

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 14 May 2015

The **SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Atkinson)** took the chair at 10:30 and read prayers.

Bills

NATIVE VEGETATION (ROAD VERGES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (10:31): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Native Vegetation Act 1991. Read a first time.

Second Reading

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (10:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This is the second time that I have introduced this bill and I hope it is not like the health bill that we are doing for the third time in this place at the current moment. Last time I introduced this bill was in November 2012, and I remember that day well, because it was an extreme fire danger day in South Australia.

There had been a fire not far from our farming property between Kangarilla and Meadows. The whole state was on red alert that day and the need to have common-sense legislation about managing native vegetation in this state was no more evident than on that day. If we want more evidence about that, just look at the recent history of bushfires in South Australia.

This is a common-sense piece of legislation, in anybody's opinion, other than a few of the absolute greenies. While I am not allowed to display in this place, I have circulated a photograph of a road near our farming property and it just shows what I am aiming for on the left-hand side of the road and what is currently the situation on many roads in South Australia on the right-hand side. I know what I would like people to be able to do using their own common sense.

My legislation, which is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation amending the Native Vegetation Act, uses the word 'reasonable'. Under the Acts Interpretation Act, 'reasonable' has an interpretation. You are not napalming the verges; you are not getting out the D9 and clearing every piece of vegetation and topsoil from the verges. You are doing what is reasonable to make sure that when—and I do say 'when', not 'if'—there is a bushfire, you are able to drive down that road and escape your property if the need arises, if you have not otherwise left early.

We saw on the West Coast the numbers of deaths of people on the roads who were caught with masses of native vegetation on both sides. There were flame-overs, their vehicles were caught, and they perished. That happens over and over again. From personal experience, I have driven fire trucks where you have got flames coming through tons and tons of fuel load and litter on the sides of the road, and you have got flames leaping up the side of the fire truck. You know that, had there been some common sense, reasonable clearing of the verges, you would not have been in the perilous position that you were in having to go and try to control bushfires and save people's properties.

As I say, this is not about desertification of our verges: this is about a reasonable undertaking by property owners. I actually trust South Australians to do the right thing. I trust them to carry out clearing and reducing the fuel loads for bushfires by using common sense. I trust them to do that, and this is what this legislation is going to do.

There will be councils jumping up and down because they will not be getting the revenue from their people going out inspecting and taking photographs of people wanting to burn off a small pile of vegetation to clear it. One of the most ridiculous situations we have in South Australia is where,

in some local government areas, they do allow their landowners to go and do reasonable clearing and reasonable fuel reduction but, in other areas, you have got to apply for a permit.

The inspector comes out, takes a photograph, goes back and considers it. You get a permit for a specific time and a specific day. If it is pouring with rain that day, well bad luck, you have got to go through it again. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are wasted because of that bureaucratic nonsense. What this bill aims to do is allow people to undertake reasonable fuel load reduction, in this case on the road verges.

I would like to see it extended to rural properties as well. Everybody in this place should go back and talk to the people at Sampson Flat who were involved there—the property owners and firefighters. Ask them what they would think of this legislation and I would guarantee that 100 per cent would agree that this is a sensible thing to do. I do not see anybody in this place who could say this is not a reasonable thing to do. If you do say that, the first thing I would ask is: do you not trust South Australians to do the right thing? I do, I know the Liberal Party does, and I look forward to members in this place doing that exact same thing.

Just this morning, while coming into this place, I was listening to ABC at Port Pirie. They had the assistant chief officer of the CFS speaking there about the coming severe El Niño that has been predicted. We will get the winter rains, we will get drying off earlier, and we will have an extended fire season. The time to start preparing for the fire season is when things are starting to look like they are drying off.

You cannot do that, at the moment, with the current legislation. I encourage everybody in the place to have a look at the photographs I have got—if you have not got one, I am happy to hand you one—of what we are trying to achieve. The fuel load has been reduced significantly. Just remember that flame height is about three times the height of the fuel load. So, on one side of this picture, you have got fuel load reduced down to a matter of a few centimetres. On the other side, you have got Phalaris that is about a metre and a half high.

What would you rather face? Flames you could jump over that are 20 centimetres high with very little intensity and very little heat that is not decimating seed banks, and small creatures have got time to escape from, or would you rather have flames that are five or six metres high generating thousands of degrees worth of heat that are going to decimate seed banks and decimate any little hidey holes that creatures might be in, never mind the creatures that are in them?

You are actually doing the right thing by managing the native vegetation on the side of the roads. The Aboriginal people used to do it. Go and read Bill Gammage's book *The Biggest Estate on Earth* that tells how Aboriginal people used to manage our vegetation. They did not allow it to accumulate for year after year so that you were getting tons and tons of fuel waiting to burn when that bushfire came.

Yes, I am very passionate about this, because I have seen trucks burnt in bushfires. I have seen the unnecessary spread of bushfires because of massive fuel loads that were not able to be cleared and controlled. So, I just plead with the members in this place to look at this legislation for what it is. Ask yourselves: is this a sensible thing to do?

The minister might say, 'No, we can't do that; there are too many things that might go wrong. The precautionary principle will come out.' The precautionary principle basically says: if you cannot prove that something might go wrong but you suspect or think it might go wrong, well, let's make sure that we put rules in place so that whatever we were going to do can't be done. If you apply the precautionary principle to itself, it fails. So, let's not use the precautionary principle approach on this piece of sensible legislation.

I challenge members on the other side, if you have the courage of your convictions, come over en masse. They cannot disendorse all of you; try it. Just do what they do in every other labour party in this world: don't vote en bloc, don't vote per the minister's whim, don't vote as the Labor Party says you have to vote. Do what you were elected to do, stand up for your constituents, and vote for this decent legislation.

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon: What anti-Whip behaviour!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you on your feet, member for Newland?

The Hon. T.R. KENYON: After that disturbing and distressing speech from the member for Morphett, I move that debate be adjourned so that I might recover.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. T.R. Kenyon.

CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES (COMMERCIAL OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (10:42): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Controlled Substances Act 1984. Read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (10:42): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I thank those who have assisted in the drafting of this bill, and I also note that it will be circulated to key groups who take an interest in the bill.

Drug trafficking is the most serious drug offence that you can commit in South Australia, but there is a flaw here in South Australia with the law surrounding drug trafficking. It was a flaw that the Supreme Court highlighted in a case from 2 April 2014: R v Faehrmann; R v Moore; R v Price-Austin—a judgement of the Court of Criminal Appeal in the Supreme Court. The judges in that case where the Hon. Chief Justice Kourakis, the Hon. Justice Blue and the Hon. Justice Nicholson.

Drug trafficking is a business for drug dealers. When drug dealers in South Australia are convicted of drug trafficking and other offences, we take drugs off our streets. The law in South Australia does not consider drug trafficking and other offending as a continuing business, and this results in lower sentences for drug traffickers. The Supreme Court of South Australia last year ruled that the current law does not allow drug traffickers to be sentenced to higher terms of prison due to the limited nature of the current offences.

Today, I am following a recommendation of the Chief Justice and the other two justices of the Supreme Court. I note that, in Queensland, they have the laws that I am introducing today. We will introduce this bill, which will streamline the prosecution and sentencing for people convicted of drug trafficking and other offences.

The Controlled Substances (Commercial Offences) Amendment Bill 2015 will allow the DPP to prosecute and courts to sentence alleged drug traffickers and manufacturers for the totality of their offending, not just individual instances that the current law provides. People who traffic and manufacture commercial quantities of drugs do so over a long period of time, and sometimes they may commit multiple offences, not all of which can be encompassed properly when charged under the current law, and the Supreme Court has highlighted this flaw.

As the law currently stands, a person can only be sentenced to prison based on a specific instance of offending, not the totality of their offending over a long period of time. As I mentioned, the laws I am seeking to introduce already exist in Queensland, and the implementation of similar laws is a recommendation from the Supreme Court in the 2014 case I quoted, where they say at 57:

The merits of adopting in South Australia a provision like s 5(1) of the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 (Qld) deserves the attention of the legislature.

That is what we are here to do. As the sovereign law-making body of this land in South Australia, we are called to listen to the wisdom of Supreme Court judges when they make recommendations like this. I do believe that the current Attorney-General actually appointed these three esteemed gentlemen, too. We are called to listen to the Supreme Court, and if there is a better way of prosecuting drug traffickers I think we are called to put these kinds of laws in place. This bill will help, I believe, create a more efficient and effective justice system, and it is now up to the Attorney-General and the Weatherill Labor government to decide whether or not they will support what is a common-sense addition to our law in South Australia.

I have given the benefit to the Attorney-General of having the past year to read this case. I have not seen the government propose such a law; hence after a year we are doing it from

opposition. The Attorney and the government have certainly had the opportunity to consider this recommendation, which is in the public forum, and it has been in the public forum for over a year, and this is why after a year we are taking action on this side of the chamber and proposing these changes. We on this side of the chamber take drug trafficking very seriously, and that is why we want to do whatever we can to prosecute what are some of the worst hardcore drug dealers going around in South Australia.

Drugs, as we all know, are a scourge in our society, and we need to be tough on drug crime, but we not only need to be tough on drug crime but we also need to be smart in how we go about drug crime. This begins with introducing laws like this that will, I have no doubt, streamline the prosecution and sentencing for people convicted of drug trafficking and other offences. I would say that this is common-sense law reform. It is common-sense law reform, and it must be supported by the government. These laws have been highly successful in Queensland and, if they have been highly successful at prosecuting drug traffickers there, why would we not adopt them here? That is a question the Attorney-General needs to ask.

A judge, when they sentence for an offence against section 5(1) of the Drugs Misuse Act in Queensland, may make findings consistent with the verdicts or other sentencing materials as to the totality—the whole—of the offending of the period charged. Over there, they can fix a sentence which is proportionate to the totality of the conduct, but in South Australia it is in stark contrast, and a judge is required to sentence for the particular offences of which the defendant has been convicted and the trafficking context to which these offences are related and committed. They cannot do anything more than inform perhaps the prospects for rehabilitation or perhaps the degree of personal deterrence on the other which that sentence must reflect.

To put it in a simple way, an offender who is sentenced for an offence committed in the course of commercial trading—and that is what this law seeks to do: it seems to make this captured because the law at the moment does not consider drug trafficking and other offending as a continuing business—cannot and will not (this is the intent) expect the same leniency which might be afforded to a defendant who commits an isolated offence.

Here we are: it is a common-sense bill and I will put it out to consultation, as I mentioned. It is about time that this government got serious on drugs. They say they are serious about getting tough on drugs. Let's do something about it. The Attorney-General needs to show the people of South Australia that he is not just tip and no iceberg. I commend the bill to the house and I ask the government to support this bill.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (VOLUNTEER CHARTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 7 May 2015.)

Mr DULUK (Davenport) (10:51): I rise this morning to briefly speak on the Fire and Emergency Services (Volunteer Charters) Amendment Bill 2015. This bill was introduced by the member for Morphett, a man who is a life member of the CFS and a tireless advocate for the CFS and emergency services more generally. When the member for Morphett speaks about the CFS, this government ought to sit up and listen.

What this bill seeks to achieve is to place the CFS Volunteer Charter into legislation. The reason for this is that this government is not abiding by the current charter in letter or in spirit. This bill will formally compel the government to respect the charter. This will be achieved by inserting section 58A into the act which states:

The Parliament recognises that SACFS is first and foremost a volunteer-based organisation, in which volunteer officers and members are supported by employees in a fully integrated manner.

Another important point of the charter is to recognise the vital role played by the CFS Volunteers Association in advocating on behalf of the many thousands of CFS volunteers across the state. It is crucial that this role be recognised in legislation. The Victorian government recognises their CFA

charter in legislation, so I say to the house that if it is good enough for the Victorian volunteers it is good enough for our South Australian volunteers as well.

Furthermore, this bill seeks to make mandatory a requirement that the government consult with representatives of fire and emergency service volunteers in respect of matters which concern them. It is right that the government be required to do so. Fire and emergency service volunteers are at the heart of every rural and peri-urban community, including my own. Their deep value and commitment cannot be overstated, and at times of great need, such as the recent Sampson Flat fires, we depend on them in so many ways that cannot be properly enumerated in such a short speech.

As I mentioned in my maiden speech to the house some months ago, a constituent of mine who is a CFS member said to me, 'Sam, you can't mess with the CFS.' It is high time that the government heed this advice and support this bill today. I am deeply proud of the Sturt CFS group which has brigades stationed throughout Davenport. The group protects many thousands of homes, particularly homes near the Belair National Park and the native forest throughout the electorate from—

Dr McFetridge: Hundreds of millions of dollars in assets.

Mr DULUK: —absolutely—Coromandel Valley, the Sturt Gorge, and beyond. The Sturt CFS group recently raised funds for a new water tanker to continue their volunteer contribution. I am glad that in the recent Davenport by-election the state Liberal Party promised the upgrade of the second water tanker for that Sturt group, which has now been delivered.

I am also deeply proud of the many emergency service volunteers who live and volunteer in Davenport and who helped homeowners and businesses recover from the damaging winds in recent weeks. Without their assistance, and if not for their support, many residents would be left threatened and vulnerable to much greater damage to homes and businesses as a result of water damage. The summer bushfires throughout the Hills community this year are a clear reminder that on the very worst days the lives of our fire and emergency service volunteers are at grave risk. They place themselves in harm's way for the benefit of all of us.

A 2009 parliamentary inquiry found that in the event of catastrophic bushfire a mass evacuation of the Hills area using the current roads would be impossible. Presently, the only thing standing between complete devastation of our peri-urban environments—and, in particular, in the case of the seat of Davenport, the electorate in that peri-urban environment—the devastation caused by catastrophic bushfire, is the CFS and the volunteers. The CFS is the last line of defence against destruction by this devastating fire.

The SACFS Volunteers Charter, which was originally signed in 2008, represents an agreement that the government, the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM) and the CFS will commit to, and I quote:

- consulting with volunteers and the CFS Volunteers Association (CFSVA) about all matters that might reasonably be expected to affect them, and
- considering their views when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies.

Unfortunately, this government has completely failed to uphold their end of the charter. The government has ignored the views of CFS members and provided little or no consultation in matters affecting the CFS. The government's proposal, at the behest of the firefighters union or the UFU, to merge the CFS, MFS and SES together is complete anathema to rank and file CFS members.

It is of great concern to me and to many on this side of the house that the State Emergency Services volunteers have, and I quote, 'lost complete confidence' in minister Piccolo. It is an indictment on the failure of the minister that the PSA—of all organisations—has passed a no-confidence motion in the minister. If the PSA has no confidence in the minister, I believe it is fair to say that the rank and file members of the CFS hold the minister and the state government in which he serves in utter contempt, which is a real shame.

The massive and unfair increase to the emergency services levy last year was a shock not only to many South Australians but especially to many CFS volunteers. The CFS lost many volunteers due to the increase in the ESL, and some brigades across the state stated that they would not fight fires on crown land in protest. This is a most unfortunate situation which has been caused by this government. The question most frustrated CFS volunteers asked was: why were they, the volunteers, putting their lives at risk while the state government was doing everything they could to make their lives more difficult?

A further example of this unprecedented deterioration in relations between the CFS and the state government was the fact that hundreds of CFS volunteers came to the steps of the parliament in January this year to signal their discontent with the proposed merger between the emergency services. Of course, the minister refused to be at this rally and, when asked afterwards if he knew the concerns of CFS volunteers, minister Piccolo answered that he did not know what their concerns were. This minister and this government are out of touch with the Country Fire Service, and this is of great concern to me and many on this side of the house.

Of course, it goes on. The minister does not like to be criticised by his CFS volunteers or the PSA and is trying to silence many of his critics by attempting to sue *The Advertiser* over its investigation into how, in the middle of the Sampson Flat bushfires, the minister diverted five trucks and up to 30 firefighters away from the front line for a photo opportunity. We believe he sought to obtain all records to identify who those CFS volunteers were who spoke out about what they saw as a dangerous waste of resources during the middle of a crisis.

This is no way to treat volunteers who put their lives on the line for the defence of this state against the devastation wreaked by bushfires, not to mention the countless car accidents and other calamities that CFS volunteers take care of on our behalf. It is incumbent on us as parliamentarians to protect those who give so much to our communities. We must look to protect their interest wherever we can. I commend the bill to the house.

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders) (11:00): I also rise today to make a contribution to the Fire and Emergency Services (Volunteer Charters) Amendment Bill 2015. I commend the member for Morphett for bringing this bill yet again to this chamber. I would certainly hope that the government consider their response to this and hopefully find a way to support this, because, of course, the charter we are talking about was drawn up by the government itself. I have a copy of it in front of me, and it has been signed by the current Premier, Jay Weatherill, as well as minister Tony Piccolo, whose signatures are, among others, on this charter.

This bill seeks to amend the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005 to recognise the South Australian CFS and South Australian SES volunteer charter. It has been reintroduced by the member for Morphett, a life member of the CFS and a very proud member of the CFS, as are many on the side of the chamber. Unfortunately, when it was introduced for the first time in 2012 it lapsed. I think it is very timely that it has been reintroduced, particularly given the current minister's intention to restructure our emergency services levy and also given the significant concern that is held by the volunteers in our communities about this restructure.

It is fair to say that I come across strong opposition to this restructure wherever I go. The CFS and the SES are such an important part of our communities—our country communities, our rural communities—and we cannot take them for granted, as this government seems to be doing. We have to treat them with respect, we have to give them the value they deserve. This government's attitude was highlighted not only by the incredible increase in the emergency services levy earlier this year but also in the way this restructure is being approached. The member for Morphett intends to change the act by inserting, and I quote:

Parliamentary recognition of SACFS Volunteer Charter

(1) The Parliament recognises that SACFS is first and foremost a volunteer-based organisation, in which volunteer officers and members are supported by employees in a fully integrated manner.

And that is the secret of making any organisation work, that integrated manner, which creates a functioning organisation, an organisation that has respect and retains that respect.

Further to that, the bill seeks to recognise formally the South Australian CFS Volunteer Charter as well as the principles and relationships between volunteers, the government and the

SACFS and SACFS Volunteers Association. I would suggest that this bill is long overdue and should be considered by the government. It is not unreasonable in what the charter requests. The charter states:

The volunteer members of the Country Fire Service are fundamental to emergency management services in South Australia.

The charter provides a framework for the commitment to protect the needs and interests of CFS volunteers. It represents an agreement that the government of South Australia, the South Australian Fire and Emergency Service Commission and the CFS will commit to consulting with CFS volunteers and the Country Fire Service Volunteers Association about all matters that might reasonably be expected to affect them.

The current minister has done his best to portray consultation, but I think, as is often the case with this particular government, many decisions are already made before the consultation even begins. The charter also suggests that the government should consider the views of volunteers when adopting or approving new practices and policies or reviewing current practices or policies. The bill is also looking to insert in section 58A, that the parliament recognises that the South Australian CFS is first and foremost a volunteer-based organisation and also that the parliament recognises the CFS volunteer charter, and that is what we are essentially talking about today.

That charter is a statement of the commitment and principles that apply to the relationship between the government of South Australia, the commission, SA CFS and volunteer officers and members, and requires that the government of South Australia, the commission and the SA CFS recognise, value, respect and promote the contribution of volunteer officers and members to the wellbeing and safety of the community, and requires that the government of South Australia, the commission and the SA CFS commit to consulting with the Country Fire Service Volunteers Association on behalf of volunteer officers.

I mentioned the government's key involvement in this charter. They instigated the charter themselves and have signed off on it. It is reasonable and fair and, in fact, as part of the emergency services sector reform which is going on at the moment, one of the suggestions is—from the government, I might add—that throughout the reform engagement process the minister has committed to elevating the charters into legislation. That commitment has already been made by the minister and by the government. It would be in a manner similar to the volunteer charter in the Country Fire Authority Act in Victoria, just across the border. We have many things in common with the Victorians, particularly in the way our community volunteer organisations function, and the importance of those volunteer organisations and the important roles they play in our communities.

Often we do not duly recognise the threats that can be posed to our landscape by fire. We live in a landscape (apart from the far South-East, member for Mackillop) that can essentially burn for six months of the year—any time from October through to the following April we are at risk. It pains me to have to say that but there is no doubt that at one time or another it is quite possible that the Adelaide Hills will burst into flames again and it will be a significant tragedy. We will rely at that time on our CFS volunteers like we never have before.

I hope that the government seriously considers this bill. It is an important bill; it is a significant bill. I congratulate the member for Morphett for his dedication, not just to the CFS but seeing this bill through.

The Hon. T.R. KENYON (Newland) (11:07): I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

The house divided on the motion:

While the division bells were ringing:

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morphett is called to order for disturbing a division. The time has expired, lock the doors. The motion is that the debate be adjourned. I appoint the Minister for Emergency Services teller for the ayes and the member for Morphett teller for the noes. That is the second time we have had the same mobile phone ring this morning.

Ayes 23
 Noes 19
 Majority 4

AYES

Bedford, F.E.	Bettison, Z.L.	Brock, G.G.
Caica, P.	Close, S.E.	Cook, N.
Digance, A.F.C.	Gee, J.P.	Hamilton-Smith, M.L.J.
Hildyard, K.	Hughes, E.J.	Kenyon, T.R.
Key, S.W.	Koutsantonis, A.	Odenwalder, L.K.
Piccolo, A. (teller)	Picton, C.J.	Rankine, J.M.
Rau, J.R.	Snelling, J.J.	Vlahos, L.A.
Weatherill, J.W.	Wortley, D.	

NOES

Bell, T.S.	Chapman, V.A.	Duluk, S.
Gardner, J.A.W.	Goldsworthy, R.M.	Griffiths, S.P.
Knoll, S.K.	Marshall, S.S.	McFetridge, D. (teller)
Pederick, A.S.	Pisoni, D.G.	Sanderson, R.
Speirs, D.	Tarzia, V.A.	Treloar, P.A.
van Holst Pellekaan, D.C.	Whetstone, T.J.	Williams, M.R.
Wingard, C.		

PAIRS

Mullighan, S.C.	Pengilly, M.R.
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Motion thus carried.

Honourable members: Shame.

