap in mortality rates for indigenous children under five within a decade. These are both aimed at improving indigenous health outcomes. Neither of these indicators rely on data from the Aboriginal Health Survey for measurement. They use data from other sources.

The Aboriginal Health Survey was designed to produce stable population estimates on several health topics, including disease and risk factor prevalence, for aboriginal people living in metropolitan, rural and remote areas of the state. Many remote communities participated in the survey. Examples include Yalata, Oak Valley, Coober Pedy, Ceduna and Koonibba. The survey provides an accurate reflection of the experiences of remote communities.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA RENAL STUDY

484 Mr MARSHALL (Norwood—Leader of the Opposition) (4 December 2012). Has the South Australian government accepted the 'hub and spoke' model of service delivery proposed in the Central Australia Renal Study and if so, what will be the flow-on effects of that decision over the next twelve months?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health and Ageing, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for Defence Industries, Minister for Veterans' Affairs): I am told:

Alice Springs has been identified as the location for a hub and spoke model of service delivery for renal services in central Australia and continues to accept haemodialysis patients from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands. SA Health has increased the number of haemodialysis chairs available across sites in country South Australia which has increased the capacity within the local system. While there has been consideration of the establishment of a satellite haemodialysis site in the APY lands, it is not considered practicable at this time for several reasons. These include the large distances between communities and the infrastructure and workforce needed. The visiting respite dialysis service currently visits four sites within the APY lands to enable patients to return to their home communities.

Patients from the APY lands will continue to dialyse in their respective units, for example Alice Springs, Port Augusta or Adelaide. The visiting respite dialysis service will allow these patients to return to their home communities for week long visits providing the opportunity to reconnect with their land and communities. These visits will increase in 2013-14 with South Australia now owning its own dialysis truck. SA Health will evaluate this model of service provision and will continue to explore different models, including self care dialysis where appropriate.

BUDGET PAPERS

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for the Public Sector, Minister for the Arts) (15:03): I lay on the table the following 2013 budget papers:

Budget Overview 2013-14—Budget Paper 1

Budget Speech 2013-14—Budget Paper 2

Budget Statement 2013-14—Budget Paper 3

Portfolio Statements 2013-14—Volumes 1,2,3 and 4—Budget Paper 4

Capital Investment Statement 2013-14—Budget Paper 5

Budget Measures Statement 2013-14—Budget Paper 6

I move:

That the Budget Statement, Portfolio Statements, Capital Investment Statement and Budget Measures Statement be published.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2013

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for the Public Sector, Minister for the Arts) (15:04): Obtained leave

and introduced a bill for an act for the appropriation of money from the Consolidated Account for the year ending 30 June 2014, and for other purposes. Read a first time.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for the Public Sector, Minister for the Arts) (15:04): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It gives me great pleasure to deliver my first budget as Treasurer.

The state budget is more than a statement of public sector finances. It is an instrument through which a government can pursue its social and economic goals.

The decisions taken in this budget—and the decisions not taken—speak to our fundamental beliefs and values.

The choices we have made in this budget stem from our belief that government has a crucial role to play in helping industries to change and grow, in protecting and creating jobs, and in building a better quality of life for people.

We value the sense of purpose and self-respect that secure, well paid employment brings. That is why this government will continue to invest now, to ensure that our economy grows more strongly tomorrow.

We value the ingenuity and drive of our entrepreneurs, especially those young people trying to get a start. That is why measures that create opportunity for small businesses are a focus of this budget.

We value our high quality of life and believe we must protect it. That is why we are investing in affordable homes; in easing the pressure on families; and in supporting those most in need.

We believe that in a decent society, people receive the care they need, and have the opportunity to take control of their future. That is why we continue to invest in high quality services in education, in training, in health care and in disability.

This budget reflects these values.

Mr Speaker, throughout the history of this state, the South Australian economy has flourished when a strong government has partnered with the business sector and the community to create opportunity.

Whether under Sir Thomas Playford, whose government promoted industry development, or under Don Dunstan, when our creative industries were conceived and developed, or more recently in the development of the mining and defence sectors, much of what this state has achieved has been driven by strong governments.

In our state, governments must take a leadership role in supporting sectors of the economy that are adjusting to the pressures of great economic change, and must help drive opportunities in sectors with potential for significant growth.

Our government continues this South Australian tradition. The Economic Statement released earlier this year built on the state's seven priorities and identified four focus areas for our economy.

Today's budget continues this significant body of work.

Mr Speaker, this budget, as with each budget delivered since the onset of the global financial crisis, is handed down in challenging economic times.

The global economic outlook is mixed, with uncertainty dominating Europe, tentative growth in the United States, and more modest levels of growth in China than in previous years.

Within Australia, both business and households remain cautious with high levels of savings and restrained investment and consumption.

The persistently high Australian Dollar and strong competition from countries with lower production costs have continued to place pressure on the manufacturing sector.

This is reflected in the performance of the South Australian economy.

Households and business remain cautious, holding back spending decisions, and hence, activity.

The housing sector has been subdued, with low levels of dwelling commencements. The retail sector has also been soft.

But South Australians have been resilient in the face of these challenges, with more new jobs being created than those lost—10,600 in the last 12 months.

And recent data shows that both our housing and retail sectors appear to have turned the corner.

Our long-term outlook is strong. The Economic Statement released in March was built on independent economic modelling that shows that we will achieve growth under any of the modelled economic scenarios.

Mr Speaker, in recent years, we have faced significantly declining tax and GST revenues.

Again this year, the budget is delivered in a context of downward revisions to GST and taxation revenue estimates. In particular the Commonwealth Government has further written down its forecast of the total GST pool since the mid-year budget review.

In the context of lower revenue projections, and the need to continue supporting economic activity and service delivery, this budget estimates an operating deficit of \$911 million in 2013-14, a deficit \$43 million higher than was anticipated at the mid-year budget review.

However, this estimate includes a change in accounting standards which requires an increase in nominal superannuation expenses.

This accounting change, which does not involve any actual increase in expenditure and does not affect our debt, nominally increases superannuation expenses by between \$163 million and \$182 million a year over the forward estimates.

Without this change in accounting treatment, the 2013-14 net operating position would be a deficit of \$748 million, an improvement against the estimate in the mid-year budget review of \$120 million.

As was forecast in last year's budget, we are on track to return to surplus in 2015-16, with a surplus of \$375 million, strengthening to \$661 million in 2016-17.

Without the change in accounting treatment, these would be surpluses of \$551 million and \$843 million, again substantial improvements on the position at mid-year budget review.

And government debt is expected to fall to \$8.8 billion by 2016-17, an improvement of over \$450 million against the forecast in the mid-year review—and a moderate 7.6 per cent of gross state product.

So this budget delivers a significant strengthening of the budgetary position by the end of the forward estimates in comparison to the position at the mid year budget review.

As the economic conditions improve, we will pay down debt, just as we did in the years that preceded the Global Financial Crisis.

Mr Speaker, it is true there are decisions we have not taken that would lead us to surplus quicker.

But we have chosen not to sell our remaining significant government assets.

We have chosen not to abandon our program of infrastructure spending.

We have chosen not to cut deeper into the important services which support or protect the community.

Mr Speaker, this budget also describes the steps we have taken to ensure the long-term sustainability of our budget.

In 2011, we secured an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to share more of the cost burden of providing quality health services.

We have recently reached agreement for DisabilityCare, under which the Commonwealth will partner with us in properly supporting people living with significant disabilities. We have

reached agreement to relieve state housing payment obligations and so reduce the pressures on our social housing provision.

We are also continuing to negotiate arrangements to ensure that the Commonwealth Government partners with us in the funding of the whole of school education in this state.

Together, these agreements will have a positive effect on our budgetary situation for many years to come.