The SPEAKER: I warn for the first time the member for Morphett. I think the house is weary of members who lose a vote shouting out 'shame', and I will warn any member who does it henceforth.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am sorry. I humbly apologise for my phone ringing. I have not actually been in here this morning so it cannot be the second time.

The SPEAKER: The member for Bragg has explained that the mobile phone that was ringing was her phone, but not for the second time. The earlier ringing phone was on the opposition side also but it was not the member for Bragg's.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. T.R. Kenyon.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 26 March 2015.)

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (11:15): I take great pleasure in rising to support my colleague the member for Morialta for bringing this matter to the house. Basically, this bill would amend the principal act to make it an offence for anyone to exert undue influence on a freedom of information officer while they were making a judgement as to whether information, data, papers, etc., held by government should be released under our freedom of information law.

I fully support this. There are significant problems with the freedom of information law in this state; indeed, I think it is a misnomer to even call it a freedom of information law. It is certainly a law

which imposes secrecy, and it does more to prevent information from escaping the clutches of the government of the day than anything else. The particular matter that the member for Morialta wishes to address with this bill is quite significant; that is, we believe freedom of information officers are regularly influenced by direction—perhaps not directly from ministers but certainly from ministers' offices—to do whatever they can to withhold information which should be in the public realm.

Good government is about making good decisions, and when you can secrete the information on which you base your decision-making from the public, from the opposition, from the stakeholders, when you can secrete information even loosely related to those decisions, it is impossible for us to be confident that we have any decent level of accountability within the deliverance of governance in this state. That is the situation we find here in South Australia.

I have been through the process under the existing freedom of information law, a few years ago I recall, and it was with regard to the development of the desal plant. After all these years we are quite regularly reading reports, some of which emanate from within the South Australian government and some from within SA Water, which highlight what I was trying to highlight many years ago as the shadow minister, that that was an absolutely bungled decision. I am specifically referring to the decision to double the size of the desal plant.

It was a dumb decision, and I guarantee it was made on the basis of dumb information that was provided to the cabinet of the day. However, we could not access—the community could not access, the opposition could not access, no-one could access—the information on which those decisions were made until years later, until after the dumb decisions had been made and all the money had been spent and wasted. It has happened time and time again.

With regard to that, I recall one particular matter on which I was trying to seek information. I appealed it to the Ombudsman and eventually got the relevant information, but it was about 18 months after I had made my initial request; far too long after the events to do anything about them. Time had passed and more dumb decisions had been taken and more South Australians had been hurt, and they continue to be hurt by that dumb decision. I suspect this happens on a very regular basis.

The particular ill that the member for Morialta wants to cure here is to remove the ability for ministers and ministerial staffers to have undue influence on FOI officers by influencing them to withhold information. I believe that in an ideal world ministerial officers would only be aware of an FOI request once the decision had been made, and I think it is fair and reasonable that a minister (through his or her office) should become aware that a particular set of information had indeed been released.

I do not think that a ministerial officer (or office) needs to be flagged that an FOI request has come in. In fact, I think that should be an offence; I see no necessity for the bureaucracy to inform the minister that there was an FOI request. I can see no necessity for that. But I certainly accept that if information is released it is fair and reasonable that the minister for that particular area of government be made aware. They could be apprised of the relevant information in the interests of that matter and brought up to speed on it in case they need to answer questions put by the media or, indeed, put in this place. That is an important part of the working of government and, obviously, its accountability.

For ministers' officers to be apprised of requests before a decision has been made is a nonsense and only encourages the sort of interference that the member for Morialta is trying to stop. That would be one simple way of doing that to make sure—

The Hon. P. Caica: The member for Hartley.

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, the member for Hartley. I kept referring to the member for Morialta, the good Whip over here. I apologise to the member for Hartley.

The Hon. P. Caica: Apologise to both of them.

Mr WILLIAMS: I do not think that is necessary. Notwithstanding that, they are both good members, and their membership of this place makes it a better place than what it was previously.

This is a really important small step in improving our FOI law. I have talked at length on previous occasions regarding my concerns with our FOI law per se, and I sincerely hope and expect that I will do that again from time to time during the rest of this parliament.

I will leave my comments there. I fully support the measure that has been brought by the member for Hartley, and I hope that the government takes notice of this because it is important for maintaining confidence in the governance of this state, and I commend the bill to the house.

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (11:23): What is the price of freedom of information? I can tell you: it is \$181,829.30. I rise to support this bill moved by the member for Hartley because of that exact figure: \$181,829.30 was the sum total of seven FOIs I submitted in 2009, 2010 and 2011 in relation to the development of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. I was asking for the business case and for email trails on various doctors' contracts, those sorts of things—but no. The cost involving the business case amounted to \$39,750; there was another one for Central Northern Adelaide Health Services, \$39,750; there was one on SA Health, Media and Communications unit—and that was a cheap one—\$3,034.30; and there was another one I had in there as well for Aboriginal health services, \$4,297. That is the price of freedom of information.

It is a shame, but I was warned recently by one of my contacts in the government that I should be very, very wary of the information I get back from the office of the Minister for Emergency Services with my FOIs that are going in there—if for no other reason than it is a shame that, if you put in an FOI on a relatively straightforward topic, you get back not one, not two, not three, not four, not five but six pages of redacted information—on several of those pages there are a couple of lines that have been left in; the rest of it is completely blanked out.

The cost of the freedom of information there was that there was no information. What is going to be the cost of that information being kept secret? We just do not know what is there. I am afraid that I do not trust this government to release the information. I do not trust the interference we are seeing now from ministers and their departments in the freedom of information process.

The former governor of South Australia, Kevin Scarce, absolutely stunned me when I was over at Government House for a reception for Youth Parliament. I asked him about this and asked whether I could use it, and he said, 'I said it, so you can use it.' He said when addressing Youth Parliament, 'There are three things wrong with this government: there is no ministerial accountability, the Executive ignores the parliament, and the Public Service has been highly politicised.' Obviously, this government has the highest respect, as we all should, for former governor Kevin Scarce, and for him to say that, as I said, I was stunned by that.

When we have to continually ask for reviews of the freedom of information process, when we have to continually sit in the Ombudsman's office, as I have done on a number of occasions, with people I am trying to seek information from—and their team of lawyers in one case—what is going on in this state? What is the state of the state?

Surely, the democratic process should be about our being able to access information in an open and transparent manner. Obviously, there is commercial-in-confidence material, but why doesn't the government offer members of the opposition confidential briefings on that if they have concerns about it? I must give the Minister for Health his due: we did have that on one occasion recently, where I put in an FOI about a particular organisation in the health department where there were some concerns about the fact that, if the information was released without some background, it could be interpreted in a way that could have caused some personal danger to some people. So, I was more than happy to have a confidential briefing, and I will not betray that confidence because I accept the responsibility as a member of parliament to understand the process and the procedures and the importance of maintaining that confidence.

The need to make sure that the information that is out there that should and could be on the public record is indeed on the public record is what this is about, but we are seeing this time after time after time. I hope that when the government is in opposition—and it will be—those who are here now and listening to this now remember what I am saying—that when you are battling this process every day, like we have to, you remember what you did because you reap what you sow. It is very important that you are open and honest, have the courage of your convictions—have the courage, the decency, the openness.

I would name certain ministers in this place who I can talk to. I do have their mobile phone numbers, and I can have an open and honest conversation with them. I am heartened by their integrity, their professionalism and their ability to stay on top of their portfolios to the point where they can have those discussions with me. I am humbled by the immense trust they have in me in their giving me the information they do, knowing that I am not going to betray that confidence because I am not seeking to bring them down or trick them or be smart about it. I just want to know for my constituents' sake and for the state's sake. That is all. We want to make sure that things are going well. If you have something to hide, that is a shame. If you have nothing to hide, do not hide it.

Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (11:29): This bill really puts me in mind of the fantastic work we were hoping to see from one Mr John McTernan when he came as a Thinker in Residence to South Australia: he was going to look at open data, making data more visible. I note John McTernan's recent success in destroying the Scottish Labour Party in a similar way to the way that he destroyed the Australian Labor Party at a federal level, but I fear I may slightly digress. At that point, I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Motions

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (11:31): I move:

That this house urges the regional development minister, in conjunction with the state government, to—

- (a) provide adequate core funding for the ongoing operations of the seven Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees in South Australia; and
- (b) ensure that the operational funding of the RDA network is provided annually on an uncontested basis.

I admit that this is an identical motion to the one put before the chamber last year, for which there was a good number of opposition speakers. I admit from the very outset that the world has moved forward slightly since that time, but this motion was proposed again before the minister made an announcement on 27 March, as I recollect, when he basically committed to what I have asked for and had been asking for. In my discussions with the minister, it had probably been part of his intent long term from his time of taking over the portfolio.

I will put on the record, without repeating entirely what I said last year about this, the absolute respect and importance the RDA structure has in South Australia and the critical nature of the fact that the parliament has to ensure, within its capacity to fund operations, that it is able to do what it is there for, and that is to provide a better opportunity for regional communities. That is what I stand up for and what many other members of this parliament who come from regional communities, even if they do not reside there any more, stand firmly behind and truly believe in. We want South Australians to have a vibrant, strong, economic, great social fabric, an environmentally responsible future, no matter what they do. Regional South Australia deserves exactly that same level of respect, as much as our metropolitan cousins.

The RDA structure has an interesting history. It comes from the regional development boards and the area consultative committees that were funded by the federal government. The amalgamation of those structures occurred when the member for Colton was minister. There is a local government contribution towards it, a state government contribution and a federal government contribution. The federal government has publicly lauded the fact that South Australia has that unique three-way nature of it, that it works exceptionally well and that it allows for the cohesive network of service providers in all communities to understand, to work together and to be involved in the planning of it, and to ensure that opportunities become realities. That is what I am here for, and I know that many others are here also for that, because we have to ensure that occurs.

With that agreement that occurred, my great frustration was that it was seemingly not very long after this new structure was put in place—probably five or six years ago now, in the 2010 budget—that it was flagged after the 2010 election that there would be a withdrawal of funds from the RDA structures from July 2013. That gutted me, I must say, along with many other members who have seen good work by the RDA structures and wanted to support them and understood that

the RDA staff in many cases are very dedicated, not being paid an exceptionally high amount of money. They have extensive networks of people across their community they talk to and can join together so that the dots are connected and opportunities result from that.

My concern was that, without some surety of funding in the longer term, even though in respecting that it always has to be a three or four-year agreement—I understand that there have to be time frames in place and key performance indicators have to be set as part of that also—but surety had to be attached to it.

Minister O'Brien was in this chamber at the time and I was asking him questions in estimates, and it was with great frustration because I thought he understood my point and accepted that but, looking forward, was not able to ensure that it had a financial future. It then transferred to minister Gago, who restructured the Regional Development Fund slightly (the \$3 million that was available for projects), took some of that back (\$200,000 approximately for each of the seven RDAs), and left the \$1.6 million remaining in the Regional Development Fund, but there was still that level of frustration.

Then, when the election was held last year, minister Brock, the member for Frome, assumed the position of Minister for Regional Development and got the opportunity for a level of funding to exist. He had a very strong commitment from the Premier of \$3 million to be available, and Regional Development Funds and job creation funds, the \$39 million that the minister refers to quite often for the 2014-15 year, which in many cases was an exact example of what we took to the people of South Australia in the 2014 election. It was important to me that instead of it being project based, it actually be core funding. For me it is not though, and I know for the minister also, from our discussions.

It is not just the fact that the reassurance of the dollars is there and you do not need to ensure the outcomes. It has to be focused on outcomes. There have to be reportable opportunities. There has to be a chance for communities to appreciate what has been done and see the tangible examples and outcomes of it to ensure that it is there. I am not sure if it is the result of good work by the minister, the continued lobbying by the opposition or the desires of the RDA networks themselves. The minister points to his chest and I can understand that because I know he has been committed on that too, and the results of the 2014 election created that rather unique situation for particular assurances to be given, but it was frustrating.

Minister, in your discussions with the RDA structures, I think they would have told you of the frustration they had, initially, when it was project based, but there are processes that have to be worked with. From my point of view, it was the length of time taken for the processes to occur. The 27 March announcement this year by the minister confirmed the support of the RDA networks, the Hon. Rob Kerin as the chair of RDA SA and the funding commitments put in place for three years, which I believe will have strong outcomes (as it has to).

It gives some level of assurance to local government, as a key funding supporter of it, and the federal government, as a key funding supporter of the RDA structures, that there is very tangible support from the state government, unless, across a \$16 billion budget, we do not have the capacity to put resources in to ensure that all have access to support, mentoring, assistance, training and connection to those who actually know how to solve a problem; case managers within government departments, advisers who work with the minister. That is the critical role that I think the RDA structures play; they have very large areas that they support and they have done it tough for some time.

I know that RDA boards and their staff had to instigate, not necessarily austerity measures, but they had to ensure that they operated as well as possible, financially. They spent an enormous amount of time on the road, meeting people personally, doing all the telephone calls and that sort of stuff. They are not just based in their offices expecting everybody to come to them. They go out to the people with the opportunities that exist. I think the continuous call the opposition has made for an adequate level of core funding support has been heard, and the minister has ensured that was heard on 27 March when he made the announcement.

So, the mood has changed somewhat, I think it is fair to say. I did consider the appropriateness of this motion continuing, but I believe it is a worthy debate for the parliament to

hold. There are other members of the opposition who also want to speak to it to enforce the positive aspects of what they see the Regional Development Australia network in their electorate is doing and the absolute desire for the funding support to still be there. I know the minister, like other members, has visited the RDA networks across the state and I know we have all seen the great examples of where a level of financial support has created an outcome that might not have ever existed unless there was some physical resource there to help them through the process.

No matter what we have done in our life, when we come into this place there are people who tell us that they have an idea and they want to know where to take that idea, and it is not until you have been here for a while or had worldly experiences that give you relationships with others that you are able to ensure that they get that level of support. While members of parliament have to have that skill—that is one of the basics we have to possess—for an RDA officer, it is absolutely key, too, no matter what role they have within the RDA.

I see great examples of absolute dedication. There was one chap who used to work for the RDA board for Yorke and the Mid North who has semiretired, he does not work for them anymore, and I can assure you, Deputy Speaker, he is one of the very few people in the world that I actually trust with my life. That is the level of confidence I had and still have in that chap. I had seen him for many years before he came into the RDA structure and he was absolutely committed. Before I came into this place, I was part of the interview panel that appointed him. He was anxious about the fact that he had to wear a tie to go to the interview because it was not how he dressed normally. He gave it to us exactly how he felt, but that is the sort of commitment and emotion we wanted to see, and that is what I see demonstrated through so many Regional Development Australia board employees.

In standing up and moving this motion, it is not just a push for adequate resources to be provided but it is a level of respect that we hold for the structures as they exist, and it is not just the staff; it is the board members, too. There have been some changes across the board to the membership. As I understand it, the negotiations between the Hon. Warren Truss, minister Brock and David O'Loughlin (as then president of the Local Government Association) announced some changes. I will put on the record that former member for Schubert Ivan Venning was appointed the chair of the Barossa RDA. I pay my respects to Mr Ian O'Loan, who had been chair before that and who was a board member with me on the previous Yorke Regional Development Board some years ago. I have seen great examples also of what he has done in his ability to negotiate through challenging times.

To all of those people, no matter where they are from, who are on boards, who are staff of the RDA, I pay homage to them because they are very much the unseen heroes of a community. It is a word used very easily, I understand that, but I know that for many of them they have continuous conversations about ensuring that the smallest of ideas that might start to develop in someone's mind actually has the greatest opportunity to grow into a vision and that vision becoming a reality.

I am exceptionally pleased to note the minister's commitment to \$3 million per year. I note that it is for a three-year period. The minister has not talked to me about what KPIs exist within it—and we might discuss that in estimates in more detail—but, from the discussions I held with the minister, I absolutely support him on the principle of that being in place. It is a change for the good. I think that sometimes notices of motion can be around political opportunity, but I believe that, where a change occurs between the notice given and the debate occurring, the full information needs to be provided. That is why I ensured I gave to opposition members who flagged their interest in speaking to this motion a copy of the minister's press release, because I wanted them all to have the updated information.

The minister flagged to me that it he might amend this motion, although I have not yet seen the words; however, I respect that, as the world has changed on the issue, there might be an opportunity for that. In between other members speaking, I might have a little chat to the minister. The RDA boards will hopefully continue to be here, they will work hard, they will get support very strongly from members of parliament.

My hope is that, no matter what occurs in the political realm in the future, whoever is in government will continue to support it. I give the absolute assurance that for as long as I live, breathe and remain in this house, I will ensure that from an opposition and Liberal Party perspective I continue

to push it. I know I have many supporters amongst my colleagues here who have seen what they do and want to support it to ensure that the RDA structure continues to prosper but, importantly, that from their hard work society and regional communities prosper. I commend the motion to the house.

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (11:43): I move to amend the motion as follows:

That this house acknowledges the regional development minister, in conjunction with the state government, for—

- (a) securing \$3 million per annum in funding for the seven Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees in South Australia;
- (b) ensuring the RDA network is also able to apply for funds from the \$15 million Regional Development Fund; and
- (c) complementing federal and local government funding to the RDA network across the nation.

I agree with many of the sentiments expressed by the member for Goyder. I know that he has a very strong commitment to regional development, like all of us here, but especially those of us who come from country electorates. We want to see the regions thrive. I do not doubt the commitment of those opposite to seeing that.

The South Australian government recognises the significant contribution regional communities make to the economy and prosperity of our state. The government acknowledges the need to support regional communities to achieve growth and development and to generate vitality. The government has made a substantial commitment to regional development articulated in the Charter for Stronger Regional Policy and in funding commitments amounting to \$39 million in 2014-15 and \$29 million per annum thereafter. These commitments include an increase in funding for Regional Development Australia associations from \$1.4 million to a total of \$3 million per annum.

Following consultation with RDAs on funding arrangements for the next three years, RDAs self determined the distribution of the \$3 million between them. RDAs will provide a three-year project plan reflecting priorities identified by their communities. The effect of the new funding arrangement is that the South Australian government continues to be the major funding partner of South Australian RDAs.

The RDA program is a nationwide commonwealth initiative, and in South Australia it was based on a tripartite understanding between commonwealth, state and local governments. Indeed, that is an understanding that goes back many years. The success of the RDA program, which is also managed by the commonwealth, has been attributable to all three tiers of government working together to establish clear direction and agreed priorities for RDAs to work on in their communities.

In October 2014, the Hon. Warren Truss MP, commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, announced that, following a review of the RDA program, the commonwealth had decided to retain the existing 55 RDA associations across the country. However, minister Truss also outlined his expectation that RDAs focus more strongly on economic development and facilitating local projects that make a difference to their communities.

I acknowledge the work of Warren Truss in not doing what often happens when governments change at a federal level and tear apart structures that are in place and reinvent new ones. It is good to see that continuity. I can advise that the South Australian government strongly supports the direction set by the federal minister and that the funding arrangements that have been put in place for the next three years by the state government will allow RDAs to pursue a work program that will achieve this goal on behalf of the state government.

The state government has developed strong relationships with the South Australian RDAs. During 2014, Regions SA worked with the RDAs to establish a new framework for regional collaboration. Regions SA and chief executive officers of the RDAs held a number of meetings to develop a framework that guides their collaborative efforts. The framework recognises that both parties have a strong alignment of roles and responsibilities for advancing the economic prosperity and growth of our regions. The framework acknowledges the importance of working towards a collaborative approach and also acknowledges the existing and separate relationship that each party has with the commonwealth and local governments and the benefits that these relationships can bring to maximising investment for regional development.

As mentioned, the South Australian government has recently been able to consolidate its strong relationships with RDAs with a three-year funding arrangement that provides for a renewed emphasis on regional economic development. State government funding is being provided to RDAs based on agreed grant funding guidelines that incorporate activities for all three tiers of government. In particular, RDAs will receive funding to:

1. Identify and drive priority activities that will generate economic development in South Australia's regional areas, taking into account the resources and aspirations of regional communities as well as the plans of the state, commonwealth and local governments.
2. Assist stakeholders and proponents to develop viable project proposals and support them to identify and access funding sources.
3. Provide advice to the South Australian government on current issues, challenges and opportunities in regional areas.
4. Assist the state, commonwealth and local governments to promote awareness of government initiatives and access to government programs.

The funding that has been provided to RDAs will enable them to undertake a broad range of activities that will drive regional economic development and allow them to make a real and lasting difference in regional communities on behalf of the government.

In addition to the state and federal funding that is provided directly to RDAs, it must be remembered that RDAs are eligible to apply for grant funds from the expanded \$15 million Regional Development Fund. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage RDAs to be proactive in identifying projects that are being considered in their communities and to ensure that all available avenues are pursued to progress these projects. RDAs are able to provide advice and assistance to proponents in accessing not only the \$15 million Regional Development Fund but also the federal government's National Stronger Regions Fund.

I am confident that the three tiers of government have set a clear direction for RDAs in terms of driving economic growth and development in South Australia's regions. Governments have also committed substantial funds to ensuring priority investments are made in regional communities. The work of RDAs will be vital in ensuring that this direction and these funds are channelled to the right projects that result in real and lasting growth. The collaboration that has taken place to date between governments and RDAs will pave the way for some fantastic results for regional South Australia and I look forward to receiving updates on these results from the Minister for Regional Development in the future.

I spent probably 10 years of my life as a member of an economic development board, the Whyalla economic development board, before it amalgamated and became the Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula regional development association. I will put a bit of flesh on those comments when it comes to funding and what it might mean for individual boards. The Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula regional development association receives \$475,000 in funding from the state government, guaranteed over three years; the 11 councils on Eyre Peninsula provide \$340,000, and the Whyalla city council is the biggest funder amongst the councils on Eyre Peninsula; and the federal government provides \$220,000. So we are talking about over a million dollars to assist the board to carry out its operations.

The board itself employs 15 to 16 people. The only quibble I would have with the employment of those 15 to 16 people is that most of them are now employed in Port Lincoln and only 3.5 in Whyalla, so I think that is something that needs to be addressed. It is worth noting that the current chair of the Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula regional development association, Jim Pollock (who is also the mayor of the Whyalla community), in his feedback on the changes that have occurred, indicated that the minister is doing the right thing.