Mr Speaker, as a result of our agreement with the Commonwealth Government to relieve state housing payment obligations, this budget provides further stimulus to the housing construction sector which builds on the significant investments this government has previously made to support jobs and economic activity.

Last October, our government introduced the Housing Construction Grant—a grant of up to \$8,500 available to all home buyers who are purchasing or building a new home up to a market value of \$450,000.

The positive impact of this grant is growing; over 1,100 South Australians having received this grant in the seven months since it commenced.

This budget extends the Housing Construction Grant for a further six months, at a cost of \$38.7 million. It will now apply to all eligible new home purchase contracts entered into until 31 December 2013.

But we also need a more direct stimulus for the housing construction sector.

That is why we are providing a new affordable housing stimulus program.

This budget is investing \$50 million in the program which, together with our existing direct housing investments, means that the industry will benefit from an injection of \$220 million, or 936 homes constructed, in the next 18 months. This will support more than 2,400 jobs across the state.

Mr Speaker, this budget is also recognition that to create a dynamic, modern economy in South Australia, we need to do more than support our existing industries.

Twenty years ago I made the decision to start my own small business. Starting your own business isn't easy.

You only truly understand what it is like to build a small business from the ground up if you have done it yourself—it is not an experience that you can inherit.

It is a difficult thing to negotiate with banks, to hire and manage staff, to establish a pipeline of work, and to pay employees and bills when yours aren't being paid.

I spent many nights working all night long, with all the worries and stresses all too familiar to small business owners.

That is why I wanted a small business package in this budget.

In preparing this package, I met with representatives of local banks on a number of occasions. We shared our ideas about what we could do collectively to support small business. So I am pleased that five banks have announced measures of their own to complement the measures I set out in today's budget.

Mr Speaker, this budget provides a temporary payroll tax rate cut for employers with taxable payrolls up to \$1.2 million.

A concessional tax rate of 2.5 per cent will apply to annual taxable payrolls of \$600,000 to \$1 million, which effectively halves the rate for these businesses.

The concession will phase out to the ordinary payroll tax rate of 4.95 per cent for annual taxable payrolls between \$1 million and \$1.2 million.

This concession will provide relief to payroll tax payers worth \$21.6 million over two years. These concessional rates will be available between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2015 (inclusive), providing relief of up to \$9,800 for a business each year.

This budget also includes a package of measures to provide targeted assistance to small business, including:

- \$2 million over 4 years to provide a full stamp duty exemption for corporate restructures, more in line with interstate exemptions
- \$1.6 million over 4 years for additional resources for the Small Business Commissioner to assist small businesses with dispute resolution, and to assist people to start, develop and grow their businesses
- \$440,000 over 2 years for the government's Industry Participation Advocate to help small business win a greater share of government contracts

Mr Speaker, Adelaide is consistently rated as one of the world's most liveable cities.

As we canvassed in the Economic Statement, there is an economic imperative in creating a vibrant city.

Developing a vibrant city will help us attract and retain the best and brightest in South Australia. Creating a more vibrant Adelaide encourages investment which translates into employment opportunities for South Australians.

And we have demonstrated that there is a role for government in the development of a vibrant city.

As well as directly investing in big projects to transform the city, we have provided stamp duty concessions for city apartments, removed planning restrictions stifling investment and growth, revitalised our laneways and encouraged the burgeoning network of small bars that has spread to Peel Street and beyond.

To foster our new entrepreneurs, our government is contributing \$1.4 million over the budget period to support two new hubs.

We will support the ongoing operation of the incubation hub in the West End of the city. This hub is co-sponsored by Microsoft and BankSA.

We will support a second hub that will assist emerging artists and creative industry members to develop and enhance their commercial and creative talents.

We have allocated \$1.5 million for the master planning and design of the site of the existing Royal Adelaide Hospital, to be vacated in 2016.

This budget also commits \$18.2 million over four years to ensure that our cultural institutions continue to reflect our position at the forefront of national arts and culture.