Jim would only say that if he truly believed it and if he believed that it was in the interest of his community and his region, because he is a non-partisan individual. If it was a Liberal minister who had introduced something of a similar nature, he would also be saying to that minister, 'You have done the right thing.' It is interesting to reflect that Jim Pollock was a former candidate of the

Liberal Party for the seat of Giles but, like I said, he always plays a straight bat and he is a decent bloke.

The member for Goyder made many comments about the importance of the regional development boards and how they can take an idea that often comes from someone with a bit of an entrepreneurial spirit, work with that person and work with the different levels of government to translate that idea into a real tangible benefit for communities. Let us hope that we see more of that, and far more of that in the future.

Mr KNOLL (Schubert) (11:54): I rise today to speak on this motion. Before I go into some of the specifics of the work that the RDA does in my area, I want to talk about this motion, the amendment and where we sit today. I find it quite interesting, and maybe just a little disingenuous of this government, that they sit here and talk about championing RDAs and the work they do in the country because, had they won majority government in their own right at the last election, none of this would have been delivered and, to sit here now and say, 'We've delivered for the regions,' is a very hypocritical move by the Labor Party. We are not only talking about the recurrent funding for RDAs: we are also talking about the Regional Development Fund and the jobs acceleration program. We are talking about everything that the minister and the member for Frome put in his agreement.

Can I say that RDAs have obviously got confidence for the next three years and that leads us close enough to the next election at which time a responsible Liberal government can make sure that the RDAs are saved over the longer term, but RDAs should not have too much faith in what the Labor government does, because the Labor government was prepared to cut their funding and it was prepared to leave them in a ditch. It is only because of a minority government situation where the member for Frome's vote became vital to the continuation of a Labor government that we have these things in place today. We can all celebrate the good work that the RDAs do but I do not think that, apart from the member for Frome, the government can sit here and claim any credit for anything. In fact, they should just sit down and be quiet in this regard.

The reason the RDAs are so important is, if you come out to regional areas—a place, I might add, that produces over 50 per cent of the merchandise exports of South Australia and a place that houses about a third of the state's population in those seven RDA districts—and you are looking for business support services, if you are looking as a small business to start up, be able to find your way in your region and be able to access opportunities, it is only the RDA that you can turn to. There is nothing else, absolutely nothing else, besides the RDA that you can turn to. So, to say that this is vital for the regions, is an understatement.

I know the RDA does good work for two reasons. The first is the people who seek to get involved who obviously see good value in these things; and the second is the work that they do, and I will get to that a little later. The RDA that covers most of the population of my electorate is RDA Barossa, which takes in the four councils of Mallala, Light, Barossa and Gawler. All of those four councils provide people to go onto the RDA and they are extremely good and valuable in their input, and I have met all the people on the board and all the representatives; but it is the non local government representatives, for me, that highlight how important this board is to our local community.

In the Barossa, we have a new chair. We have the venerable Ivan Venning, who promised me that he would stay out of Barossa affairs for 12 months, and he kept his pledge, but he has jumped right back in as chair of the RDA Barossa; and, can I say, I could not be any more pleased. He is a man who deeply understands our region and the priorities for our region, and he is a great advocate for all things Barossa, and I mean in the broader RDA map Barossa sense. He is also a man who knows how to promote the Barossa in the broader regional sense. I am very grateful and glad to have him along.

We have, as the deputy chairman, Alex Zimmerman, who is the commander of the local service area in the Barossa and a very highly respected local. We have Victoria McClurg, a local cheesemaker whose cheese factory is about 150 metres from my house. At the moment, she is extending her premises so that she can develop new cheese styles to bring to market. As I walk past every few days to get my wife a coffee from Casa Carboni, I have a look at the progress. I have not been home this week yet because parliament has been sitting but, when I was there on Sunday, the concrete floors had been laid, the walls were already up and it was at the stage where they can start to finish the externals of the building and build the internals.

We also have a local winemaker, Rolf Binder of Rolf Binder Wines—Veritas wines is another one of his labels—involved with the committee. Rolf is a very well-respected local winemaker. He is very open and has a very gregarious personality. His Bulls Blood icon red wine sits up there with the best that the Barossa has to offer. He is a man who gives back to his community in a variety of ways and one of those is through the RDA Barossa. His presence on that board definitely lends weight to it.

We have Wayne Perry, who is involved with the northern futures project. He has now gone out on his own, consulting, but he has been very heavily involved in trying to connect young people to job opportunities and to help young people access job opportunities in the Barossa region. He has been a great advocate for that.

We have Tony Clark who is a man I have heard speak a number of times on a whole variety of topics. Chief amongst those was the fact that we should be looking to invest in the broader agricultural/horticultural region in pomegranates because, he says, pomegranate juice is a huge export opportunity to China. They cannot grow enough of these things and pomegranate juice is extremely important. It is something that stuck in the back of my head. Unfortunately, I have never had the spare capital and the land to be able to plant some pomegranate trees, but it is something that has stuck with me. He understands those opportunities and, again, he adds weight to the board.

We have a gentleman called Andrew Morphett who, amongst other things, is a co-owner of Anlaby Station, which is very famous, north of Kapunda. They have taken to looking after Anlaby Station and making sure that it works and is restored to its former glory. I have had a few functions out there and they were really fantastic.

Lastly, we have Sarah Henderson who runs the Novotel Barossa. I sat on a board with her when I was chair of Barossa Food and, again, she is someone who has strong input and strong love for, and understanding of, the region. She is someone who was not born and raised in the region but who has definitely taken to the Barossa culture and lifestyle.

The RDAs are so important. When I became a new member of parliament, I had spent the previous 12 months going around trying to understand my electorate, writing notes and doing my research. I went to meet with the RDA and its fantastic CEO, Anne Moroney, and we sat down to discuss the priorities for the region. She handed me the roadmap that they have developed and every single issue that people had put to me about helping to improve our region was in the RDA roadmap.

The roadmap encompassed tourism and the need for a new Barossa hospital. On that topic, I would love to be able to work with the RDA to produce an addendum to a future Barossa hospital case that can look at more innovative ways to fund a Barossa hospital. It covered transport and dealing with improved passenger transport networks, such as Northern Expressway connectors, as well as things like digital connectivity and broadband.

High-speed broadband in the Barossa is a huge problem, especially when you get outside of the townships, and especially when we have quite a strong entrepreneurial spirit. We have a lot of people who need access to broadband and we are excited that, over the next 12 months, we expect the NBN to come to the Barossa. Through a combination of fibre to the node and fixed wireless, we should see improved megabits per second (if that is the correct term), but we should also start to see coverage in those blackspots where we have small business owners trying to get on and improve their opportunities in our region.

The roadmap addresses areas from premium food and wine profitability, which is something that I have spent quite a lot of time trying to push through Barossa Food and various other organisations, to improved advanced manufacturing and water for the future. Every single priority on the RDA Barossa's roadmap is something that I have dealt with in a community sense and it has been put together in a very concise document. The RDA in the Barossa is extremely connected to the community; it is a very fundamental organisation. Without it, the region would be lost, so to say that recurrent, ongoing funding for the RDA is vital is an understatement.

In the last few seconds, I would like to mention that part of my electorate takes in the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island RDA. I have yet to go and visit them, but their CEO is a gentleman named Damien Cooke who has had decades of experience helping companies to export overseas.

I know he lived in South Africa with his family; in fact, I know him reasonably well because he was my high school rowing coach. He is a man who instilled in me a lot of discipline and strength and whom I greatly admire and look up to. It is good to see him giving back to his community by helping out the Adelaide Hills RDA.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:04): I too rise to support the member for Goyder's motion. Listening to the member for Goyder, I think that he is across the RDA spectrum. He has been concerned about the future of RDA since I entered this place, and it has been a note of concern as to where the government's support of RDA was going.

I will acknowledge that minister Brock has adopted the 2014 Liberal Party policy, and I congratulate him on that. I think that we as a party stumped up the support and funding. We gave an assurance to the seven RDAs in South Australia that we as a party were going to make a decision that we recognised the RDAs as significant contributors not only in developing confidence in people to invest but also in supporting those entrepreneurs who are part of our communities and part of our economy.

I really do think that the establishment of RDAs, and the confidence they instil in the business sector particularly, is a great boost for emerging new businesses. I guess they give good feedback. They also go out there and research. In a lot of ways, they are a conduit for the research arm that gives confidence to people who are looking at investing significant amounts of money in most cases.

What was missing previously was what we call the 'Brockument'. The minister, coming into this place, obviously had some agreements with the Premier. Some of them were questionable, but he is slowly oozing out some of those 'Brockument' commitments or policy decisions. I think that this RDA commitment does have a political smell about it. I agree with the member for Schubert. He was quite forthright with his view, and I noticed that a number of members opposite really raised their eyebrows, but I think the truth does hurt.

There was a political decision behind what funding was reduced under the previous minister. I had many robust discussions with the previous minister for regional development, and it was clear that she struggled with the portfolio. The telling factor was that many of the RDAs, including the Murraylands and Riverland RDA, were living on life support. They did not know from one day to the next whether they had a job. They did not know what security their job had. They did not know what lease arrangements were on buildings or on vehicles.

The way I would describe it is that many of those employees were living day to day. Their focus was on the survival within the organisation more than doing what they were there to do, and that was to generate interest and confidence and to reassure investors and entrepreneurs that their ideas were good or, if they were not up to scratch, to help them research and better present their applications or models.

Most of these businesses do seek funding. In today's world, when trying to start up a business, if you are looking for a funding stream there is a huge amount of work in filling out the forms, filling out the applications and putting up prospectuses. In many cases, people have good business models but, in some cases, they need that assistance to cross the t's, dot the i's and make sure that they are credible applications for projects that will benefit the economy, particularly that of the regions.

One of the issues I would like to talk about is the Murraylands and Riverland board, which I have engaged with during my time in this place. I will only speak for this board, but I have met with other RDA organisations, and I think everyone has the best interests of their regions and areas at heart. I know that they do meet, they do talk and they do share ideas, and I think this state can be a better state with a collaborative approach with RDAs.

Working in individual silos is always dangerous, and I think it always harbours a lack of productivity, particularly given what we have seen. I must say, when the RDA Murraylands and Riverland was rolled into one organisation there were a few teething problems due to the parochialism between one area or district and the other, but they soon worked it out. They worked out that working collaboratively was in the best interests of good projects in both the Murraylands and the Riverland and was going to benefit their regions and the state as a whole.

Let's face it, a lot of the projects that come into the Murraylands and Riverland districts revolve around food production and value-adding, as well as other areas. I commend the work of the two officers in the Riverland branch, Nicole Jachmann and Mark Bell; I think they do a great job. They are headed up by the former CEO, Brenton Lewis. I think Brenton had been there for a number of years, from the instigation of the RDA and amalgamation of the Murraylands and Riverland districts. He did a great job, and was a fierce advocate when seeking funding for his branch. Brenton was always up for the chase, and never held back on a good argument or robust discussion, and I think that is what it was about.

We now look at accessing commonwealth government money. The RDAIF is a big carrot. Occasionally, these groups get hold of that money, and they make a difference. But, what we are seeing at the moment is that the uncertainty is partially behind us. The money that is coming in to the region—I know that the member for Hammond and I have talked about diversification money. A lot of those projects were put before governments through the RDA. I know that some of those were failed projects from other application streams, and some of them are new applications. I think the Minister for Regional Development now needs to get on with securing a funding stream.

It is sad to see that we have potentially lost \$25 million worth of diversification money that came under the basin plan pool of funding. I understand the minister is up against a government that has proudly said they will not accept money coming in for RDA projects because it is not their constituency. It is a \$25 million pool of money, and I think it is outrageous, particularly for the Treasurer, to tell me that he would rather spend the GST component of that money elsewhere. It just smacks of political bias.

The other thing that really does concern me is that not one Treasury official, nor the Treasurer, nor the Premier, nor the Minister for Regional Development could actually give me proof that there was that large GST component of that \$25 million. No-one gave me the proof. I travelled to Canberra and asked the deputy minister for proof. I wanted some proof from the commonwealth Treasurer's department, but they could not give it to me. I went to great lengths to find out exactly how this state's river communities could have benefited from that money, but no-one actually gave me a credible argument as to why there was a GST component.

But what really does smack of political bias is that a government would walk away from the regions that it relied on during the drought for the water supply here in Adelaide. It is time for the government to stand up and make good on the commitment that those regions gave to the people of Adelaide, the people of South Australia, that when they turned on a tap they had water, and the reason that they had water is because they had the irrigators' water. I think there is more to come out of that now. I hope that the minister will fight for some form of compensation, and I look forward to his reply.

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (12:15): I also rise to commend the member for Goyder and support his motion:

That this house urges the regional development minister, in conjunction with the state government, to—

- (a) provide adequate core funding for the ongoing operations of the seven Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees in South Australia; and
- (b) ensure that the operational funding of the RDA network is provided annually on an uncontested basis.

I understand that South Australia's seven Regional Development Australia associations will continue to receive state government funding for the next three years, and those organisations will certainly receive a share of \$3 million over three years. Obviously, this is intended to boost economic development. I understand that it is the Riverland and also the Murraylands that receive \$450,000 a year under what is the new funding agreement, with \$400,000 per year for the RDA of the Limestone Coast. Obviously, the minister took some lobbying to come to the table. All I will say, quite respectfully, is for a minister for this area, we would like to see more.

I acknowledge the good work of the member for Goyder and the lobbying that he has done to ensure that this sort of funding continues in the future. As state Liberals, we have always been supportive of the work undertaken in the regions by the RDA SA network. It goes without saying, and many of my esteemed colleagues have also said that. It is also the case that, in the lead-up to the

last state election, we were the ones who announced our regional development policy to reinstate annual funding to the seven RDAs at a level of \$3 million, because we in the Liberal Party are serious about the regions. We are not fairweather supporters for the regions. We support the regions through thick and thin, even if there are not marginal seats in the region to win.

It is really important that this government does more for the regions, not only for this area but also across the state. Often, time and time again, we see so much pork-barrelling in marginal seats in the city where they think the seats are to win. However, we all know that our regions are second-to-none. We cannot abandon the backbone of our economy. They are one of the few regions that are actually excelling and doing quite well, and the regions are growing at the moment. Look at our exports, which need to be doing better, but so much of the engine room comes through things like agriculture and agribusiness, which are derivative from the regions.

I will be brief on this motion. I commend the member for Goyder, who is a passionate advocate for the regions. I thank the member for—

The Hon. G.G. Brock: Frome.

Mr TARZIA: Frome. I was going to say the member for Port Pirie—you basically are the member for Port Pirie.

The Hon. G.G. Brock: The minister.

Mr TARZIA: The minister—I thank the minister for coming to the party, a little bit late, but he has come to the party. For the good of these regions, I want to see this funding to continue, and I commend the motion to the house.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:18): I rise to speak to this motion tabled by the member for Goyder:

That this house urges the regional development minister, in conjunction with the state government, to—

- (a) provide adequate core funding for the ongoing operations of the seven Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees in South Australia; and
- (b) ensure that the operational funding of the RDA network is provided annually on an uncontested basis.

I think that is the core of the issue, because what we saw earlier, and other members have spoken in regard to the 'Brockument' and the deal that the member for Frome cut with the Labor Party, was the simple fact that there was not that continual core funding there for regional development bodies across this state.

I will declare my interest: I was a member of the Murraylands board before I was elected and my wife, before that time, was working with the Murray Mallee Strategic Task Force to get better outcomes for the Murraylands and Mallee. She was certainly the lead in getting the Telstra phone tower at Alawoona.

This money is absolutely vital in regard to all the regional development bodies right across the state. It is interesting to note that on 27 March, after much lobbying from this side of the house and the continual persistence of the member for Goyder, which I congratulate, the member for Frome, the Minister for Regional Development, issued a press release with the \$3 million core funding agreement for three years. That is a good thing, but why did it take a bit of push and shove to get there?

The split goes this way: RDA Yorke and Mid North, \$475,000; RDA Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula, \$470,000; RDA Far North, \$400,000; RDA Limestone Coast, \$400,000; RDA Barossa, \$380,000; the two RDAs that affect my electorate, RDA Murraylands and Riverland, \$450,000; and RDA Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu, and Kangaroo Island, \$425,000. That is welcome funding, but why is it not the core of any government in this state to make sure that this funding is in place? This state does not end at Gepps Cross or the tollgate, and it is about time members of the Labor government realised that.

What we see time and time again, especially with the Premier and the Treasurer, is that they talk about not doing things for a constituency which is not their core constituency. The member for

Chaffey rightfully mentioned the \$25 million that looks to be lost from the diversification funding for the Riverland and Murraylands and the government making the point that, 'It is not our constituency. Why should we deal with it?' I remind the government, the Premier, the Treasurer, and all those below them that they are supposedly here to govern for all South Australia and that it should not matter whether seats are blue, red or marginal. It should not matter a darn, quite frankly.

The simple fact is that around 400,000 people live in the regions, and the regions actually supply over 50 per cent of the economic base of this state. The government was so keen to acknowledge the mining sector with the proposed expansion of the Olympic Dam mine, and they are so keen to acknowledge in statements since that did not happen that now we will rely on the clean green environment and the produce from that environment, but it is all talk.

We have a government that goes around the state with their so-called community forums, the community cabinet, but what is the point? It is just a lot of hot air. They do not really care about the regions. It is just to tick the boxes against the 'Brockument'. I just think it is disgraceful how they treat country areas of this state. I have had plenty of conversations with the Minister for Regional Development. He has to work a hell of a lot harder to make sure that we get more funding to the regions right across the state and he has to make his presence felt. Sadly, I do not think the Premier and the Treasurer take too much notice of him. That is not a reflection on him; I just think they do not care. In fact, I know they do not care about the regions.

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: It is not rubbish because we have just lost \$25 million—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I'm on my feet. I know it is hard to tell. It means you sit down. It is unparliamentary to interject; it is unparliamentary to respond to interjections. I would ask all members to observe standing order 142 and keep their noise to a minimum and listen to the member for Hammond in silence. Member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for your protection. If what I am saying is rubbish, why, all of a sudden, do I have 21 projects across the Murraylands and Riverland that have missed out on their funding? Why is that?

The Hon. P. Caica interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I won't have it. The chamber is entitled to hear the debate in silence. Member for Hammond.

Mr PEDERICK: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and if members on the other side want to argue the case, argue the case in contributions—that is what we are here for—get up when it is your opportunity to speak. They are the simple, cold hard facts. That money has gone missing from Riverland and Murraylands communities because of the sheer arrogance of the Premier, the Treasurer and all those on the other side of the house in the government. It is the sheer arrogance of a party that does not give a flying toss about regional South Australia. It is an absolute disgrace that we are losing opportunities for employment and for the spending of millions of dollars in regional communities.

I look at the Gifford Hill project which, over 20 or 30 years plus, would have brought in \$1 billion of income to Murray Bridge and surrounding areas but, no, this state government turns its back. I will be the first one to get up and thank the state government if there is a chance but I think that chance is gone, mind you, because assistant federal minister Jamie Briggs said it was gone if it was not accepted by the federal budget day which was Tuesday.

If that money somehow comes back to those communities in the form of those projects, I will be the first one to get up and thank the government, but they keep playing politics. They keep talking about the GST issues that will happen with that money. What about the nearly \$900 million heading towards \$1 billion of unallocated GST funding that will come to this state over the next four years—and that is a fact? This \$25 million is a very small amount compared to that amount of money.

I will say that is pleasing to see that this money has come into place for these RDAs for regional development. It is absolutely vital that we keep the cohesive work between local government and the other tiers of government as much as possible. However, the trouble is we see this infighting

with financial agreements that goes on now, where too many people decide they want to play politics with money that should be allocated to the regions—money that is absolutely vital and money that does not come up every day of the week by any means throughout regional South Australia.

Regional South Australians are due their money as much as anyone else. Just because the main populous lives in the urban areas, does not mean all of the money needs to go there. Yes, regional South Australians use urban areas for education, health, business and a range of activities, but we have to remember that the wealth of this state comes from regional South Australia, whether it is in our food production or our mining capabilities. It is a very sad day when it appears that a state Labor government talks the talk but will not walk the walk and put a real contribution into regional South Australia.

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton) (12:28): I will be brief. I rise to speak in favour of the amended motion. I do have a tiny bit of background in this area. I recall when we first came to government, I think it was under the Howard government, where they had the area consultative committees that were in essence replicating what our regional development boards were doing in the areas.

Labor came to government at the federal level and decided to do away with those area consultative committees, which was the right thing to do, and jointly with the state developed the Regional Development Australia boards throughout regional South Australia. I had a bit to do with it.

I not only want to congratulate the minister for the work that he has done since he has been in cabinet in ensuring that appropriate funding arrangements have been available to the regional areas in a variety of areas, but in particular I want to refute the comments of the member for Hammond. You invited me to do so by getting on my feet, Deputy Speaker.

His view that our view that South Australia stops at Gepps Cross is just nonsense. We on this side fully understand the importance of regional South Australia. It is the single underpinning plank that drives our economy. We can talk about mining, but we know that mining goes in a boom and bust, and that we have got to make hay when the sun shines, when the commodity prices are right, but it is nothing for a mining company to close down its operations with very short notice and reopen it again when the times are better, and we see that. In no way am I understating the importance of mining to South Australia, but the point I am making is that this state relies so heavily on the contribution of regional South Australia through its agriculture and all aspects of—

Mr van Holst Pellekaan interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: Well, I happen to have been, and one day you might be, a minister, but no-one on that side, as I recall, has been to date, and you have got another three and a half years to go before you could be. I was agriculture minister for a period of time and also the water and environment minister, which took me out into the beautiful areas of South Australia and gave me a clear understanding—although I understood beforehand—of the importance of the role of regional South Australia in its significant contribution to this economy. So I refute the comments of the member for Hammond; they were absolute nonsense. I did also notice too that the member for Hammond said that his wife was, I think, very important in the area in getting the tower somewhere in the Mallee—

Mr Pederick: Alawoona.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Alawoona. Well, I congratulate Mrs Pederick for doing more for her area than the member for Hammond has done since his time here. She should be the member—

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: That's right; she should be the member.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr van Holst Pellekaan: They're a strong team.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Yes, and she is the main player of that team. Notwithstanding that particular comment, I want to reinforce a couple of points. The point that I started off with was about the contribution of the minister and the role that he plays around cabinet, and not only that, but his

advocacy for the regional areas, which manifests itself in the funding that he has been able to get. We have heard—and this happens quite often—members opposite quite rightly congratulating my good friend, the member for Goyder, for the work he did and for the lobbying he did to get there, but it really wasn't the member for Goyder. It was, in fact, the minister who got that funding via cabinet to be distributed throughout regional South Australia. I congratulate him for that.

I was talking to the member for Chaffey this morning about the work that is going to be done up at Loxton. Loxton, as anyone in this room would know, was a shining light in the role that it played in supporting primary industry in this state. And it did fall by the wayside, but its future is looking very rosy, I think, in the role that it is going to play in the future, a role that we know can significantly contribute to that which underpins our economy year in and year out, that is, primary production in its various forms in this state.

Another issue that was raised by the member for Hammond was the \$25 million that was to be distributed through the federal government for various water saving initiatives. I want to make this point: that was a deal that was struck by the Premier in relation to the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. There was never to be any caveats on how that money would be funded. It is coming off our GST, but the point—

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: It's 21 projects—but the point I want to make is that the member for Hammond says, 'You've done nothing about it.' Well, I will tell you who has done nothing about it: the opposition have done nothing about it, because they have not bothered to speak to their colleagues in Canberra—

Mr Pederick: That's a lie.

The Hon. P. CAICA: That's a lie—oh!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P. CAICA: That's a lie, is it?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have asked both sides to observe the standing orders and listen to each member as they speak on their feet. It goes to both sides of the chamber. I have been as harsh on my colleagues to my right as I am on my colleagues to my left, so I really cannot have the shouting backwards and forwards. The member for Colton is entitled to be heard in silence.

Mr GRIFFITHS: If I may make a point of order, the member for Colton in his contribution was in this chamber at the time when the member for Chaffey spoke about the meetings he had had in Canberra with members of the Coalition.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am not going into who said what. I am concerned about the loudness of the debate and the interjections. If you have a problem with what was said in the context of the debate, you know what you can do; there are ways to address that. I am asking members to observe standing orders and to listen to each other in silence.

The Hon. P. CAICA: Thank you very much. Unlike the member for Hammond, I do not need your—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, that is not necessary.

The Hon. P. CAICA: I do not need your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I am very thankful that you are directing a spat to a proper observation of the standing orders. I apologise for breaching those and I promise not to do it again

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Ever or just today?

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P. CAICA: Certainly, for the purposes of *Hansard*, not over the next four minutes. I would make this point: if, as the member for Hammond says, what I said was a lie—that they have indeed been talking to their federal colleagues, and it is true that I was not in this house when the member for Chaffey gave his particular contribution—if it is then a lie, it is a mistake more than a lie. But what I would say is this: the federal colleagues of the member for Hammond and the member for Chaffey must think they are as ineffectual as the rest of South Australia does because, obviously, they did not listen to you in doing what it is that is the right thing to do. I put it squarely on the shoulders—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P. CAICA: Excuse me, you are being disrespectful now and disobeying the Deputy Speaker's rulings. They are just as ineffectual as we think they are because their federal colleagues do not listen to them either.

I am going to finish off where I started. I want to thank the minister for his contribution to regional South Australia, the role that he has played, his forceful advocacy on behalf of the regions, his ability to be able to extract in tight financial times money from cabinet to make sure it is distributed where it should go—and that is to regional South Australia—and for recognising the magnificent contribution that regional South Australia plays in our state. I refute any comments that suggest that we, on this side of the house, do not recognise or support regional South Australia.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, I would like to acknowledge in the gallery students from Woodcroft College, guests of the member for Mawson, being ably shepherded around the building by the member for Reynell. We welcome them to parliament today and truly hope that they enjoy their time with us.

Motions

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

Debate resumed.

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (12:37): It gives me great pleasure to support the member for Goyder in his motion:

That this house urges the regional development minister, in conjunction with the state government, to—

- (a) provide adequate core funding for the ongoing operations of seven Regional Development Australia (RDA) committees in South Australia; and
- (b) ensure that the operational funding of the RDA network is provided annually on an uncontested basis.

The member for Goyder understands these issues extremely well, and I congratulate him for not only moving the motion but for the success of his motion. Since he moved the motion back in February, the government and the Minister for Regional Development have acquiesced to that and provided support back in late March. I thank them very directly for that.

It does not cause me any concern whatsoever to put very clearly on the record, here or anywhere else, the fact that I know that the member for Frome has regional development deep in his heart. I know that he is incredibly genuine about regional development and about his electorate. I am happy for that to be recorded and reported anywhere whatsoever. I do not share the same view of the government as a whole. I listened carefully to the member for Colton, and I do not say that there is zero interest whatsoever from the government, but it is not as strong or as prominent or as genuine as ours is. I think that is an indisputable fact.

I was the shadow minister for regional development when the government withdrew its support for regional development across the state after they had participated in developing a very good three-tier model for regional development which had funding, planning, support, participation and energy coming from local government, state government and federal government. Very shortly after that model was put together—and it was a good one, and I congratulate the government for

doing it—they withdrew their funding, they pulled the rug out, and that was incredibly disappointing. Now we are back to where we should be, and good on the state government and good on the member for Frome (the Minister for Regional Development) for getting us there.

Let me also say very clearly that we went to the 2014 election with that pledge in place. The government did not go to the 2014 election with that pledge in place. The government did that because it was part of a deal that they came to with the member for Frome. He asked them to do that and they agreed, but we were going to do it anyway. If we had been elected we were going to do it anyway.

Another very important issue that needs to be put on the record again and again is that the member for Frome did a deal on behalf of regional South Australia with the government as part of his discussions to help them form government, but what he got for regional South Australia was less than our election commitments were going to the election. So good on him for sticking up and getting something for regional South Australia that the current Labor government was not going to give them if he had not asked for it. But if we had been elected, without anybody asking us for anything extra, we would have done much more. We had already put on the record the fact that we were going to do much more than the package of support that the member for Frome (now regional development minister) got for regional South Australia.

We are all working the very best that we possibly can for regional South Australia. I do not doubt for a second that the member for Frome is doing the very best he can to be their advocate within government and within cabinet. He would never, ever have to spend time advocating with us on those sorts of things because we are already across the line, and that is proven by the commitments that the Labor Party took to the last election and the commitments that the Liberal Party took to the last election.

My electorate of Stuart overlaps with four fantastic RDAs: the Barossa, Murraylands and Riverland, Yorke and Mid North, and the Far North. They all do fantastic work, as I know the other three that exist in the state do as well. They try incredibly hard, from their chairs, boards, CEOs and staff all the way through to the people who work on the front desk in administration in those RDAs. They are all there for the right reasons, and I congratulate them on that. They are all working incredibly hard to get the very best for their region and for our state.

I was grateful that the member for Colton put on record all of the things that regional South Australia does for our state and his strong support of them. I will just name a few: agriculture; resources; tourism; many services, including government services; retail; hospitality; manufacturing; transport; communications; education; and power generation. Many other things operate out of regional South Australia, supporting regional South Australia and our state as well. Very importantly, out of all of that is an enormous number of exports.

It is also important to put on the record that the value to our state's economic contribution that comes from regional South Australia is significantly underrecorded. If we look at the mining industry and what it contributes to our state, a huge proportion of that contribution is actually registered as coming from the eastern suburbs of Adelaide, because that is where a lot of the companies have their offices. The work and the wealth generation is actually going on in the electorate of Stuart, in the electorate of Giles and the electorate of Flinders, and I think even in the electorates of Chaffey, Goyder and Hammond, and many others. The work is going on in the regions but the wealth generation is often recorded as if it were coming from Adelaide, because that is where the accountant happens to be. The contribution and the value of our regions is actually way beyond what is recorded in financial records around our state.

I support the motion wholeheartedly. I congratulate the member for Goyder for moving it and I thank the member for Frome for what he has done to get the state government to do what it was not going to do before the election. I think it is also fair to put on record again the fact that we were going to do those things before the election.

*Parliamentary Procedure***VISITORS**

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker I would like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of another wonderful group of students from Woodcroft College, who are guests of the member for Mawson. We welcome them to parliament today and hope they enjoy their time with us.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of the former Speaker and member for Hammond, and I welcome him to parliament.

*Motions***REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA**

Debate resumed.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Frome—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government) (12:45): I thank all the speakers and particularly acknowledge the comments of the member for Giles. I thank him for his contribution, as well as members from the other side and the member for Colton.

As a direct result of my negotiations with the Premier in March last year, regional communities across South Australia will receive funding of \$3 million dollars per year through their Regional Development Australia associations, and I would like to put on record my unreserved appreciation for what the RDAs have done, not only during this parliament but also previously. I have been involved with RDAs for many, many years. Without this agreement the RDA funding would have been reduced to \$1.4 million. I would also like to make it quite clear that at the time the numbers were not in favour of the opposition forming government, so we need to move on, and go forward from here for the next 3½ years.

As mentioned by the member for Giles, the effect of this funding increase is that the South Australian government is now the major funder of the seven RDAs in this state. In a very tight budgetary environment this is a significant investment of public funds, and I have made it quite clear that this funding needs to be directed towards growing regional economies, improving infrastructure and creating sustainable jobs. I am very sure that members on the opposite side will be in agreement with that. Whether it is federal, state or local council money, we certainly do not want to be putting it up just to put bums on seats. We want KPIs and results, and that is what we will get from this new agreement.

I also have to especially acknowledge the contribution local government makes to each of the RDAs. We have an argument in this house about what the state puts in and what the feds put in, but at times we do not acknowledge the great contributions made by local councils financially. That is something we need to highlight, and I continue to do that in my travels across the state. I have been from one side of this state to the other on a couple of occasions, and I will continue to acknowledge the contribution of local government.

When I became minister it was my intention, right from the start, to review the funding operations; in other words, not have the 1.4 and the 1.6 as contestable. I did not want that. However, I could not do that; I needed to speak to each of the RDAs to better understand what their issues were out there, what their concerns were, and hear their views.

It was back in March, April, May last year, in that vicinity, that I went out there, and I heard very clearly the issues and frustrations that were out there. However, as a minister I needed time to settle down and time to understand that. I am dealing with public money, whether it is state, federal or local council money. I have always had that view that we needed to make it 100 percent, \$3 million out there.

I think the member for Hartley might have mentioned the breakdown of this new agreement. We have had negotiations for a long time. We wanted the agreement of all seven of the RDAs and I congratulate Rob Kerin, as the chair of RDA SA, for his contribution and dedication to this. We went to the seven RDAs and asked them what breakdown they needed for the \$3 million. They came back through Regions SA, but the total was less than \$3 million. They asked for less than \$3 million for

their own RDA sector. We then sent it back to them and said, 'You need to review what you're looking for from this state government, from Regions SA.' They came back and some of them increased their original allocation.

I can confirm that funding provided to the RDAs to date has delivered positive results for regional South Australia, and I am personally aware of a number of projects undertaken by the RDA for Yorke and Mid North which have delivered very positive outcomes. In particular, there are three projects I would like to mention in relation to the Yorke and Mid North region. This is my RDA, and I also share it with the member for Goyder; I know he is very passionate about it, as we all are passionate about regional South Australia. This RDA was involved in securing funding for the Port Wakefield water pipeline project. This infrastructure will provide water for planned developments in the region, including the poultry industry around the Balaclava area, and that water comes back via the River Murray through Auburn.

The RDA also established the Clare Valley Alliance which secured funding for, and subsequently completed, the Clare Valley branding strategy. The group will support the development of food, wine and tourism across the region through further communication and collaboration. Finally, the RDA worked closely with Unity Housing to help deliver more than 100 new houses targeted at low-income earners, the elderly and people living with a disability across the 11 regional towns during 2014. We will continue to work with people like that through the RDAs. Through the regional development funding I have received, we are working on opportunities for affordable housing in the South-East where there are not enough houses.

I am confident that the funding being provided to RDAs for the next three years will allow them to deliver many more positive projects. RDAs will undertake a broad range of activities that will drive regional economic development and allow them to make a real and lasting difference in regional communities on behalf of the government and also the state. We must remember, even though we can argue with each other, I believe we all have one goal in mind, and that is jobs for our regions. We need to continually push that; we need to continually talk it up and not talk it down, because it is no good talking it down. We have issues and challenges, but we need to work through it together. If we do not do that, we will not succeed.

I acknowledge the appreciation for the continued funding for RDAs provided by the commonwealth government and local councils. We also need to understand the necessity for that and that each RDA region is different. We need to understand what the issues are on Eyre Peninsula, in the Murray Valley and in the South-East—we need to understand the issues in all regional areas.

I want to reinforce that it was always my intention to allocate \$3 million, uncontested, to RDAs. Like everybody here, I want to get a result for each of us. The state government needs to get something out of their contribution, the local councils need to get something out of their contributions, and so do the feds. It is no good putting money in for no KPIs. We have clear KPIs in there, and I am very happy to liaise directly with my counterpart, the member for Goyder—the shadow minister for regional development—at any time, and we will have those discussions moving forward.

In talking with each RDA, we need to understand them; there are some new chairs out there, and they were basically appointed by the federal government. We want to be able to work very closely with each RDA and stop wasting our time working in different directions, working in silos, because if we continue to work against each other, we lose vital opportunities to actually get a result.

The member for Chaffey mentioned that he fully appreciates the role of RDAs—even prior to coming to this place—and I want to reinforce that I was always appreciative of the RDAs in my previous roles as a mayor and as a councillor of the Port Pirie Regional Council. I will always continue to be appreciative and promote them as much as we can.

I am disappointed that the member for Hammond considers the country cabinets are a waste of time. I am—

Mr Pederick: Put your money there.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I am disappointed because I hear nothing but praise about the three country cabinets going out into the regions. It is not only for the ministers to find out what is happening out there but it gives people in each region an opportunity to talk directly to a minister. I will continue to push, with this government—

Mr Pederick: You've missed out on \$25 million, Geoff.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: I will continue to talk about the good things that are happening out there—and there are some good things happening out there. We are also having a summit next week in Whyalla, in one of the universities there, and I am going to showcase as part of that some of the innovative ideas that have come through the regional development funding through this state in the last 12 months. I will certainly not talk this state down. We have to talk it up and be positive about it. We have some great opportunities here, and I want to work, as we all do, with the federal government on where we can go without financial disadvantage to this state.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: In closing, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would thank the member for Goyder for bringing this motion to the house. I had a discussion with him. We have put this in place, but the member for Goyder wanted to bring it to the chamber, and I appreciate that. Again, I thank all speakers from both sides of the house, and I look forward to a very close working relationship for the next three years to get good results.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: If the member for Goyder speaks, he closes the debate. I remind members that if there are interjections I will stop debate, so it will be in everybody's best interests to hear the member for Goyder in silence.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (12:55): Thank you, Deputy Speaker. It has been a very busy hour and a half, I must admit. I do not believe that the minister actually reflected upon the amendment that the government itself has proposed; I do not think that you in your contribution reflected upon that.

The Hon. G.G. Brock interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: That's okay. In my brief contribution, I want to reinforce my appreciation to everybody who has spoken. There is a diversion of opinions and not total agreement, but the one positive is for the regions—go for it, absolutely! Can I move an amendment, though, to the government's amendment?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is in order.

Mr GRIFFITHS: I seek to amend the amendment from the government, as confirmed by the minister, as follows:

After the words 'That this house acknowledges the regional development minister, in conjunction with the state government' add the following words 'has adopted 2014 state Liberal Party policy commitments'.

Members interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: It is a statement of fact. So I am thus moving that those words be included in the amendment proposed by the government.

Mr Griffiths' amendment to Mr Hughes' amendment negatived; Mr Hughes' amendment carried.

Motion as amended carried.

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

Mr PICTON (Kaurua) (12:57): I move:

That this house—

- (a) recognises World No Tobacco Day, taking place on 31 May 2015;

- (b) acknowledges the thousands of South Australian families who will be impacted by the damage caused by smoking this year;
- (c) continues to support measures to reduce the smoking rate, especially those designed to prevent young people from becoming new smokers; and
- (d) congratulates the state government on strengthening anti-smoking measures, including outdoor dining areas to be smoke free by July 2016.

I look forward to these two minutes of debate on this very important motion before we have to adjourn. On 31 May, we again mark World No Tobacco Day, and that has been marked every year around the world since 1987, so it is important to get this into *Hansard* before that date, even though the debate will occur much later. What this day does is draw attention to the negative effects of tobacco consumption and aims to try to prevent those harms occurring in the future.

We have had 50 years of hard work by doctors, scientists and public health advocates around the world, and now it is very hard to find anyone in Australia who does not know that smoking is harmful for you. The days when tobacco companies would lie about the dangerous health effects have luckily long since past, and our nation and our state lead the world in measures that we can take.

Unfortunately there are still some six million deaths worldwide every year, and we know that some 15,000 of those tobacco-related deaths each year are Australians, and some 679 Australians have died from smoking over the 50 years from 1950 to 2000. But it is not just the deaths. Unfortunately, we have many people who live with the diseases every year that are caused by smoking.

I was struck by a passage in a recent book called *Removing the Emperor's Clothes* by Professor Simon Chapman, a book I was asked to do a review for for the *Crikey* newspaper. It had a message from Karen and Karen's story, and I will quote just a small passage of that. It says:

I was diagnosed in 2007 at 46 years. Yes, I smoked for several years. I have endured 12 surgeries since 2007 trying to improve my quality of life. Almost my entire tongue, lower jaw, gums, and beautiful teeth have been removed and reconstructed because of the treatments to remove cancer. Bone was taken from my hip to construct my jaw; normal function is gone permanently.

Many smokers say things like, 'Oh, well, I'm going to die anyway,' or, 'I could get hit by a bus tomorrow.' Well, from my experience I can honestly saying dying immediately would be much easier than the low slow, slow suffering this disease puts patients through. In 2007, while in hospital, I had had the cardiac arrest because the tracheotomy blocked. Once resuscitated little did I know I had years and years of pain, ongoing treatments and loss of normal function ahead of me; it's devastating.

I think that really sums up the suffering that many people go through day by day in Australia that we are aiming to alleviate. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 13:00 to 14:00.

Petitions

FOSTERS ROAD, NORTHGATE

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens): Presented a petition signed by 1,326 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to take immediate action to install a pedestrian or koala crossing, improve school zone signage and construct indented parking bays at Fosters Road, Northgate adjacent to Cedar College.

LITTLE PENGUINS AND NEW ZEALAND FUR SEALS

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss): Presented a petition signed by 1,073 residents of Victor Harbor and greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to take immediate action to initiate a breeding program of local little penguins to ensure longevity of their unique DNA and to enhance their survival as a subspecies, and to introduce a management plan and implement strategies for the control of New Zealand fur seals in South Australia.

NOARLUNGA HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Mr WINGARD (Mitchell): Presented a petition signed by 1,341 residents of South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to take immediate action to ensure that the emergency services to the Noarlunga Hospital are maintained and the changes under the Transforming Health plan are not implemented.

COUNCIL RATE CONCESSIONS

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey): Presented a petition signed by 334 residents of greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to retain and index state government concessions on council rates.

COUNCIL RATE CONCESSIONS

Mr TRELOAR (Flinders): Presented a petition signed by 334 residents of greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to retain and index state government concessions on council rates.

*Parliamentary Procedure***VISITORS**

The SPEAKER: I welcome to parliament students from Calvary Lutheran Primary School, who are guests of the member for Reynell, and students from Woodcroft College, who are guests of the member for Mawson.

*Ministerial Statement***STATE GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS**

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier) (14:02): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Today with my colleague the Treasurer it was my great pleasure to announce the first reform as part of the state government's state tax review. Pensioners, low-income earners and self-funded retirees holding a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card will receive up to \$200 per year under a new cost-of-living concession. This concession is in direct response to the Abbott government's failure to reinstate the \$30 million per year in funding it cut from pensioner concessions in South Australia. While we are disappointed that the Abbott government has refused to reinstate the payment they cruelly cut from pensioners, we are proud to be able to step in with a new concession that will come into effect on 1 July.

Our concession will enable about 205,000 households to use our \$200 payment towards their bills, whether that is electricity, gas or water bills, council rates or whatever is their greatest need. The new concession will replace the \$190 council rate concession which only provided funding to pensioners, low-income earners and self-funded retirees who own their own home. As a result of our reform, more South Australian pensioners will be better off. Our concession is expanded to help more people and is better targeted to those in need of support.

Eligibility for the new concession has been expanded to include pensioners and low-income earners who are tenants; that means 45,000 pensioners and low-income earners will now receive an extra \$100 in their pocket each year. Our concession will give more people more money and greater flexibility to manage their budgets. While homeowners who currently receive the council rate concession will not need to apply separately for this new concession, tenants will need to apply by 31 October 2015.

Application forms for the concession will be made available from 1 July 2015 by contacting the concession hotline on 1800 307 758. Our new concession will cost the state government \$36.5 million per year, meaning the total amount of funding the state government will now spend on concessions in 2015-16 is \$280 million.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Before the Premier said anything even slightly contentious, these members offended: I call to order and warn for the first time the leader, the member for Hartley and the member for Schubert; and I call to order the members for Morialta, the deputy leader, Hammond, Chaffey and the Treasurer.

Parliamentary Procedure

PAPERS

The following paper was laid on the table:

By the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (Hon. L.W.K. Bignell)—

Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia—Annual Report 2013-14

Ministerial Statement

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOURISM COMMISSION

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL (Mawson—Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Minister for Forests, Minister for Tourism, Minister for Recreation and Sport, Minister for Racing) (14:05): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The SPEAKER: Leave is granted to the minister, who is dressed in a somewhat agricultural manner today.