Mr Speaker, the mining boom may be slowing in the traditional mining states but South Australia is increasingly seen as the next mining and energy frontier.

This budget provides further funding so that we can fully realise the benefits of the mining boom for all South Australians.

We will establish the Mining and Petroleum Services Centre of Excellence to encourage innovation and applied research, at a cost of \$6 million.

The Centre will link mining and energy producers, service industries and researchers to drive innovation in unlocking our resources potential.

The Plan for Accelerated Exploration (PACE) program has firmly entrenched South Australia as an international mining leader. It has been instrumental in leveraging more than \$300 million in spending on mineral exploration in South Australia in 2012.

The budget expands the PACE program by a further \$4 million over the next two years, bringing total PACE funding to \$28 million over the budget period.

The budget also provides \$588,000 over two years for a joint initiative with South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME). This funding will assist Eyre Peninsula land holders and mining interests to better work together on the opportunities provided by exploration and mining.

Mr Speaker, our government is committed to the manufacturing remaining as a cornerstone of the State's economy.

We will use sophisticated processes to create products of great quality. We will compete with value-added products and services, not on lowest unit cost. We will compete with a higher skilled workforce.

In 2010, the government committed to providing 100,000 training places over a six-year period. We are on track to achieve this target early.

This budget provides a further \$27 million over two years to support increased demand in training.

Other initiatives to support and grow South Australia's manufacturing sector include:

- \$4.1 million for a High-Value Food Manufacturing Centre which will bring industry, government, universities and researchers together to focus on processes that add value to our produce
- \$3 million over three years for the Small Business Innovation Research Pilot program, which will help small business develop innovative products

Mr Speaker, the South Australian food and wine industry is worth over \$14 billion and accounts for 36 per cent of South Australia's total merchandise exports.

Growing global demand for our premium food and wine products, presents a considerable opportunity for this industry.

The safety of our food, and the conditions in which it is produced, will be an increasingly important part of its value to the world.

To ensure we continue to protect our environment, this budget delivers \$5.9 million over four years to the Environment Protection Authority.

In addition, we will also provide:

- the High-Value Food Manufacturing Centre I mentioned earlier
- \$2.6 million over four years to establish innovation clusters in the Riverland/Murraylands and Limestone Coast regions
- \$2.5 million over four years to promote our premium food and wine in key provincial markets of China
- \$1 million over 4 years to boost fruit fly surveillance, border controls, monitoring and public education to reduce the incidence of fruit fly outbreaks in South Australia

Mr Speaker, from the onset of the global financial crisis, the government has maintained a strong commitment to infrastructure investment.

The investment in key infrastructure has, and continues to deliver, significantly improved hospitals, schools, roads, water, entertainment, tourism, and leisure facilities for the state. These investments will benefit South Australians for generations.

Crucially, these investments have also supported up to 12,000 jobs each year in the economy, and have contributed up to 3 per cent per year of gross state product.

Mr Speaker, this budget continues this series of investments, with \$10.1 billion being spent across government over the next four years.

These projects will support 8,700 jobs in 2013-14 alone.

This program includes works underway, but also includes the new project of the upgrade of South Road between the Torrens Road intersection and the River Torrens.

This \$896 million project is co-funded by the Commonwealth under the Nation Building program, and construction will commence in 2014-15.

The partnership with the Commonwealth also includes the construction of an electrical sub-station and the electrification of the Gawler rail line to Dry Creek at a cost of \$152.4 million, as the first step in re-starting the electrification of the line to Gawler.

The program also includes \$63 million for the duplication of part of the Tonsley rail line to provide for an increase in services, rebuilding the Clovelly Park and Tonsley railway stations, and

providing a bus interchange at the intersection of South Road and Sturt Road to make Tonsley a public transport route for access to and from the city.

Mr Speaker, this budget provides over \$5 billion for health services across South Australia in 2013-14 and, over the last decade, we have seen the substantial redevelopment of every metropolitan hospital, and increases of almost 1,200 doctors and 4,000 nurses.