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL: I am off to Mount Gambier this afternoon, sir.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL: I love getting out in the regions, Tim. Today I am pleased to announce the appointment of Sean Keenihan as Chair of the South Australian Tourism Commission Board. Mr Keenihan brings a wealth of international engagement experience at a very important time for tourism in South Australia. He is the national Vice President of the Australia China Business Council, South Australian President of the Australia China Business Council and Chairman at Norman Waterhouse Lawyers. He is also the state government's Strategic Adviser on China and worked closely with the government on developing the Premier's economic priorities.

As well as building on our existing markets, tapping into the Chinese visitor market is absolutely critical to the ongoing growth in our regions. In the 12 months to September last year, Chinese visitor numbers were up 13 per cent to 31,000. We are on track to reach our goal of 57,000 Chinese visitors each year by 2020. Importantly, they are the highest spending of all our international visitors. The state government's goal for the visitor economy is to grow it from \$5.2 billion a year to \$8 billion by 2020. This increase would create a further 10,000 jobs throughout the state in the tourism sector. Mr Keenihan's focus will be on the international competitiveness of our tourism sector and creating these jobs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former chair, Jane Jeffreys, for her tireless commitment to the SATC Board. Ms Jeffreys had been the chair since October 2011. She will remain on the board in the role of director. I look forward to her continuing commitment and dedication to the state's tourism industry.

In addition to Mr Keenihan's appointment, South Australian Motor Sport Board chair, Andy Ford, has been appointed as an SATC Board member effective from 1 July. Mr Ford has been on the Motor Sport Board for 14 years and is an ideal choice to help with the transition of motorsport events into the SATC.

*Question Time***STATE GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS**

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): My question is to the Treasurer. How many people will be worse off under the government's changes to pensioner concessions announced today?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Finance, Minister for State Development, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:08): I assume that means that the Leader of the Opposition is not supporting bringing in new people to the concession payment—

Mr Marshall: You can think what you like; just answer the question.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I know you're having a bad day; it's okay, it will be over soon.

The SPEAKER: Point of order, member for Schubert.

Mr KNOLL: I do not think you are having a bad day, sir.

The SPEAKER: It would be nice if it were a point of order, because I would have upheld it, but it was just an impromptu speech. The Treasurer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There are self-funded retirees who do not hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card who will not be eligible for the new concession and will no longer receive the \$100 council rate concession, and there are about 20,000 of those households.

STATE GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:09): My supplementary is to the Premier. What does the Premier say to the 20,000 self-funded retirees in South Australia who are going to be worse off under the government's new pensioner concession proposal?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Little Para is called to order.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier) (14:09): I will address those 20,000 people after I have spoken to the 45,000 people who actually have a concession for the first time—\$100 to those who are doing it tough, who are renters, who deserve the support from this government because they are struggling with the cost of living. That is the priority for this government; that is, to first address those who are doing it toughest, because we care for those South Australians who are struggling with cost of living pressures as they sit in whether it is their retirement village, their Housing Trust property, their residential parks or their tenancies where many of them are paying very significant rents, often very much more than they can receive in either community housing or public housing. We will address our first remarks to those 45,000 people.

In relation to the 20,000 people, what we are saying to that group in the community is that we are better targeting our concessions. We are targeting our concessions to those who, basically, are most in need. We will be saying to, for instance, Mr Rob Gerard, who potentially is one of those 20,000 people, who is a self-funded retiree, that he may not be receiving his \$100 again. For those for whom there is no means test as self-funded retirees, we do not think it is appropriate that they continue to receive that \$100 payment, and we are better targeting.

The whole scheme, of course, costs the government more money even after the better targeting of the scheme because we are substantially expanding the scope and, of course, we are increasing the actual amount for those people who are presently getting their \$190 concession. We are increasing that to \$200.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The members for Adelaide and Unley are called to order, the members for Morialta and, Chaffey and the Treasurer are warned a first time, and the member for Morphett is warned a second and final time. Leader.

STATE GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:11): Supplementary to the Treasurer: what will be the method of implementing this new arrangement? Will letters and cheques be sent to the individual people who are receiving the concession and what will be the cost of administering this new system?

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Wright is called to order. Treasurer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Finance, Minister for State Development, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:12): There will be no novelty cheques with large pictures of politicians on the novelty cheques. We will be paying the first round of payments to people probably in cheques but the government would like to transition to an electronic funds transfer method because we think that is more efficient and probably more convenient for people who will be receiving the payment. Given that we are dramatically increasing the scope of the payment and so many more people will be eligible for this scheme now, we need to find out exactly who they are, so we will be having a longer period for those people who are tenants.

As the Premier said, this is a new scheme and will include many more people who are living in council incorporated areas or tenancies that are being rented out to them at commercial rates (which factors in property-based taxes on them), who, previously, received no concession. They received no payment. For the first time, Labor is investing in those people who are in private rental and in non-government rental—and in government rental, indeed. They will be getting payments. The cost of administering the scheme will be about \$800,000 a year initially but, of course, we want to make that as efficient as possible. We want to bring the cost down. We will be introducing legislation. I hope the legislation passes unencumbered. I hope members opposite support the legislation—it will be part of the budget bills—without anticipating debate or the introduction of any legislation.

The SPEAKER: No, because that would be out of order.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, sir: it would be out of order. It is important that we first find out the number of people out there who currently have a commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card, a DVA gold card or a DVA gold card with 80 or more overall impairment points, a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, commonwealth Low Income Health Care Card or State Concession Card, and recipients of the Newstart Allowance, Austudy payment, ABSTUDY payment, a parenting payment, a partner allowance, a sickness allowance, a special benefit, a widow allowance, a youth allowance and, of course, people receiving payments under the Community and Development Employment Projects and the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme.

We will be making these payments available to people. We will be out there encouraging them to contact our concessions hotline which will be made available on 1800 307 758. It is important that we distinguish that people who own their property and are currently receiving the \$190 council concession will be getting an increase of \$10 per year and you will not have to do anything. That money will be forthcoming to you in a payment before your council rates are due. For those people who were not eligible for the old concession, but are now eligible under the new concession, I encourage you to get onto the hotline and register.

I hope members opposite can assist us in getting members of their community who have become eligible to get onto the hotline. I can see the member for Hartley again nodding in agreement that this is a good arrangement for those people in getting them onto the hotline and involved so they can get access to this \$100 payment for the first time. We do not want anyone to miss out. We want people who are eligible to get onto the hotline and speak to the government to get their new cost-of-living allowance.

*Members***MEMBER FOR LEE**

The SPEAKER (14:15): I am pleased to say that during private members' time this morning, the member for Lee became a father to Benjamin Frederick Mullighan. To celebrate the birth, I offer clemency to the member for Hartley on his second warning.

*Question Time***HOUSING SA**

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:16): My question is to the Minister for Social Housing. Will the new \$200 payment be excluded from Housing SA tenants' income when assessing and determining their rent?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Finance, Minister for State Development, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:16): There will be no change to people's requirements for eligibility, I am advised, and if there is we will obviously make sure that this payment does nothing to disadvantage people. We do not want anyone to be disadvantaged by this payment. If the member is asking if it will go towards an income test or that the \$200 payment will somehow increase someone's income to make them ineligible for state government services—no, it will not.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide is warned and the member for Stuart is called to order.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:17): My question is to the Treasurer. Now that the government has received significant extra funding from the federal government, will the government commit to reversing its massive hike in the emergency services levy?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Finance, Minister for State Development, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:17): If only we could. If only the extra revenue in GST actually touched the sides of the cuts made by the commonwealth. It is important to point out to the members opposite, who seem to want to ignore the cuts made by Canberra, that in 2015-16 alone the cuts by the commonwealth to South Australia are \$160 million. The uplift in GST is \$130 million. This myth, this hypocrisy, that the Leader of the Opposition is peddling to the public that somehow this extra money in GST is filling the gap of the hole created by the commonwealth is simply not true. In 2016-17 that cut increases to \$224 million. In 2017-18—

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am comparing the cuts made by the commonwealth. These are in the commonwealth government's own budget papers. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can listen rather than rudely interrupting constantly because he is having a bad week, in a bad year, in a bad term, in a job he is out of his depth in.

The SPEAKER: The Treasurer will not debate the answer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, sir. The cuts increase to \$224 million in 2016-17. In 2017-18 the cuts from the commonwealth increase to \$400 million. In 2018-19 they increase to \$599 million. That is a total of \$1.4 billion worth of cuts from the commonwealth. The Leader of the Opposition is using his own calculations. That extra GST revenue will not touch the sides of these cuts. The benefit of the GST for the states was that we got additional revenue we could spend on things like tax cuts, improving productivity in our economy, upgrading road infrastructure and increasing concessions.

We are being forced more and more, as activity funding from the commonwealth decreases every year and those cuts get bigger and bigger and bigger, to pour that GST money that used to be

unencumbered to pay for health and education and essential services. So, while the commonwealth give a little with one hand they take a lot more with the other, and that's the one truth that the opposition fail to recognise because they don't want to recognise it. They want to bury their heads in the sand.

The SPEAKER: Point of order.

Mr GARDNER: Well, that was clearly debate, but he's finished.

The SPEAKER: So the point of order is withdrawn. I would have upheld it.

Mr MARSHALL: Supplementary, sir.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Before the supplementary, I call to order the member for Kavel and the member for Stuart, and I warn him for the first time. I warn for the second and final time the member for Adelaide. I also warn for the first time the member for Unley and the deputy leader and, for the second and final time, the member—and I will say it slowly so he can catch up—for Morialta. Leader.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:20): Supplementary to the Treasurer: can the Treasurer outline to the house what the final wash-up of federal government revenue to South Australia will be this financial year compared with what he put out in his budget last year? How does it compare with what Julia Gillard and Kevin Rudd promised South Australia would receive this year? Is it higher or in fact lower?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Treasurer, Minister for Finance, Minister for State Development, Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy, Minister for Small Business) (14:21): If you are talking about GST distributions—

Mr Marshall: No, I wasn't—total federal revenue to South Australia.

The SPEAKER: Yes, I think we've got the question. Treasurer.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: You can't answer that question without including the cuts made by the commonwealth to our health service, so I will just go through the cuts one more time so that the Leader of the Opposition understands in full the size and scope of the cuts. We are receiving \$73.9 million less this year in our National Health Reform Agreement that former prime minister Gillard promised. We are receiving \$28 million less from a national partnership—

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I am reluctant to warn and remove from the house the leader. I give him enormous scope to interject, more than all the rest of his team and the parliament combined. I would ask him now to show some restraint.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I will start again. With the National Health Reform Agreement as agreed by the former Labor government, we are receiving \$73.9 million less from the Abbott government; as agreed by the former Gillard government, the National Partnership Agreement on Improving Public Hospital Services, we are receiving \$28 million less; as agreed by the previous Labor government, we are receiving now on a National Partnership Agreement on Financial Assistance for Long Stay Older Patients, \$10.6 million less.

The health national partnership reform payments and other national payments as agreed by the former Labor government, this current government is cutting that by \$3.9 million. The National Partnership Agreement on Preventative Health, the National Partnership Agreement on Indigenous Early Childhood Development, \$1.8 million. In health alone, we are receiving less from the Abbott government than we would have received had the previous Labor government been re-elected to the tune of \$125.1 million.

But there's more. Other related funding is the National Education Reform Agreement, the National Agreement on Skills Reform, the National Partnership Agreement on Training Places for Single and Teenage Parents is \$2.2 million; the National Partnership Agreement on Certain

Concessions for Pensioner Concession Card and Seniors Card holders will be stepped in today, \$30.5 million (that was agreed by prime minister Keating, prime minister Howard, prime minister Rudd and prime minister Gillard, and it took Prime Minister Abbott to get rid of it), and we are getting less from the National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy, \$2.5 million,—a total through other impacts as well of \$35.2 million—totalling \$160.3 million this year alone that we are worse off since the election of the Abbott government.

If they think that we can somehow take road funding or funding from Torrens to Torrens or Darlington or some other infrastructure program and reassign that money into health, they are mistaken. These commonwealth grants are tied to activity, and that is again what the opposition refuses to accept. They refuse to accept it. I can't move that money around as I see fit. That money is tied to specific purposes. That is how the government do it. They have a methodology where they pay payments as projects are delivered.

I can't move money out of Darlington and Torrens to Torrens, and nor should I move that money out of those projects to fund cuts in health and cuts in education and cuts to pensioner concessions made by the colleagues of members opposite in Canberra. What we need to do is to have these cuts reversed.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: While the GST is increasing, it does not meet the cuts made by the commonwealth.

Mr van Holst Pellekaan interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Stuart, even before that interjection, was going to be warned for the second and final time. The member for Mount Gambier is called to order and warned a first time, and the member for Davenport is called to order. I point out to the member for Unley standing order 142: when a member is speaking no-one may make a noise or disturbance or converse aloud. Leader.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:25): Given the Treasurer's hostility towards the federal government cuts in health and education, can he outline to the house whether he has in fact lobbied Bill Shorten, his federal leader, to restore those cuts on behalf of the Australian Labor Party?

Mr Pisoni: He's irrelevant.

The SPEAKER: The member for Unley is warned for the second and final time. The Premier.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier) (14:26): It's not just the South Australian Treasurer that's raising his voice against these cuts to health and education: it's every other Treasurer of every other state and territory around the nation—Liberal and Labor.

Mr Marshall: That's not the question.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: But your question was predicated on a false premise, that somehow it is only the Treasurer that's complaining about these cuts. That is simply not the case.

Mr Wingard interjecting:

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

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Naturally enough, that was the topic of the discussion at COAG, which was to insist that the commonwealth government engage with us on these \$80 billion of cuts. I must say, sir, we were, I think, very pleased to get a commitment from the Prime Minister, which was repeated again in his letter to me concerning this federal budget, that he's prepared to have those discussions in a constructive fashion when we meet for our retreat. I think that is a substantial concession, the first time we have seen an acknowledgement by the federal Liberal government that the \$80 billion—

Ms CHAPMAN: Point of order: unless Mr Shorten has defected to the federal Liberal Party, all of this so far is completely irrelevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: The question again?

Mr MARSHALL: Has the Treasurer lobbied Bill Shorten regarding the health and education cuts that he is fighting against here and the parliament today?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: It's germane, sir, because the point of that background is to say that our focus is on the federal Liberal government. We have an election in the order of 18 months away if it goes to its ordinary timetable. There is a basic principle of responsibility here. It's the federal Liberal government that imposed the cut, it's the federal Liberal government that can reverse the cut. We're spending our time and attention in speaking to the person who has the capacity to actually make—

Ms Chapman: 'Hello, Bill. You're irrelevant.'

The SPEAKER: The deputy leader is warned a second and final time.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: And, Mr Speaker, I will add this: we have offered an olive branch to the federal Liberal government about sitting down with them and having a constructive discussion about commonwealth-state relations. People are sick of politicians fighting with one another. They are sick of the blame game about whose infrastructure project is being funded one way or the other, who is responsible for the healthcare system, who is responsible for the education system. What they want is the leaders of this nation to come together and come up with a sensible division of responsibilities between the commonwealth and state governments.

For our part, we believe that there will still be a shortfall, even if we do explore all of the efficiencies and opportunities that exist in getting a better federation and that that will have to be grappled with through some revenue measure. We have been honest about that. We have actually put serious public policy ideas on the agenda. We have talked about introducing taxation regimes, for instance, on superannuation, where there are very generous concessions paid to high income earners.

We do want to agitate those sorts of questions because we think, even if you do pursue a quality agenda as far as you possibly can, there will still be a shortfall. We've found that with Transforming Health. Even if you explore all of the efficiencies from having a high quality system, there is still going to be a funding gap between what we get from the commonwealth now and what we need to spend to actually maintain a high quality healthcare system, and that has to be filled—

Ms Redmond interjecting:

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: That has to be filled, and we've really exhausted the limits of our budget capacity to do that. It makes sense for the commonwealth to step in and assist us with that. They have been a partner in health and education funding, and now they are withdrawing. We do want a conversation with them, and we're prepared to be constructive and reach an agreement with them.

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen is called to order. The member for Bright.

PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES

Mr SPEIRS (Bright) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for the Public Sector. What is the government's policy for public servants who are working second jobs while being employed as public servants?

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for the Public Sector) (14:30): I will have to take that on notice; I'm not aware of what the policy is.

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide has stayed with us just long enough to ask this question.

HOUSING SA

Ms SANDERSON (Adelaide) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Social Housing. Given the government's policy of redeveloping South Australian Housing Trust properties built prior to 1968 within 10 kilometres of the city by 2020, can the minister explain how the conditions set out in the rental agreements for tenants of South Australian Housing Trust properties will be met with the implementation of this policy. Mr Speaker, with your leave and with that of the house, in case you are not aware, one of the conditions is that:

...the Trust agrees to provide the tenant with other Trust accommodation—

The SPEAKER: The member for Adelaide is seeking leave to make an explanation?

Ms SANDERSON: Yes. I seek leave to make the explanation.

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Ms SANDERSON: The condition states:

...the Trust agrees to provide the tenant with other Trust accommodation of a standard at least equal to that of the premises, with land of at least the same size as that of the premises, and in the same area or a nearby area.

The SPEAKER: I understand the member for Adelaide sent letters to Housing SA tenants about this matter, as did the member for Bragg. The Deputy Premier.

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Justice Reform, Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Child Protection Reform) (14:31): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and can I say that the—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Okay. Since the dawn of time—

Mr Gardner: You're like a *Batman* villain: 'The Anaesthetist'.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: That's good!

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta is on two warnings.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: In the beginning there was the Housing Trust, and darkness was on the face of the deep—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: You're confusing Genesis with John's gospel.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Yes, indeed. Anyway, I don't want to waste my valuable time on that. It may come as a surprise, but the Housing Trust—or Housing SA as it is presently called—has been going through the process of building and renewing its stock since the dawn of the Housing Trust.

The SPEAKER: In 1938, I think.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Indeed, it is later than the dawn of time, but a significant time ago.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I stand corrected by the member for Schubert—mid-1930s.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: And as the member for Newland points out, some 4.5 billion years after the dawn of time. Nonetheless, still a long time ago—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.R. RAU: That's by current estimates. The point is they have been doing this for a very, very long time, and whether they are renewing one property, or two properties, or five properties, or 50 properties, or 4,000 properties, they go about it in exactly the same way.

The way they go about it, Mr Speaker, as you well know, because a number of these people are constituents of yours, as they are of mine—there is a visit from the people representing

Housing SA who talk to the people and make arrangements suitable to those people for alternative accommodation. In many if not most cases, there is an attempt made that the new properties which are the result of the development will be an opportunity for that person to return to the community from which they have come, except they return to the community from which they have come in a new property, which is probably more suitable to their requirements; and they often want to move.

Can I say also, Mr Speaker, that members might be surprised to know that there is a complete disconnect between the actual stock held by the Housing Trust, some 44,000 properties, and the actual requirements of the people who are the prime target audience for the Housing Trust service. In fact, most of the people who want these properties, you will find, are single people, or perhaps one or two people but a large number of single people looking for properties. Mr Speaker, you would know, as I know many people across there perhaps would know, that most of the properties are in fact not designed for single people at all, they are three-bedroom properties which were designed for the sort of cohort of people who used to be the primary group—

Ms REDMOND: Point of order, sir: the question was about the specifics of the contractual or lease arrangements entered into between the Housing Trust and the tenants and this answer is going nowhere near that.

The SPEAKER: No; the Deputy Premier is in orbit but he is heading towards, by centrifugal force, the substance of the question.

Ms Redmond: Centrifugal force means further away, sir.

The SPEAKER: No, that's centripetal.

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I think that's pronounced Uranus. As I was trying to explain, this has been going on for a great deal of time. What we are doing now and in the future will be, on a larger scale, exactly what has happened in the past. The idea that people who are Housing Trust tenants should be frightened by correspondence from the member for Adelaide and the member for Bragg is, quite frankly, very, very annoying.

PUBLIC SECTOR AGENCIES

Mr GEE (Napier) (14:37): My question is to the Minister for the Public Sector. How can South Australians find information about the performance of public sector agencies?

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Minister for Education and Child Development, Minister for the Public Sector) (14:37): I thank the member for his question. Our public sector has a vital role in providing important services to the community. As such, our public sector should be efficient and effective, but also transparent. One of the commitments in the state government's Building a Stronger South Australia policy was to develop an online location where people could have access to service performance information in one place. Today, I am pleased to announce that a new online initiative, SA Performs, is about to go online. This site has been developed by Service SA and will shortly be available on the sa.gov.au website.

While some information is currently available on agency websites, SA Performs will provide a single point of entry for customers wishing to have access to performance figures relating to currently available data and to a range of new performance statistics. Customers will be able to find easily information such as emergency department wait times, details around Adelaide's air quality, public transport performance, road crash and safety reports, and also government invoice payment performance. As Minister for the Public Sector, I am also pleased to announce that SA Performs will provide data on Service SA customer satisfaction and wait times, information that is being released proactively for the first time.

As members would be aware, Service SA provides the community with access to government information and transactions through its integrated network of online telephone and face-to-face channels. Service SA business channels complete 10 million transactions and collect \$1.6 billion annually. I am pleased to report that a recent survey of over 4,400 customers showed that 98 per cent of customers contacting Service SA by telephone were satisfied with the service they received and 67 per cent with the time it took to get through; 94 per cent of customers attending

a customer service centre were satisfied with the service they received and 80 per cent with the time it took to receive the service.

Service SA continually works to improve customer experience and in light of these results is focusing on timeliness. I congratulate Service SA staff for delivering high levels of service in what is a complex and high volume service delivery environment. While members will know that some of Service SA's 10 million annual transactions do involve some difficulties for people, these represent a very small percentage of the total, and Service SA is continually working towards improved customer experience. I welcome members of this house inquiring about Service SA matters on behalf of their constituents, and assure the house that this feedback helps to inform service provision improvements.

I look forward to keeping members updated on further important initiatives being implemented by Service SA as it continually looks to improve services to the community. I encourage members to visit the site later today to see just how well SA Performs operates as part of that service.