The most important measure of success is the results delivered by our investments. We have substantially reduced elective surgery waiting lists, and we lead the nation with the shortest emergency departments waiting times.

With our extra doctors and nurses, more than 92,000 additional patients a year get treated in our hospitals.

And we are delivering one of the largest most advanced tertiary care hospitals in Australia, in the New Royal Adelaide Hospital.

By any measure, Mr Speaker, a dramatic improvement in health care has been delivered under this government.

We are also assisting the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, contributing an additional \$9.1 million in operational support over the forward estimates, as well as funding for research units transferring to the SAHMRI.

The social and economic benefits of medical research are vast, as this institution will become a beacon for talented researchers from across the globe.

Mr Speaker, this government also values the sense of safety and peace we enjoy in our suburbs and towns.

A well-resourced police force is integral to creating a feeling of safety in our communities. We will not compromise on community safety.

Our government's police recruiting program has meant South Australia now has over 800 more officers than it did ten years ago.

The police budget has doubled over this period. It is no coincidence that we have seen a reduction in reported crime of over 40 per cent over the corresponding period.

This budget delivers \$34.9 million over four years to ensure that SAPOL is able to meet the government's commitment to recruit 300 additional police officers, although over a longer period than was originally planned.

Mr Speaker, there has been a longstanding need for improvement in our state's court facilities. We will provide \$2.0 million in 2013-14, in addition to significant funding held centrally, to facilitate the construction of new Supreme and District Court facilities, in partnership with the private sector.

In addition, the government is also providing \$6.4 million for a new South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, a single, easy to access body for the review of administrative and similar decisions.

These initiatives are expected to significantly increase access to justice and speed up the resolution of matters before the courts.

Mr Speaker, anyone who has witnessed a serious motor vehicle accident, lost a loved one, or known someone who has been seriously injured in a crash would understand why our government is committed to investing in safer roads.

The Motor Accident Commission, after unexpectedly strong investment performances this year, will make a contribution of \$100 million to a dedicated fund to be used for future road improvements and road safety initiatives.

The first projects that will be addressed through the fund include:

- Reconfiguration of the Britannia Roundabout to make it more efficient, easier to navigate, and safer
- Upgrade of the North East Road and Sudholz Road intersection
- Upgrade of the Magill Road and Glynburn Road intersection

- Installation of traffic signals at the intersection of Golden Grove and Grenfell Road (East), Surrey Downs
- Installation of 10 additional safety cameras at locations with a history of crashes or speeding infringements
- The state contribution to the \$106 million upgrade of the main access road into the APY lands
- The state contribution to the \$24.9 million improvement to the South Eastern Freeway

An Advisory Group that will include the Motor Accident Commission and community and road safety industry representatives will be established to provide advice on further road safety projects to be funded from this money.

Mr Speaker, this government values every child and we are committed to ensuring that the unique talents of every child are nurtured.

This budget provides \$3.2 billion for education in 2013-14, over double the funding from when we first came to government.

Over that time, we have substantially increased our spend per student, decreased class sizes, recruited more teachers, and delivered new schools.

We know that a good education starts even before a child walks through the school gate. So we have reached an agreement with the Commonwealth for Universal Access, to provide \$44.1 million over three years to ensure that all four year old children have access to 15 hours per week of preschool, the year before they attend school.

This budget also funds an \$8.5 million children's centre at Blakeview North to expand on our network of 38 children's centres.

And \$2.8 million over three years will be provided to The Australian Centre for Social Innovation's ground-breaking Family by Family Program, for families and children.

It will reduce the number of children who are separated from their families.

To protect our most vulnerable children, \$27.2 million is provided in the budget over four years to support the increasing number of children requiring care.

Mr Speaker, we value our high quality of life and we want to protect it.

Maintaining quality public services like health, education, family support and housing are critical to our standard of living.

We need to ease pressures on families to ensure they can enjoy in that quality of life.