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen was right and I am wrong. We all hope that the Deputy Premier was moving with centripetal force towards the substance of the question.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:40): My question is to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. Are the minister and her department in breach of the South Australian government Competitive Neutrality Policy, paragraph 5.1(b), by locking out private screening companies from participating in screening of volunteers and others who are currently screened only through DCSI?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:41): I have recently been contacted by two companies that do private screening. I have indicated that I am happy to sit down and speak with them about the services they offer, and I intend to do so.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:41): I have a supplementary. Can the minister tell the house whether any groups have been threatened with having their contracts with the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion withdrawn if they do not have their police checks undertaken by the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:41): It is my understanding that it is often a contractual obligation of non-government organisations and many stakeholders that we have agreements with that they use the DCSI screening system.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:41): A further supplementary, Mr Speaker: if that is the case, can the minister advise why the private providers can do these police checks for \$48.50 when DCSI charges, for exactly the same check, \$99.55?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:42): In relation, particularly, to the children's check, and as I have said many times, we have a very robust check. We not only look at people's criminal records but also at the data we hold as a government. So we often look at up to eight different databases, and that does take some time. That is the price it is. I just remind members that if someone is volunteering, it is \$55, and that can include multiple checks on the one application.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:42): Another supplementary: can the minister advise the house whether it is true that 97 per cent of these checks require only one police check, and no further government department checks?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:42): That is not my understanding.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Mr DULUK (Davenport) (14:42): My question is also to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. My office has been approached by many teaching, nursing and speech pathology students who cannot enrol in the practical component of their course without obtaining DCSI and police screening. Often that screening is being delayed for many months. Will the minister direct her department to create a fast lane screening process for applicants whose interests will be disadvantaged if they do not receive a speedy clearance response?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:43): I thank the member for this question. I was aware of this concern and, as we have gone through streamlining and looking for efficiencies and barriers to more effective ways that we can screen, this is one of the areas that was raised. It is of great concern.

We have been working on communicating with the universities and also with DECD, which actually hosts many of these work experience students. We have an escalation group within screening; when they come to us, if the timing is important we make our best endeavours. What we are trying to do is to proactively work with the universities, knowing that these students will be looking to do work experience in the health system or the education system, and screen them before they start that work experience to make sure they are ready to go and that there are no delays in them having that work experience, which is fundamental to their degree.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:44): Supplementary, sir: my understanding is that these checks are at least cost neutral, so why don't you just employ more people in the checking department?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:44): Member for Hammond, I have. In fact—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond is already on a warning from the pre-lunch session. I warn him for the second and final time.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In late February, we had 9,000 people who were due checks more than 30 days. We are now down to 4,000 people. I continue to work on this backlog. We know that 83 per cent of people receive their check within 30 business days. I have worked on this check on the processing of what we have and by mid-next month we would have tripled the number of people, particularly in the area of assessments. One of the areas that was brought to my attention is that, while many people go through the system very quickly—

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: —if someone has a name check, then there was a hold-up. What we have worked on is employing and training up more than 25 assessment officers—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wright is warned for the second and final time.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Excuse me, sir. I have only had one call to order as far as I know.

The SPEAKER: You were so busy interjecting after my call to order that you didn't hear your first warning.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Other areas that we have done is that we now work two shifts over an 11-hour day. What we have introduced is voluntary overtime. People are often working on Saturdays and even on Sundays to get to this backlog. We continue to focus on reducing. Another area that we have seen is an area of overscreening. I have been working with my colleagues the

Minister for Health and Minister for Education to identify within their own departments to make sure that the portability and the validity of that screen is recognised. When people have a screen, we are letting them know to say if you are applying for another screen, 'Here is your customer reference number. Here is the date that you had screened. It is still valid.'

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Dr McFETRIDGE (Morphett) (14:46): A supplementary, Mr Speaker: the minister has said that it takes a couple of months to do these screening checks. Is that because the checks done by her department are done manually where the private firms are doing it electronically and 75 per cent of checks are completed within one hour?

The SPEAKER: Well, that is not really a question, is it? The member for Morphett is on two warnings. He really ought to go for that.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Mr DULUK (Davenport) (14:47): Sir, I have a supplementary: I am still confused. Will the minister fast-track the process or not?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:47): When people contact us and they need it, we have an escalation team, and they will fast-track those screens.

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Was that the member for Unley in violation of standing order 142—will not converse aloud? Member for Stuart.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (14:48): My question is to the Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion. Can the minister explain why after almost eight months one of my constituents who has lost his school bus driver's licence due to lack of response is yet to receive a response to a screening application for child-related employment?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:48): I do not think it is appropriate to talk about specific individual cases and their name. I understand the situation. We have gone through the process with him, we have informed him of the situation. The authorising organisation—the ball is in their court now. My understanding is that the decision, whether it will be specific clearance or not, will be up to that organisation.

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Mr VAN HOLST PELLEKAAN (Stuart) (14:48): A supplementary, sir: will the minister commit that if this person's clearance comes through 100 per cent clear whether or not the government would reimburse him for lost wages over the last eight months?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:49): We will not be reimbursing him.

HOUSING SA MULTITRADE CONTRACTS

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Social Housing. Can the minister inform the house that Doherty Trade Services retains its capacity to provide plumbing and other maintenance services to Housing SA houses in line with its contractual obligations?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:49): Yes, they are one of our multitrade contractors.

HOUSING SA

Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (14:49): My question is to the Minister for Social Housing also. What is Housing SA's policy to deal with and respond to multiple allegations of drug dealers selling illegal substances out of Housing SA properties?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:49): We have a memorandum of understanding with South Australia Police. Obviously if there is illegal activity in our houses we report it to the police and they investigate.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr KNOLL (Schubert) (14:50): My question is to the Minister for Regional Development. Why is the Laura to Gladstone road, which you described in 2013 as 'extremely dangerous', only going to have its safety upgrade completed in 2018?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Frome—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government) (14:50): That section of road has been done. I have had a couple of complaints only in the last two days about the condition of it and I will be having a look at that this weekend.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr KNOLL (Schubert) (14:50): Supplementary: can the minister explain why his press release detailing the upgrade only noted the \$3½ million figure and not the \$1.2 million figure, which was only for the \$2.8 million first stage of that road fixing?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Frome—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government) (14:51): The figures that I quoted in my press release were the figures released to me through the department.

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (14:51): My question is to the Minister for Regional Development. With the strength of opposition to the closure of the Repat Hospital expressed to you at a meeting that you attended at the Port Pirie RSL in March, will you join efforts being made calling for Ward 17 to be rebuilt on the site of Daw Park?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Health Industries) (14:51): There is a process—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING: Questions about the Repat go to the Minister for Health: I am the Minister for Health.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: If members of the opposition continue to breach the invariable rules of the house about which minister can answer a question—namely, all of them—then they will be warned or ejected from the house. The Minister for Health.

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING: As I have said previously, we have a process in place. We have a working group, chaired by Dr Susan Neuhaus, who is the chair of the Repat Foundation, co-chaired by Professor Dorothy Keefe, eminent experts in post-traumatic stress disorder, representatives of the veterans' community, and Professor Sandy McFarlane, I think Australia's pre-eminent expert on post-traumatic stress. They are working through this issue. They are looking at what the model of care should be for sufferers of post-traumatic stress, and that will drive where the new Ward 17 will be.

Dr Neuhaus has said repeatedly that her advice to the government about where the new Ward 17 will be located will be driven by the model of care and not the other way around, because it is very, very important that we get the model of care right first and let that drive where the location of

the new Ward 17 should be. It would be a mistake to compromise on the care of veterans because there had been a politically predetermined outcome as to the location of the new Ward 17.

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr MARSHALL (Dunstan—Leader of the Opposition) (14:53): Supplementary: can the Minister for Health outline to the house whether the Minister for Regional Development has in fact made any representations to him regarding where Ward 17 will be located?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Health Industries) (14:53): I can say this: the Minister for Regional Development constantly talks to me about issues of concern to him and concern to his electorate and, of course, he has been privy to all of the cabinet discussions about this issue, but who I will be listening to are the experts in the care of people with post-traumatic stress and their representatives who are sitting on this work group. They will determine what is the best model of care and, from that, will determine where is the best place to put the new Ward 17.

I think it was in this chamber not that long ago the opposition were asking me whether it could be located up in Elizabeth following a motion from the Playford council. So there are lots of different views about where it should be located. Obviously there is very strong opinion about leaving it at Daw Park but, at the end of the day, I want to make sure that where we do put it is in the best interests of veterans.

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen is warned for the second and final time. The member for Goyder has a supplementary to his question.

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (14:54): My question is to the Minister for Regional Development. Can the minister outline the follow-up that he has provided his constituents from the Port Pirie RSL about their concerns about the Repat closure?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Mr Speaker, is he asking me as the Minister for Regional Development or the member for Frome?

Mr GRIFFITHS: Sir, I shall clarify it and say: what follow-up does he provide to the people who actually vote in the electorate of Frome, as member for Frome?

The SPEAKER: One cannot direct a question to a member in his or her capacity as a member unless the member is responsible to the house by dint, for instance, of being a chairman of a committee, so the question is out of order. I know that rule because, in fact, the opposition directed a question to me when I was a backbencher in my first week.

Mr GARDNER: Point of order, sir. Standing order 96 suggests that questions may be put on questions relating to public affairs. This is a question relating to public affairs. Cabinet, as you have just ruled, speaks with one voice, so the member for Frome/the Minister for Regional Development/the Minister for Local Government is entitled to answer it.

The SPEAKER: Questions go to ministers because of their responsibility to the house as ministers. One cannot ask a question of a member in his or her capacity as the member for a House of Assembly district, otherwise question time might be full of questions to the members of the opposition, which I am sure they wouldn't like.

Mr GARDNER: I have a supplementary question, sir.

The SPEAKER: A supplementary question to a question I have just ruled out of order?

Mr GARDNER: I have a supplementary question to the question that was answered previously that was in order.

The SPEAKER: Very well, then: go ahead. You are in order.

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr GARDNER (Morialta) (14:57): My supplementary question is to the Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Local Government. What advocacy has he given to the government on behalf of people in Port Pirie he met at the RSL the other week?

The SPEAKER: I'm not sure that's in order, either, but the minister seems pretty keen to answer it.

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Frome—Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Local Government) (14:57): I have my discussions within the cabinet and I am not going to discuss what I discuss in the cabinet, but I have my say there.

Mr Marshall interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The leader is warned for the second and final time.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Supplementary, sir, to the Minister for Regional Development.

The SPEAKER: I think the supplementaries are exhausted on that line, but you can ask just another question.

REPATRIATION GENERAL HOSPITAL

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (14:57): To the Minister for Regional Development: in recognising that cabinet discussions are in confidence, is the minister able to provide me with a copy of his diary note of when he has met with any health department staff about the Repat site?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK: Can you repeat that question?

Mr GRIFFITHS: The question to the Minister for Regional Development is: is he able to provide me with a copy of a diary note identifying a briefing he has been provided with by health department staff about the Repat site redevelopment?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Health Industries) (14:58): Let me be quite clear here: there is a group of experts who will determine the model of care and the best place to put Ward 17. On that group is people like Brigadier Laurie Lewis, Bronson Horan and Sandy McFarlane. All of these people would be light years ahead of any of this mob in their knowledge of post-traumatic stress. I've never met a more ignorant mob in my life than those opposite, who would not know a single thing, who wouldn't know a veteran with post-traumatic stress if they tripped over one. What a load of ignorant—

The SPEAKER: Yes, point of order.

Mr GARDNER: Sir, given your recent rulings about bleating and braying, I would submit that 'this mob' clearly must be unparliamentary as well.

The SPEAKER: Could the Minister for Health make an act of contrition?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING: About 'this mob'?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING: Of course, sir, I very happily withdraw 'this mob', but it is a colloquialism, 'this mob', in referring to a group. But, if the opposition takes offence at 'this mob', I happily withdraw it, sir. The simple fact is we have an expert group who are looking at this very issue about the location of Ward 17—

Mr GARDNER: Point of order: a conditional apology when he has clearly used unparliamentary language is utterly unacceptable.

The SPEAKER: I am not ruling that it is unparliamentary, but I think it is not—

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING: If the opposition is offended, I apologise, sir.

The SPEAKER: Whether they take offence or not, I asked for an act of contrition.

Mr KNOLL: There is a mob of emus, a mob of kangaroos, and a mob of meerkats, so 'mob' does refer to an animal, which is unparliamentary.

The SPEAKER: Is that from Erskine May, or the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association or is it just from the dictionary? Could the member for Schubert elaborate?

Mr KNOLL: A mob is a collective noun used for various Indigenous Australian animals; therefore, the term 'this mob'—

The SPEAKER: It's a colloquialism used by Aboriginal Australians to describe fellow Aboriginal people.

Mr PENGILLY: Just on the matter of mobs, speaking as a humble farmer with sheep, we have mobs of sheep.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Finnis to order. Is the Minister for Health finished?

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING: No, there's plenty more where that came from, sir. There is a process in place with eminent experts in the field of post-traumatic stress and representatives of veterans. I understand there are going to be people, veterans, who have strong feelings about this particular issue, but the government will be listening to experts in the field, representatives of veterans' groups. Most importantly, we will be determining the location for the new Ward 17 based upon what provides the best clinical care for those with post-traumatic stress. That will then determine the location.

What I won't allow to happen is a politically predetermined outcome to then compromise what the model of care should be for those with post-traumatic stress. That is an appropriate way to approach this issue. I think that it is pretty poor for certain people to try and play politics with this important matter.

JUSTICENET SA

The Hon. S.W. KEY (Ashford) (15:02): My question is directed to the Attorney-General. Can the Attorney-General inform the house about the recent JusticeNet SA's Walk For Justice?

The SPEAKER: Just before the Deputy Premier begins with the words, 'The year King Uzziah died,' I am informed by the Clerk that no less an authority than Speaker Lewis has ruled that 'mob' is not unparliamentary.

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Justice Reform, Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Child Protection Reform) (15:03): There was a palpable sense of relief with that ruling across the chamber, and I know my colleague the Minister for Health was relieved.

More importantly, JusticeNet is a valuable not-for-profit organisation that provides pro bono legal representation. Along with the Legal Services Commission and community legal centres, JusticeNet SA forms a critical component of our justice system by helping to ensure that South Australians have access to justice when they become involved in stressful and costly legal disputes.

On Tuesday, I had the privilege, along with the member for Bragg—who I might say looked absolutely outstanding in her morning exercise attire and much more glamorous than me, and I am going to try and match her next year—

Mr Marshall: Did you even walk? Did you start the walk?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I did.

Mr Marshall: How many paces did you get into the walk?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Just calm down. There's more to come. I just want to say, Mr Speaker, if you have the time next year, I would be very honoured if you would join us, and you will see what I mean about the member for Bragg who was looking extremely sort of sporty, and I did feel somewhat—

Mr GARDNER: Point of order: this is insulting and is not debate; it's nonsense.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Aside from the two of us, there were some 450 people there and all of them were there because they actually care about our justice system, and they care about JusticeNet. We started walking roughly in an easterly direction from the University of Adelaide and we crossed over Frome Road, and then we moved along past the old Royal Adelaide Hospital and then we turned basically to the north I guess and went through the Botanic Gardens, and it was beautiful at that time of the morning.

Then as we had gone through the Botanic Gardens and into Botanic Park, the member for Bragg and I noticed a slight sprinkling—it was not a lot, just a bit—and then as we crossed over the University Footbridge—no, we didn't go over the footbridge, did we, we went the other way. Anyway, we wound up on the other side of the river and at that stage the rain became quite heavy but that did not stop us and we kept going. Aside from the member for Bragg and me, there were many other notable people there, many more notable than us even, including the Chief Justice—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. J.R. RAU: No, but he was cooking.

Ms Chapman: He didn't go for the walk.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: No, he didn't go for the walk, not like us. The former prime minister, Julia Gillard, and the Chief Justice and Maggie Beer, who actually did come on the walk and cooked—they actually cooked an excellent breakfast for the people.

In 2013, JusticeNet initiated a self-representation service in the Supreme Court and that provides assistance to people who wish to represent themselves in the Supreme Court, which is always a problematic issue for everybody concerned, including the judge on the bench. The government has provided to JusticeNet a one-off grant of \$14,861 so that they can continue this valuable work in the short term. I have asked my department to continue to work with JusticeNet and the Courts Administration Authority on the sustainability of that arrangement.

JusticeNet unites solicitors, barristers and law firms in ensuring that South Australians, including those with disability, poverty and homelessness, are able to be adequately represented. I want to congratulate the organisers of the walk and the organisers of JusticeNet for doing such a spectacular job. Can I mention the member for Schubert, who was involved in the Mid-Winter Ball—

Mr Knoll: And the member for Taylor.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: And the member for Taylor, indeed. They are all lining up behind JusticeNet because guess who one of the big beneficiaries of that ball is going to be? JusticeNet. I think it is really good for people to get behind that.

The SPEAKER: The member's time has expired. The member for Mitchell.

SPEED CAMERA REVENUE

Mr WINGARD (Mitchell) (15:07): My question is to the Minister for Road Safety. Can the minister guarantee that the state government is not using speed camera fine revenue to pay for non-road safety programs?

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light—Minister for Disabilities, Minister for Police, Minister for Correctional Services, Minister for Emergency Services, Minister for Road Safety) (15:07): I thank the honourable member for his question. As the budget paper shows, we have a Community Road Safety Fund, and all the moneys collected from expiation notices, etc., go into that fund and are used for the purposes of road safety, which includes a whole range of programs. In fact, I was asked this question recently, most of the money is actually spent in regional areas.

*Parliamentary Committees***SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (GAWLER PARK LANDS)
AMENDMENT BILL**

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Health Industries) (15:08): I move:

That the committee have leave to sit during the sitting of the house today.

Motion carried.

*Grievance Debate***NOARLUNGA HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

Mr WINGARD (Mitchell) (15:08): I rise today to talk about the Noarlunga Hospital and the significant downgrade the hospital is facing under Labor's health cuts plan. Earlier today I tabled a petition with over 1,300 signatures calling on the government to maintain existing services at the Noarlunga emergency department. The petition also called on the government to take immediate action to ensure that changes to the Noarlunga emergency department, proposed under the Transforming Health plan are not implemented.

In addition to the petitions tabled in parliament today, a further 2,800 people have signed an online petition against the emergency department downgrade at Noarlunga Hospital. While Labor may have backed away from closing the emergency department at Noarlunga completely, under Labor's health cuts plan, Noarlunga Hospital's emergency department will still suffer a double downgrade.

Under the plan, patients with life-threatening emergencies will be diverted away from the emergency departments at Noarlunga Hospital, TQEH and Modbury. In the case of Noarlunga, there is a second downgrade that will only apply to Noarlunga. People will be diverted away from the Noarlunga emergency department if it is likely that they are going to need to be hospitalised. The government says that between 7 per cent and 8 per cent of the patients currently seen at the Noarlunga ED will need to be diverted away from Noarlunga, but health professionals suggest that up to 40 per cent of patients could bypass Noarlunga on those criteria.

This is a recipe for dangerous confusion amongst patients. Ambulances alone will not be able to fix the confusion—70 per cent of patients arrive at emergency departments under their own steam. Southern residents will be put in a position where they have to self-diagnose. They will need to determine if they are experiencing an emergency. If patients are likely to be admitted to hospital they should not present at Noarlunga Hospital at all. The new Noarlunga Hospital's ambulance station was not designed to take this extra load and there are no plans to expand it.

After the double downgrade, Noarlunga Hospital's emergency department will be the lowest standard emergency department in metropolitan Adelaide. The data in the government's own business case for Transforming Health shows that the average total travel time for Noarlunga patients will more than double from 11 minutes to 24 minutes. In an emergency, those 13 minutes could be the difference between life and death.

The Weatherill Labor government has failed to release any data on patient flows, failed to release planned budget savings, and failed to conduct a genuine consultation process with the people of the south. People living in the southern suburbs will be forced to travel to the Flinders Medical Centre to access a fully functioning emergency department, an emergency department that has repeatedly had ambulance ramping over the past four years. The southern suburbs have been further targeted with the closure of the Repat Hospital at Daw Park, resulting in 22 per cent fewer general hospital beds in the southern region.

Waiting times for elective surgery at Noarlunga Hospital have more than doubled in the four years to 2013. Some Flinders outpatient clinics have waits of more than three years. With the Repat gone, the waits will get even longer. The efforts of the local community to express their concerns have been relentless, and it is clear the government are completely out of touch with community expectations when it comes to health care. In this context, I pay tribute to the work of Maureen and

Kevin Hamilton and Mayor Rosenberg. The people of the south do not deserve second-class health care, but that is exactly what they are getting under Labor's health cuts plan.

On 4 May, I attended a Channel 7 health forum focused on services in the south. The minister and shadow minister for health were present, together with the local Labor members, with the notable absence of the member for Mawson. The member for Kaurana has claimed to have saved the Noarlunga Hospital. While it is true that the original plan was even worse than the current plan, the people of the southern suburbs need their Labor members to doggedly pursue their interests rather than settle for second best. Under Transforming Health, the south has not been forgotten; it has been targeted, disregarded and downgraded.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Ms HILDYARD (Reynell) (15:12): I rise to speak on the dangerous and anti-community 2015 federal budget, a budget which locks in the Abbott Liberal government's vicious cuts to health and education, to community services and to skills funding, and confirms their utter lack of care for our communities. Uncertainty of community sector funding to deliver quality services to our most vulnerable citizens is rife, with short-term extensions only in some funding areas, such as homelessness, and with many of the cuts to community services from last year's budget remaining. Those highly dedicated community sector workers, 85 per cent of whom are women, along with public health workers have had their salary sacrifice arrangements slashed in a move which will see the take-home income of these relatively low paid workers cut.

The Abbott Liberal government is trying to silence our community as they prepare for an election. They have now set their sights on expecting parents. Attacks on paid parental leave will affect up to 46 per cent of mothers, including those active union members who have fought hard to secure much-needed leave within their existing enterprise agreements. Childcare subsidies are cut for any stay-at-home parent with a partner earning more than \$65,000 per year, and cuts have been made to family tax benefits.

This Abbott Liberal government continues its ideological crusade to increase university fees and create \$100,000 degrees, thereby locking kids from families with lower incomes out of tertiary education. This budget confirms Tony Abbott's intention to cut funding for undergraduate student places by 20 per cent, costing universities around \$3 billion over the current forward estimates. University research is cut again, with \$263 million of cuts to sustainable research excellence on top of almost \$430 million ripped from university research equity and reward funding in last year's budget.

As well as the locking in of the billions of dollars in cuts to health and education from last year's budget, there is no new funding for vocational education and TAFE, no additional funding to front-line domestic violence services, and unemployed young people will still be stranded with jobseekers under 25 left with nothing to live on for a month. Tony Abbott has also retained his planned changes to the eligibility age for Newstart, pushing jobseekers who are between the ages of 22 and 24 onto the lower youth allowance. We need more young Australians in work, not less. Jobseekers deserve support as they head into the workforce, not savage attacks that make it harder for them to find work.

It is clear that Tony Abbott has learnt nothing—and how short-sighted this budget is. On the night before the last election, Tony Abbott said that there would be:

...no cuts to education, no cuts to health, no change to pensions, no change to the GST and no cuts to ABC or SBS.

On budget night last year, he cut more than half a billion dollars out of the ABC and SBS leaving viewers angry and hundreds of ABC and SBS employees shattered.

This budget has locked in a record \$11.3 billion cut to foreign aid, hitting some of the world's poorest countries hard and putting regional security at risk. The Abbott government's aid cuts continue to hurt the most vulnerable and hurt Australia's international reputation as a good, global citizen. But the cuts are also putting regional security at risk. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute says that reducing deprivation and inequality in our region delivers significant strategic benefits to Australia.

The cruel attack on dental patients continues with Tuesday night's budget ripping \$125.6 million from the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. Just last weekend, the federal health minister promised that the Abbott government would 'sink its teeth' into dental reform promising \$200 million in new spending. The only thing the minister has sunk her teeth into is Australia's kids, stealing \$125.6 million from Labor's scheme that provided millions of children with dental care through Medicare. Tony Abbott has broken his promise that this budget would not come at the expense of the family budget. A new \$1 billion cut, cruelly announced on Mother's Day, will leave tens of thousands of mothers worse off in the early months of their child's life.

This budget fails the fairness test with \$80 billion in cuts to schools and hospitals. In my electorate of Reynell alone, \$1,551,000 has been cut from the promised Gonski funding equating to \$1,280 per schoolchild. In contrast to the Abbott government's cruel disregard for pensioners, I am so proud that our state Labor government has today announced our cost-of-living concession that will support older South Australians and see more than 200,000 seniors able to access these new concessions. I am so proud of our respect for those South Australians who have contributed so much to our community.

FEDERAL BUDGET

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:18): Sometimes I wonder if I live in the same universe as members opposite. I too want to make some comments in regard to the federal government and the great things they have done with their federal budget that was handed down on Tuesday night.

I particularly note the allocation of \$403 million towards farmers and business incentives. An amount of \$333 million will also help with financial counsellors and drought-concessional loans, and in light of that, farmers can fully claim new fencing, new water facilities, troughs, tanks, pipelines, etc., and fodder storage. I can see far greater investment by farmers in their properties with those sorts of fast-tracked rebates through the taxation system where you can fully claim the benefits of those purchases in the year of purchase.

Going further down the line to other great announcements in the federal budget, there is the 19 per cent increase in health funding, or \$208 million more over four years—\$208 million more. There is a 26 per cent increase for education—or \$200 million more over four years. What we do not hear from the other side is that there is \$2 billion more of infrastructure funding for South Australia, which is \$1.5 billion more federal funding over four years, than there was in the 2014-15 budget.

The problem we have with infrastructure funding in this state is that the Labor government has not put forward any proposals. The Treasurer in this place (I think it was yesterday) said that no-one else knew where the Strzelecki Track was apart from the member for Stuart. Well, there are a lot more of us who know where the Strzelecki Track is and if he was paying more attention to it we would have it fast-tracked for an upgrade and bitumising. There is bitumen from the Queensland border, 24 kilometres east of Innamincka, all the way to Brisbane. South Australian businesses, as the member for Stuart indicated the other day, are going at least 1,000 kilometres out of their way so they do not have to go up the Strzelecki Track to the Cooper Basin.

What is also in this budget is unallocated GST funding of almost \$1 billion that is coming to this state. That is fantastic news for this state. The problem is, if it goes anything like the record of this Labor government in the early years since 2002 when it was getting quite often (nearly all the time) \$500 million extra in unfunded GST, which was just blown.

We have the member for Reynell talking about the defence of our region. In the federal budget there is \$1.2 billion more in our defence budget. I salute our troops, our people in the Air Force, our sailors, our Navy personnel, for the great work they do. I note that my brother served for 23 years in the Army and served overseas on two deployments. These people are keeping us safe. I note our special forces troops, our training troops in the Middle East and the great work of our air defence personnel and the things they have to do on their missions, like refuelling in flight, and I think it is great practical experience for these people.

I turn to the cost of living and the pensioner concessions we have seen rolled out by the Labor government. The Labor government has fought back against pensioner concessions for well over a year, holding pensioners to ransom, sending misleading information out to pensioners, confusing the most vulnerable of our society about what is going on, paying for television

advertisements out of taxpayer money for well over \$1 million, and climbing, and the blatant mistruths about what was happening with pensioner concessions.

There are a lot of job seekers out there. I have an issue in my electorate in that there are high levels of unemployment in spots but we have to rely on 457 visa holders and 417 visa holders to take a lot of those jobs. There would be at least a thousand of those in the Murray Bridge area, yet we have over 10 per cent unemployment. So, that is something that needs to be addressed, but I praise those workers for taking those spots that others will not do.

Time expired.

WORLD MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS DAY

Ms COOK (Fisher) (15:23): Wednesday 27 May, will mark the seventh annual World Multiple Sclerosis Day. It was established to raise worldwide understanding of MS and to campaign for all people who are affected by it. In 2009, data told us that over 23,000 people in Australia suffer from MS, with 2,000 living in South Australia. In some reports it is stated that the rate of detection is actually growing at 4 per cent per year, which is alarming. It is a lifelong condition that attacks the central nervous system. Very little is known about the cause, and even less is known about a cure, in spite of many years of research.

I have personally worked with, laughed and cried with some incredible friends, patients and colleagues who have been struck down in the prime of their lives by this cruel disease, which is when it most commonly attacks. I would like to pay tribute now to one of these people who I know. I met Anne Briscoe about 15 years ago when our boys tried out for the same soccer team. She is one of the bravest and most inspirational women I know, and she was able to join me this morning and attend for lunch in the house. I cannot think of a better way of supporting this special day than to share her story. These are Anne's words:

Happily married with a beautiful baby boy, recently promoted in a job which I enjoyed and was good at, studying at uni, life was good and then—a diagnosis...would change [and] shape [my future]. I knew very little about [this disease], blissfully ignorant as is most of the larger population. I now had to get acquainted with its symptoms and progressions and steel myself for what lay ahead. One of the most difficult things on my to do list was to share my knowledge with my family and many friends. How was I to assure them that I would be okay when I myself was not sure of that...

Over the next five years it became obvious that...MS was wasting no time...I deferred uni intending to go back...later. I had a supportive employer so was able to reduce my hours until my energy resources were significantly depleted and it became necessary to resign. [I needed to] focus on my family and getting my little boy prepared for school...

I remember in those early days being [very] embarrassed with the many prolonged stares as I hobbled in to take him to class with the assistance of first a walking stick and later a walking frame and finally the wheelchair. What would these children and parents think? Would they question my ability to care for my son? Would they be scared of me? Would they treat him any differently? [My] wonderful GP assured me [that I was actually] exposing [these children to something that would enrich their lives].

I will cut that story a bit short now. I would have gone on more this morning if I had had time, putting forward a motion, but what I would like to describe is how I observed this wonderful woman successfully raising her son as a single mother.

She lost her husband unexpectedly when Tom was only about 14 years old. Confined to a wheelchair with a debilitating disease, she successfully settled her son into high school, watched him grow into a wonderful young man and watched him complete school. He is now working full time and has also played soccer for Adelaide United. The tragedy of losing her husband just made her stronger. Together she and Tom make an incredible team, a team my family is much richer for knowing. Thank you Anne; you are amazing.

The 2015 World MS Day campaign 'Together We're Stronger than MS' seeks to showcase the ways that people all over the world are breaking down the barriers to living with MS. I invite members to support World MS Day on social media by using the Stronger than MS hash tag (#strongerthanMS). By sharing messages about how individuals and organisations are working to overcome the challenges associated with living with MS, we can inspire further action and create hope for the future.

KANGAROO ISLAND TOURISM

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (15:27): This afternoon I want to make some comments in relation to the announcement made by the tourism minister last week of some regional tourism funding for South Australia, which I am grateful for. However, I think the record needs to be somewhat corrected on where some of this money is going.

The minister announced \$40,000 for a media program for the Kangaroo Island Brand Alliance. That concerns me, and it concerns me because, as I interjected on the day, I understand that this group has already been given \$750,000 from the KIFA budget. That gives them \$790,000. This is a group that has really come out of nowhere. It was a creation that was largely organised, I understand, by KIFA, the Kangaroo Island Futures Authority.

I remember that some two or three years ago we had a meeting in Kingscote at the Ozone Hotel, with a considerable number of island people, at which this proposal for some sort of branding fixture to be put in place was raised. It ended up that everyone thought it was not worthwhile, that it was a waste of time, and really the night went nowhere. Yet here we now have this being reinvented.

I am of the view that this is money ill spent. It would have been far better if this money had gone to the Tourism KI marketing board. They are the ones who market the island, and it would have been so much better if it had gone to them. Indeed, I think it is an act of stupidity that it has gone to this other group when the TKI (as it is referred to) is struggling for funds.

It is interesting to note that the current council budget is excluding them from any funding whatsoever on the island. That is another story because, apart from one other, they will be the only district council in South Australia that does not support its regional tourism authority by way of any funding which, to me, is cutting off your nose to spite your face, particularly when the island has been lauded as a great destination—and you know the rest, so I do not need to go into that.

I think that is an issue that needs to be addressed. Why I bring it up and discuss it is that the great King Island branding situation in Bass Strait has fallen off the rails to a large extent insofar as the abattoir over there closed. We used to be able to buy King Island beef produced, slaughtered and packed, etc., on King Island. You can no longer do that. The abattoir closed because it was not successful. The dairy (the cheese factory) is still in existence, but they are having the same problem in supplying copious amounts of cheese to the large chains, I understand. They simply cannot do it. The boat is not regular enough, they have to fly it off the island, and I think this is one of the issues that is going to crop up on Kangaroo Island.

The quantity of product is what you have to have. The quantities of product on the island are wool, lamb, mutton, beef and a minuscule amount of grain. They are the quantity products. It is all very well to have everything else, and they all fit into the picture, but there is simply not enough. Honey is a prime example. There is nowhere near enough honey. One producer told me that he could supply a container a week to China if he had it. That is what they want, a container a week. There is just not enough honey. My view is also that there are now too many people running around trying to get into the honey and bee industry, and that is just making it difficult.

You have these small products like the honey and sheep cheese—and I could tell you a story about that but I will not—and various other things, which are fine and good little local products, but there is not a lot of them. My view is there has been a divide and conquer mechanism put in place by the state government to whittle down the strength of the local government authority with the commissioner, and this branding alliance thing is yet another one that is picking away at the edges, so you are breaking down the structures of the island. I do not like it and I will be monitoring it very closely.

FOSTERS ROAD, NORTHGATE

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (15:32): I rise to speak about a petition I tabled in this house today on the growing urgency for a pedestrian crossing to be installed on Fosters Road in my electorate of Torrens. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of parents at Cedar College, particularly Lydia Scuteri, who worked relentlessly on collecting the 1,326 signatures, as well as all the other parents who took the time to attend meetings and speak with me about their concerns. In addition, many constituents have approached me at shopping centres and street corner meetings to

raise the issue of increased traffic in the area and the need for improved signage for motorists in approaching the school zone.

The former member for Torrens worked tirelessly to address issues raised by residents relating to Fosters Road, resulting in the installation of the pedestrian refuge in late 2007 to service pedestrian needs for the college and the hospital facility located on the eastern side of Fosters Road. In addition, as a result of further investigations, a school zone with a 25 km/h speed limit was installed in late 2011, and this served its purpose.

Since that time, concerns have varied, but the common denominators have been the need for a school crossing as well as the speed of the cars travelling on Fosters Road being above the 25 km/h speed limit, particularly at the front of the school. In fourth term last year, I met with college principal, Mr Peter Thomson, to hear his views on student pedestrian safety and school traffic management in the vicinity of the college. The focus was on the increase in their student population from around 500 in 2011 to almost 800 at the beginning of this year. It also included the increase in vehicles travelling along Fosters Road.

Information gathered at these meetings with parents, the principal and residents, through concerns raised through the community, led to a request to the minister and the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure for a pedestrian movement survey to be carried out on Fosters Road in the vicinity of the college.

The survey took place in March this year, during morning and afternoon peak traffic periods, which were, of course, before school and after school, or at home time. It revealed that there are more pedestrians crossing on Fosters Road in the vicinity of the college during these hours than when the pedestrian study was carried out in 2011. In fact, pedestrians crossing in the area have increased sevenfold over the past four years.

These results have set the ball rolling for a concept plan for an emu crossing to improve pedestrian safety in the area, and I am pleased to say that the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, the school leadership through the principal, Mr Thomson, the Port Adelaide Enfield council, through Councillors Basham, Osborn and Hubycz, and the state government are working together towards a positive outcome.

When agreement is reached, the design will be completed and the project nominated on a priority list for future funding. It may come as no surprise that, with new housing developments in the area and an average of 10,000 vehicles per day travelling along Fosters Road between Grand Junction Road and Folland Avenue, my correspondence to the minister on both the crossing and better signage highlights the need for this project to be listed high on the priority list. I look forward to the day when the crossing on Fosters Road is in operation and improved signage is in place.

Bills

JUDICIAL CONDUCT COMMISSIONER BILL

Committee Stage

In committee.

(Continued from 13 May 2015.)

Clause 1.

Ms CHAPMAN: Madam Chair, I draw your attention to the state of the committee.

A quorum having been formed:

Ms CHAPMAN: My question to the Attorney is: as the bill has been drafted to be consistent with the New Zealand model of a commissioner, as I understand it on the information briefings that we have had, are the foreshadowed amendments consistent with that model as well?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: The answer is that there has been some variation based on feedback we received in the consultation process. Yes, we might have started there but in many material respects we have moved on in many elements.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am not familiar with how the New Zealand model operates, so I would ask the Attorney-General to indicate how long that has been operational and whether, in its current format, it has been successful, had no work, been overworked, had judges suspended, expelled or deported to Australia, or whatever, in the period in which it has operated?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I do not have any particular information about what has happened in New Zealand but can I say this: sometimes, if these measures work well, the measure of how well they have worked is the fact that they have not had any work to do, if that is not completely double-dutch. The mere fact that this is there means that members of the judiciary are aware.

Ms CHAPMAN: Because the New Zealand model is the one which we are copying—and there has been some discussion during debates about other models around the country—would the Attorney ascertain specifically three things between the houses and provide the following information:

- the time for which the New Zealand model has been in operation;
- the number of occasions on which complaints have been received; and
- whether they have either been dismissed, acted upon or referred to parliament for action?

If we could have an outcome of that, I would appreciate it.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Assuming that is reported on, and I do not know whether it is—I would hope it would be—

Ms Chapman: It would be in the annual report.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I hope it is in the annual report and, if it is, I am happy to try to search out that information. Can I just say again that it is impossible, really, to calculate the effect of the mere presence of this in modifying behaviour and just because there are not a lot of complaints does not necessarily mean that the act would not be serving a good purpose.

Ms CHAPMAN: I should place on the record I am not being critical of the Attorney's assertion that sometimes the very existence of a structure such as this would hopefully have some sobering effect on those who might otherwise misbehave. It is a bit like having a policeman on a road: it helps to focus your mind on not speeding or committing any road traffic offences. I was really just trying to ascertain this information because, ultimately, this appears to be where the government decided this would be the model which we follow, that is all.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: In late breaking news, Madam Chair—and I thank Mr Evans from my office whose capacities with the machine are considerable—we do have some information here. I think this comes from their annual report. According to this, the number of complaints received in the year 2013-14 was 235, in the previous year it was 258, in the previous year it was 328, and in the previous year it was 181. The earliest year that is reported is 2009-10 which was 223. Of those, the number unfinalised in each of those respective years was 79 in 2013-14, 97 in the previous year, 146 in the previous year, and 138 in the previous year. It means that the total of both complaints received and those unfinalised from the previous year (and I am starting with 2013 and working backwards) were respectively 314, 355, 474, 319 and 286.

That is in a national jurisdiction and obviously has more people than we have. There is even a breakdown here as to which courts appeared to attract them: Supreme Court, 67; Court of Appeal, 21; High Court, 62; District Court, 53; Family Court, 24; Environment Court, five; Employment Court, one; and Coroner's Court, two.

Ms CHAPMAN: Are there any identified numbers of matters that were referred to parliament to act upon, assuming for the moment that parliament has a role in New Zealand to dismiss a judge similar to ours?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I will provide a copy of this to the honourable member in due course, but just looking at it here, it has a list of outcomes. The first outcome is 'take no further action', the second one is 'complaint dismissed', which is the same as ours, the third one is 'complaints referred to head of the bench', the fourth one is 'recommend judicial officer conduct panel be appointed under section 18' and the last one is 'complaint withdrawn'. In every year, except 2009-10, there were no recommendations at all that a panel be convened. In 2009-10 there were only three out of

286 matters in respect of which there was a recommendation that a panel be appointed. That appears to be the answer. There does not appear to be any recording of there being an intervention by the parliament.

Ms CHAPMAN: There is only one other matter I really want some understanding of, Attorney. You announced this initiative in January this year. It was referred to in the course of the release of one of your Transforming Criminal Justice discussion papers. I am assuming that it means that judicial officers can be just as naughty in civil jurisdictions as in criminal jurisdictions. For whatever reason, it was brought to your attention as a very good idea for consideration. I understand and perfectly well accept that there had been some discussions with the heads of the courts who gave their endorsement in general terms that this was appropriate. I am not asking for the detail.

It may be that all the judges and judicial officers were away on holiday in January and February and not really turning their mind to reading the paper about whatever initiatives you might announce in that month, but what appears to be missing in this is why this was not a matter that was at least put to them before either you had announced that you were going to do it or at least before the bill was presented for the judges generally, and all judicial officers who are going to be in this format, for them to have a say.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: The exact dates I cannot recall, but I can assure the honourable member that there is no way that one could characterise my approach to the courts about this matter as having been surreptitious or in any way catching them unawares. I do recall having had conversations with various judicial officers and I am talking in particular here of the heads of jurisdictions, and I am positive that in those conversation leading up to the drafting of a bill there were discussions about these matters. I am absolutely certain that none of them could have been in any way caught unawares of the fact that this bill was being developed, and I am pretty sure I provided them copies of the draft that I was working on pretty early in the piece.

If I am not mistaken, the document I have here provides me with some idea of dates: the Law Society, 2 February; same date for Mr O'Sullivan, who at that time, as you would be aware, was president of the Bar Association; the director of the Legal Services Commission, 27 January; the Chief Justice, 27 January; the Chief Judge, 27 January; the Chief Magistrate, 15 January; Mr Greg May, the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner, 9 February; the ALRM; community legal services and Mr Tony Kerin from ALA on 9 February; Mr Kimber, obviously DPP, 2 February; and then other earlier ones were the Hon. Bruce Lander QC on 10 December—that was an earlier draft. I can indicate that, in respect of the ICAC Commissioner, I was interested not only in his general views about the public integrity matter of this but also, as the member for Bragg would be aware, Commissioner Lander, having being a serving federal court judge, had some practical experience of operating under the rules in the Federal Court, which we have more or less picked up here, so I thought his contribution on that might be of some assistance.

Other people were Jos Mazel, Chief Executive of Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, 27 January; Mr Cannon who was the acting chief magistrate, again, on 9 February; and Kathy Mack from Flinders University on 30 January. A range of people were provided with copies, but before the bill got to that point, I am absolutely certain that I had conversations with judicial officers about the matter.

Ms CHAPMAN: I do not disagree, Attorney, that there had been discussion with the heads of the courts, but my point was, apart from these other usual stakeholders if I can put them in that general way—although Mr Lander QC would be an exception but for the reasons you have explained, sensible consultation—you announce this in early January, you put out a discussion paper about which you had to have submissions in by the end of January. You tell serious stakeholders, including the Chief Judge and Chief Justice, three days before the closing date of consultation, which is 27 January, assuming they are even available and are not at their holiday houses, and then you introduce this bill as one of the first bills back here in the parliament.

I still do not understand why there was no discussion with the judiciary themselves, the very people who are going to be the subject of this new structure. As a result of that, there was clearly some commentary including from the Adelaide Law School published in the Law Society about this

very thing, that is, a lack of discussion and at least an opportunity for our judicial officers—and that is a fairly broad group under this proposal—to respond.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I am just advised that I must have misled everybody because those were the dates apparently that the submissions were received not sent, so I apologise.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Yes, but I am just apologising as soon as I found out.

The Hon. T.R. Kenyon: Correcting the record at the first available opportunity.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: The first available opportunity. On the general proposition of consulting with the judiciary directly, I take the view that it is not really appropriate for me as a member of the executive government to take it upon myself to consult directly with members of the courts, certainly in any formal sense, without using the conduit if you like of the head of each jurisdiction. In my formal communications with the heads of the jurisdictions, I assume that those heads of jurisdiction would have in their own counsel talked to their people about it and sought their opinions, and those would have been digested in any response they gave to me. That is the way I approached it.

Ms CHAPMAN: I think that would have some gravitas, and I would be much more accommodating in accepting it if in fact the positions of the heads of courts had been anything other than days after. They may have been oral, they may have been a phone call, they may have been a letter; I do not know, I have never seen them. I am not necessarily asking to be privy to any conversations or material which might relate to the normal conversations you would have with the heads of courts, Attorney. What I am asking, though, is for some assurance regarding their advising you, in whatever form that was. One of them was from the Chief Magistrate on 15 January, which was three days after you made a public statement about what you were going to be doing. The other two were submissions from a senior justice and a judge on 27 January—in whatever format that was.