For this reason, our Government has reformed the Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance scheme, which will see premiums drop by a total of \$148 over the next two years.

This has come at a cost of over \$41 million to the budget in reduced stamp duty revenue.

We also secured a two-year agreement with AGL that cut residential electricity prices by an average \$180 per year.

And we have moved to reduce water prices and ensure that water and sewerage bill increases will be limited to inflation over the next 3 years.

This has come at a cost of nearly \$80 million to the budget.

In addition, the budget provides \$21.1 million over four years to increase the water concession for low income earners and pensioners to 30 per cent of the eligible customer's water bill, and increase the minimum and maximum water concession by \$30 per annum, from 1 July 2013.

And we will also provide \$5.9 million over four years to community-based organisations counselling, advising and representing people in financial difficulty.

Mr Speaker, we value the dignity of the individual and the rights of all people to express themselves.

For too long people with disabilities had not been fully included in our society.

But that is now changing.

In the words of Shannon, a young woman living in Minda supported accommodation I met just last week, 'too many people with disabilities are sad it's now our turn to be happy'.

South Australia was the first jurisdiction in the nation to agree to launch DisabilityCare. This budget sets out South Australia's full funding commitment to DisabilityCare. By 2018-19 South Australia will invest \$723 million which will be matched by an equivalent Commonwealth contribution to provide people with disabilities the support they need.

But we are not waiting until then.

The budget also allocates \$107.8 million over 5 years (including \$10.3 million in 2012-13) to provide for the immediate needs of people with disabilities, including additional equipment and the provision of much-needed supported accommodation.

Mr Speaker, another group of South Australians who have also not been fully included in our community are the residents of the APY lands.

This budget provides a package of measures totalling \$63.2 million to improve the health and well-being of the residents of APY lands, which includes the upgrade of the road between the Stuart Highway and Pukatja, provision for the therapeutic needs of children, and improvements to the management of waste landfill.

More broadly, the budget provides \$32 million over three years to continue the investment, with the Commonwealth, in Closing the Gap in Indigenous health outcomes.

Mr Speaker, we have been able to find room for these investments while improving the budget outcomes, by making some prudent savings. But we have resisted the calls by some for additional large public sector job cuts.

The 1 per cent efficiency dividend has been extended into 2016-17, providing a benefit of \$58.5 million in that year, and some agency annual capital program budgets have been reduced by 10 per cent per annum, delivering a saving of \$52 million over four years.

Savings currently scheduled in some agencies to commence in 2015-16 will now be implemented in 2014-15. This provides a one-off benefit of \$43.7million in 2014-15.

Public sector staff taking a separation package from 1 July 2014 will have their payments reduced from a maximum of 116 weeks, to a maximum of 52 weeks. This delivers a saving of \$37.9 million over the forward estimates.

Mr Speaker, together we have created one of the most liveable places in the world—a civilised, peaceful community committed to equality. This community has also enjoyed 20 years of uninterrupted economic growth.

None of this has come easily—we enjoy few of the natural advantages of other states. Our climate is harsh, our regions are sparsely populated, and the delivery of services and utilities are expensive.

But with creativity and hard work we have always prevailed. This has been achieved through partnerships—between strong governments, strong business, backed by a strong community.

The budget that I have released today continues this tradition. It provides targeted funding to support and grow our economy, while ensuring we meet our imperatives for a safe, healthy, just, inclusive and vibrant community.

It does this in the midst of challenging economic circumstances, while improving the budget position over the forward estimates.

It is, Mr Speaker, a budget that is both progressive and responsible.

I commend this budget to the house.

Explanation of Clauses

1—Short title

This clause is formal.

2—Commencement

This clause provides for the Bill to operate retrospectively to 1 July 2013. Until the Bill is passed, expenditure is financed from appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act*.

3—Interpretation

This clause provides relevant definitions.

4—Issue and application of money

This clause provides for the issue and application of the sums shown in Schedule 1 to the Bill. Subsection (2) makes it clear that the appropriation authority provided by the *Supply Act* is superseded by this Bill.

5—Application of money if functions or duties of agency are transferred

This clause is designed to ensure that where Parliament has appropriated funds to an agency to enable it to carry out particular functions or duties and those functions or duties become the responsibility of another agency, the funds may be used by the responsible agency in accordance with Parliament's original intentions without further appropriation.

6—Expenditure from Hospitals Fund

This clause provides authority for the Treasurer to issue and apply money from the Hospitals Fund for the provision of facilities in public hospitals.

7—Additional appropriation under other Acts

This clause makes it clear that appropriation authority provided by this Bill is additional to authority provided in other Acts of Parliament, except, of course, in the *Supply Act*.

8—Overdraft limit

This clause sets a limit of \$50 million on the amount which the Government may borrow by way of overdraft.

Schedule 1—Amounts proposed to be expended from the Consolidated Account during the financial year ending 30 June 2014

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Griffiths.

FIRST HOME AND HOUSING CONSTRUCTION GRANTS (BUDGET 2013) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for the Public Sector, Minister for the Arts) (15:35): I move:

That standing orders be so far suspended as to enable me to introduce a bill forthwith.

Motion carried.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for the Public Sector, Minister for the Arts) (15:36): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the First Home and Housing Construction Grants Act 2000. Read a first time.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier, Treasurer, Minister for State Development, Minister for the Public Sector, Minister for the Arts) (15:36): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

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

Leave granted.

This Bill introduces legislative amendments to extend the Housing Construction Grant (HCG) for a further six months as announced in the 2013-14 Budget.

A HCG of up to \$8,500 has been available for home buyers who have entered into a contract to buy or build an eligible new home from 15 October 2012. The HCG applies to properties valued up to \$400,000 and phases out for properties valued between \$400,000 and \$450,000. The HCG was due to end on 30 June 2013.

The extension of the HCG means that home buyers who enter into contracts to purchase or build an eligible new home up to 31 December 2013 can receive the HCG of up to \$8,500. All other existing criteria for the HCG remain unchanged.

Since the HCG was introduced, the housing construction market has shown some early signs of improvement, with dwelling commencement and building approvals data showing some early indications of a pick-up in activity from levels recorded in mid-2012. The extension of the HCG for a further six months is intended to support the consolidation of this improved outlook for the housing construction sector.

Extending the HCG for a further six months is expected to cost \$38.6 million over two years.

I commend the Bill to Members.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

This clause is formal.

2—Commencement

This clause provides that operation of the measure will commence on 1 July 2013. If the Act is not assented to before 1 July 2013, it will be taken to have come into operation on that date.

3—Amendment provisions

This clause is formal.

Part 2—Amendment of *First Home and Housing Construction Grants Act 2000*

4—Amendment of section 18BAB—Housing construction grant

This clause amends section 18BAB of the Act by substituting '1 January 2014' for '1 July 2013', so that a housing construction grant is payable on an application under the Act (subject to the other requirements of the section) if the commencement date of the eligible transaction is on or after 15 October 2012 but before 1 January 2014. If the eligible transaction is a contract for an 'off-the-plan' purchase of a new home, the contract must state that the eligible transaction is to be completed on or before 30 June 2015 (unless the transaction is completed on or before that date). Currently, the section requires the contract to state that the eligible transaction is to be completed on or before 31 December 2014.

Schedule 1—Transitional provision

1—Transitional provision

A transitional provision is included to deal with the possibility of a person receiving an *ex gratia* payment to provide for a housing construction grant for the period between 1 July 2013 and the day on which the Act is assented to by the Governor. If a person is entitled to a housing construction grant in relation to an eligible transaction with a commencement date that is on or after 1 July 2013, and the person has received an *ex gratia* payment before the Act is assented to, the amount of the entitlement will be reduced by the amount of the *ex gratia* payment.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Griffiths.

At 15:38 the house adjourned until Tuesday 18 June 2013 at 11:00.