I just cannot possibly imagine how they could have been in a position to canvass their brothers and sisters on the bench in the middle of January in a matter of days. I do not see that as even possible, and nor would I expect them to have done it. I am just a little puzzled as to how you could rely on an indication from them. I read what you said in the radio transcript, and I have seen your article in the paper, and I do not have any objection to it. It is probably a good idea that we have some kind of independent person deal with these matters, but taking that as an indication of no immediate objection to the principle of it, which I perfectly understand, to me does not equate to consultation with the very people this is going to affect.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: All I can say to you, member for Bragg, is that I made absolutely no secret of my intention to pursue this particular course. I was completely open with them in my thinking about this from the latter part of last year. I provided them with a draft of a bill as soon as I possibly could. They were well and truly forewarned as to what the general propositions contained in the bill would be. I remember on at least one occasion, I think as early as October, having a conversation with the Chief Justice in my office. We had a conversation about the bill as it then was prior to its initial consultation release.

Of course, since that time, if any of the courts have had any views about the matter, I have been open to listening to those and, indeed, as recently as a week or so at a meeting with the Chief Justice, I raised with him the very matter that I raised in the parliament yesterday about a matter that had just occurred to me about the potential for unscrupulous individuals to try to use this as a weapon against members of the judiciary who are doing the right thing. I indicated to the Chief Justice that I thought it was important that we do something to guard against that, which is the main reason for the amendments that I have circulated. I think the member for Bragg has a copy of those.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have just a couple of other general matters. The Law Society's letter of 26 March 2015 draws to your attention, Attorney, their opposition to the manner in which special justices can be dealt with and, in particular, their disagreement with the suspension or removal from office by force of the legislation; in other words, it would be automatic if they were charged with an offence. In other words, my understanding at present is that if a special justice acts in a matter which is not to the standard of the Attorney, he himself is in a position to deal with the special justice,

including removing them from the role. Is this an issue that you have considered and rejected, or has it been considered and put in there somewhere? Have I missed it?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I thank the member for Bragg for that question. Yes, we have considered it and I advise the house that the Law Society thinks it to be unfair that special justices are suspended or removed from office 'by force of legislation' if they are charged with an offence, but they appear to be proceeding in some degree of ignorance of the current law because section 11(4a) and (4b) of the Justice of the Peace Act provide:

- (4a) If a special justice is charged with an offence other than an expiable offence, the special justice is, by force of this subsection, suspended from office as a special justice until proceedings based on the charge have been completed.
- (4b) However, the Attorney-General may, on application by the special justice, by notice in writing—
 - (a) cancel the suspension if satisfied that the outstanding charge should, in the circumstances, be disregarded; and
 - (b) impose such conditions specifying or limiting the official powers that the special justice may exercise as the Attorney-General considers appropriate.

Subsections (5a) and (5b) state:

- (5a) If a special justice is found guilty or convicted by a court of an offence other than an expiable offence, the special justice is, by force of this subsection, removed from office as a special justice.
- (5b) However, the Attorney-General may, on application by the special justice, by notice in writing—
 - (a) reinstate the special justice if satisfied that the finding of guilt or conviction should, in the circumstances, be disregarded; and
 - (b) impose such conditions...

These provisions were added by the parliament by way of the Statutes Amendment (Attorney-General's Portfolio) Act 2012. The Law Society objects to the five-year reappointment rule; that is a re-enactment of the current section 11(6). The provisions of the bill merely reflect the current scheme which was added recently and attracted no controversy at the time. It appears the Law Society is, or was, or continues to be unaware of this. There is no reason, therefore, to change it.

The reason for the movement of the provisions to this bill is simply this: why should a magistrate hearing an offence be subject to this new system of discipline and a special justice performing exactly the same duties not be; that would not make sense.

Clause 1 passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 passed.

Clause 4.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 1 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 4, line 31 [clause 4(1), definition of judicial office, (c)]—After 'that may' insert 'only'

Amendment No 2 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 4, line 34 [clause 4(1), definition of judicial office, (e)]—After 'that may' insert 'only'

Ms CHAPMAN: I indicate that we consent to the amendments Nos 1 and 2.

Amendments carried.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have a question in relation to clause 4(2) which sets out what the conduct is to cover, which is just about everything—obviously, act or omission, whether or not it is as part of their duties and whether or not it has resulted from some illness or incapacity. Often, the conduct of persons is for the purpose of carrying out their function, whether it is a medical practitioner, or licensee of a hotel, or as legal practitioner, although that is one that has been extended to outside of hours conduct, so to speak. Is this following the New Zealand model?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I am not sure, but can I say this: there are two things, certainly in my mind, about this. The first is that, clearly, the behaviour of a judicial officer in the discharge of their duty as a judicial officer would be relevant. Having been through the experience for some time of receiving criticism about the way in which the former provisions of the Legal Practitioners Act operated—in particular in relation to the Humphreys matter and the fact that, as matters stood then, it would appear that there was considerable doubt as to whether the behaviour of Mr McGee was something which could even have been considered properly had he been convicted of even a more serious matter by the Law Society—and making, ultimately, changes to that so that it is crystal clear that a legal practitioner who performs some misbehaviour outside of their role as a legal practitioner can have that matter considered, and it appears that the community generally not only accepted that proposition but was clamouring for that proposition, it appeared to me that there would be some incongruity if a judicial officer were not similarly treated.

More to the point, I did turn my mind to situations such as the situation, which may not be entirely apposite but I just throw it up for an example, where Justice Einfeld got himself into a spot of bother a while ago that possibly would have traversed both his duties as a judicial officer and otherwise. It is an example of where you might have to say, 'Well, had he in some way done the wrong thing in his capacity as a judge by basically perjuring himself before a court?' and there might have been some legal argument about that. So, that deals with that bit.

The other bit is that if a judge were to be in a situation where by reason of infirmity, and that infirmity might be physical or mental—and I think the member for Bragg and I are both old enough to recall individuals who did have difficulties and we want to be compassionate and everything, obviously, with those people, and I certainly do not intend to identify anybody now—if that results in them being incapable of properly discharging their judicial function, albeit for reasons beyond their control, then that should be a matter which, clearly, is able to be dealt with. It may not be a person's fault that they are suffering from some illness and one might feel great compassion for the fact that they are suffering from an illness, but does that mean that members of the public appearing before them should accept a lower standard of behaviour or a lower level of concentration or some level of abuse or misbehaviour from the bench that would otherwise not be tolerable? So, that is essentially the reasoning behind those provisions.

Ms CHAPMAN: Here is the part of the act though that really gets to the pointy end of the pencil. I understand what the Attorney-General says with respect to wanting to make sure, in the interests of people who come before our judicial officers, of having some confidence in the standard of administration of justice that they are going to dispense. In the absence of there being any guidelines or, I suppose, regulations as to what is going to be caught here, it seems to me that the difficulty of having such a broad approach is that it may act as an instrument that would have some influence on the independence of the judiciary. This is a special group, this is not an extension of better, smarter, more experienced lawyers, these people have a special appointment, even as distinct from governors, who have a separate role to the executive and the parliament.

It is all very well to have a process by which we can appoint these people—and there is no question that our process here, just like for governors really, is appointment by the executive of the day, which makes the decision as to who these people will be—but I suppose we place a fairly high threshold for removal of these people or, potentially, intimidation of these people into resigning by having a process of removal which is really high. That is, if they are unable to fulfil their duties or have acted in a manner that so offends the principle of having the proper capacity to carry out their duty, then they come back here before the parliament. It is not just as a result of some executive investigation or administrative determination. Certainly, the senior judges have to come back here.

We are now introducing a process where one would expect that, if there were to be a process to deal with judges who do not act in a fit manner in the course of their duties—namely, people might bully witnesses, refuse or fail to disclose if they have a conflict of interest, sleep with a witness, talk to juries themselves, not write their judgements on time, we can all think of examples where we would say that that conduct was either deserving of some counselling or support across to an invitation to resign, depending on how severe it might be—when we start to look at any other conduct it raises the question of whether the fear of that disclosure (for example, behaviour in a social setting outside of their judicial duties) would cause them to be concerned about their tenure.

That raises the question of how far we go in having what is ostensibly an independent regime to deal with bad behaviour of judges. Has it crossed the line into causing judges to fall into line for fear that some act they may have traversed, which might be socially embarrassing, if I can put like that, but not a criminal activity, would cause them to be fearful of this process?

I am not suggesting that will happen, that there will be situations where it would be unfairly used to cause people to rush off and sign their resignation letter to the Attorney for fear of there being disclosure not necessarily of improper conduct but indiscreet conduct at least, or whether that has actually occurred in the New Zealand example, which has operated for some years. I see this as a process which, hopefully, and as the Attorney says, is going to be more an instrument that will help to ensure judges carry out their judicial duties on time and, probably, maintain that standard in the community that they ought to enjoy, and which is not interfered with by us as a parliament or by the Attorney as part of the executive.

I understand why the government has gone so broadly. In other words, if it is good enough for lawyers it is good enough for judges. I hear that point, but judges are different, governors are different. I am not suggesting that you are going to have a code of conduct published soon or a commissioner appointed for the discipline of governors, but I make the point that certain offices are independent and should remain independent; they should not be interfered with.

On our side of the house we accept that in the absence of there being any known outrage in other jurisdictions—particularly in New Zealand, given that this is the format that has been copied and the breadth of the definition is there—this is not going to be abused. I just place on the record that for me it raises some concern.

I suppose the other thing is that, if we did not have it beyond their duties as a judge—that is, if it was narrowed only to be in the confines of that—bear in mind, there is still power for judges to be brought before the parliament if they commit offences and any other unlawful behaviour. In the current situation, it seems to me there is no threat of interference with the social activities of the judge and it seems to have worked so far.

I am sure the Attorney would be aware of situations where there is behaviour of a judicial officer outside of their duties as a judge, during working hours so to speak, which he or I might think is perhaps not really appropriate if the judiciary want to continue to have a high standing in the public eye, but that is a fairly subjective assessment and our views may not be such that justify interfering with their right to work and their right to be able to operate without fear of interference by executive or, in this case, someone who is going to be appointed by executive, whether it is the commissioner or a panel.

So, I say my piece about it. I am concerned about the breadth of what we are approving here, but I suppose one way of remedying that is that, if there were an exercising of this by someone who was a commissioner or by the Attorney or any of his successors that I would consider to be an abuse of that, rest assured, we would be back in here pretty quickly.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Can I just say to the member for Bragg, I actually share her concerns about this. To be utterly frank with everybody, if I had not been through the experience of being on the receiving end of a great deal of vitriol and various other things apropos of the Eugene McGee matter, I may not have taken the view that I have taken in this. I do agree with the point made by the member for Bragg. We do not want judges who, at their birthday party at The Feathers, drop a drink near the bar and they are snapped up on Facebook and the next thing you know they are being pilloried for being a naughty boy or girl out and about. I totally agree how absurd that would be and how unsatisfactory that would be. I, like the member for Bragg, am concerned about that matter and, if we were in the position where the member for Bragg between the houses came back and said, 'Look, we want that out,' I would entertain that conversation if that were necessary.

But can I make two points, and I invite the member for Bragg to consider these over the interval between here and the other place? The first one is this. If you look at section 16(1)(b), which is the section which deals with the dismissal of a complaint, in particular, I read, 'The Commissioner must dismiss the complaint if he or she is of the opinion that' and then you go to (1)(b) 'the complaint has no bearing on judicial functions or judicial duties'.

I know that does not completely address the matter the member for Bragg has raised but it goes some way in the sense that one might argue a bit of a slip-up at The Feathers does not necessarily constitute something that has bearing on a judicial function, whereas you could say pretty clearly the Marcus Einfeld example would. I share the member's concerns and I am happy to keep this dialogue going about that. The only other point I would make is that that provision needs to be seen in another context as well, and that is in the context of section 27C, because section 27C is the bit of this legislation where we have empowered the head of jurisdiction—

Ms Chapman: Sorry, which section?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Section 27C which is in schedule 1. This is the bit where we have empowered the head of jurisdiction and we have more or less mirrored the Federal Court rules. If you go to 27C, particularly over the page to (2)(b), it goes through what the head of jurisdiction might be.

This is more pertinent, perhaps, to the question about health issues, but you see that the head of jurisdiction may, amongst other things, say, 'I think maybe you should go to the doctor and find out whether you are suffering from some issue that requires attention,' or whatever the case might be. It would be the case that a judicial officer who then refused to cooperate with their head of jurisdiction, which does not involve me as Attorney or anyone else from the executive branch managing that person at all—the failure by a judicial officer to make reasonable compliance with a request or direction from their head of jurisdiction itself would be a matter which should form the substance of a complaint.

I think the fear the member for Bragg has expressed about interference from the executive branch is largely addressed by 27C, which clearly says that the management of these people is not the job of the Attorney-General, it is the job of the head of jurisdiction. As to the first point made by the member for Bragg, I do understand her point. I think it is a really difficult balancing point and, in my own view, if we had not been through the crucible of the McGee matter, we probably would not have turned our minds to this, except perhaps for Mr Einfeld.

Clause as amended passed.

Clause 5 passed.

Clause 6.

Ms CHAPMAN: I refer to part 2, proposed section 6, which is on page 5. I refer to proposed section 6(1)(b), 'to perform any prescribed functions'. Apart from being a complaints officer—and we understand that process—what else does the Attorney have in mind, particularly as you already have a proposed panel to deal with advice to you?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I am advised that, if one looks around Australia and at New South Wales—which admittedly has a slightly different model and a much more expensive model—one of the other functions they discharge is that they have a role in prescribing judicial education activities and in assisting with the preparation of bench books. One of the other amendments that I think I have put forward indicates that I should not be doing these things. If you look at my amendment No. 8 to clause 35, which is in the new bundle, it is meant to make it clear that, if there were to be any additional functions conferred on the commissioner, or an intention to do so, that would be only in circumstances where there had been consultation with the Chief Justice or the Chief Judge.

Ms CHAPMAN: I appreciate that, and I have had the benefit of Mr Evans of your office indicating your foreshadowed amendment No. 8 and the reasons for doing so. Whilst this work may be meritorious, under this model we are going to have a judicial conduct panel and one of their functions is to not only inquire into these but also give advice. Perhaps I misunderstood that position.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: Can I point out also that, of course, with any of these functions, not only would we have to consult with the heads of jurisdiction before we contemplated it but also, because it would be done by regulation, it would be disallowable.

Ms CHAPMAN: That was going to be my question when we came to amendment No. 8, Attorney, but I am happy to ask it now. If we jump ahead to clause 35, page 20, I will ask it now, under the regulation power. It is a bit of a moving feast, how we draft these catch-all regulation

clauses but, basically, the regulations give you power to confer functions on the commissioner, for the reasons we have discussed, and you are proposing to amend that to say that it is to be after you have consulted with the Chief Judge or Chief Justice, as it might apply. It prescribes the fees—I would hate to think what they are.

It says here that the regulations may be of general application or varied, and that is pretty much standard, and '(b) provide that a matter or thing in respect of which regulations may be made is to be determined according to the discretion of the Attorney-General or the Commissioner.' I am not quite sure what that means. I am happy to wait until you get to it if you want to, but it just seems to me that that is something new.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I am advised this is a drafting matter, a technical matter. Unless there is expressly the power to give a discretion within the regulations, the regulations cannot give a discretion. You could not have a regulation empowering a discretionary function upon anybody unless the statute expressly said the regulation-making power was sufficiently broad to contemplate it conferring a discretionary power by regulation.

Ms CHAPMAN: I am sure that is right—I totally accept that—but it raises the question of why you need to have it at all. You have a power to make regulations under this and they are disallowable through this parliament. Why are we adding to that a discretionary power of you and/or the commissioner?

The Hon. J.R. RAU: An example I am offered (which I think is, with respect, a very good one) is if the regulations were to say that the commissioner could have some role with respect to education, absent this, it would be necessary for, in effect, a regulation to set out perhaps even a syllabus rather than leaving some elements to the discretion of the commissioner. The regulation might say education in respect of conflicts of interest, or something of that nature, but, in terms of the fine grain colouring in, that would not have to be in the regulation. That would be a matter that could be given to the discretion of the commissioner. If we do not give that discretion, arguably, you might have to, literally, by regulation, prescribe everything. I think it is a practical way of dealing with these matters.

Ms CHAPMAN: I have not seen it elsewhere and it may be that it shows up more often than I notice it but, where there is a role for counselling or educative aspects of a disciplinary process, it seems to me we do not give discretions to those parties to be able to direct as they wish. We only give a discretion in the regulations if there is a form of conduct management or re-education or training. We give them that in their tool kit of things that they can do with judicial officers, in this case, who pass across the line of acceptability.

If you are saying we have to be able to say we need to have this in the act to enable them to have a discretion on the regulations as to what type of counselling they can direct—in other words, alcohol consumption, anger management, bullying witnesses in the courtroom—I just cannot see how that educative curricula has to have a provision in a general term for a regulation that just leaves it in the discretion of the commissioner.

If it is to be to undertake courses when we look back as part of this counselling role, which I think somewhere here included counselling in respect of personal behaviour or something of that nature, then it seems to me that that would deal with it. We do not need to be giving them this *carte blanche*. I would ask that you would at least consider that during the houses as to how we might tidy that up, but if it is commonplace and I have missed it, then I understand.

Clause passed.

Clauses 7 to 11 passed.

Clause 12.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 3 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 9, line 35 [clause 12(3)]—After 'notice to' insert 'the judicial officer and'

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 13.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 4 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 10, line 25 [clause 13(3)]—Delete 'must' and substitute 'may'

Amendment carried.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 5 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 10, after line 34—Insert:

- (5) Subject to sections 13A and 14, the Commissioner must conduct a preliminary examination as efficiently and expeditiously as is practicable.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

New clause 13A.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 6 [DepPrem-1]—

New clause, page 10, after line 34—Insert:

13A—Request to postpone consideration of complaint

If a complaint under section 12(1) relating to a judicial officer is made during the course of a hearing conducted by the judicial officer (whether alone or with others)—

- (a) the judicial officer may, by notice in writing to the Commissioner, request that consideration of the complaint under this Act be postponed until the hearing has been completed; and
- (b) the Commissioner must, if satisfied that consideration of the complaint could in any way disrupt or influence the conduct of the hearing, postpone consideration of the complaint in accordance with the request.

New clause inserted.

Clauses 14 and 15 passed.

Clause 16.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 7 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 12, lines 2 and 3 [clause 16(1)(c)]—Delete paragraph (c) and substitute:

- (c) the complaint—
- (i) has been made for an improper purpose (including an attempt to harass or intimidate a judicial officer in the appropriate exercise of his or her duties); or
- (ii) is otherwise frivolous, vexatious, or not in good faith; or

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 17 to 34 passed.

Clause 35.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 8 [DepPrem-1]—

Page 20, after line 14—Insert:

- (4) The regulations must not confer functions on the Commissioner in accordance with subsection (2)(a) unless the Attorney-General has consulted the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in relation to the proposed conferral of functions and the Commissioner must, in the exercise of any functions so conferred, consult with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Chief Judge of the District Court and the Chief Magistrate.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Schedule 1.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 9 [DepPrem-1]—

Schedule 1, page 21, line 4 [Schedule 1, clause 3, inserted section 27A, definition of *judicial office*, (c)]—

After 'that may' insert 'only'

Amendment carried.

The Hon. J.R. RAU: I move:

Amendment No 10 [DepPrem-1]—

Schedule 1, page 21, line 8 [Schedule 1, clause 3, inserted section 27A, definition of *judicial office*, (e)]—

After 'that may' insert 'only'

Amendment carried; schedule as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. J.R. RAU (Enfield—Deputy Premier, Attorney-General, Minister for Justice Reform, Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for Child Protection Reform) (16:33): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

HEALTH CARE (ADMINISTRATION) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 May 2015.)

Mr SPEIRS (Bright) (16:34): I rise to speak in general support of the Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill. The Liberal Party supports the Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill with some amendments, and further comments about this will no doubt be undertaken at the committee stage.

The arrival of this bill in the house gives me the opportunity to reflect a little more broadly on healthcare issues facing our state, and in particular the impact of that in my own electorate. Transforming Health has the capacity to place our healthcare system on a modern footing, which will enable it to sustainably adapt to the growth and changing demands that are part of our ever-changing healthcare landscape.

However, it is my view and the view of many healthcare workers, clinicians and many experts in the field that there are significant flaws in Transforming Health. Its lack of appropriate community engagement has left it lacking the support of the South Australian community, many in the health industry, and has shaken our community's confidence in public health services.

The issue with Transforming Health most frequently raised with me is the closure of the Repatriation General Hospital at Daw Park. This hospital is a 300-bed facility which employs 1,250 staff. The hospital is viewed with clear-eyed affection by thousands in our community who have first-hand experience of how it has cared for loved ones, supported veterans, got seniors back on their feet after serious illnesses or falls, provided palliative care for people in the twilight of their lives, and simply provided a quality healthcare service to those who needed it.

I recall that recently at one of my regular seniors forums held at Brighton, a local man stood up and told of how the Repat saved his life. He eloquently outlined how he left the Repat in a healthier state than he had been before the illness which resulted in him being there in the first place.

The closure of the Repat is defended as being a necessary step in the transformation of our health system. The government says that this is about modernisation and renewal, not cost cutting. I would have to disagree. The health minister has said in this place that the physical state of some parts of the Repat building are squalid. I draw the house's attention to the fact that any decline has happened under the watch of a four-term Labor government. It is worth noting that much of this facility is deemed to be state-of-the-art, with its rehabilitation facilities world-renowned and the skill of hospital practitioners often lauded nationally and internationally.

The incredible feeling in our community about the proposed closure of the Repat has been demonstrated by the more than 60,000 people who have signed petitions led by the Liberal Party and the many people who have contacted my office and the offices of my colleagues. Meanwhile, 44 RSL sub-branches from across the state have signed an open letter calling on the government to save the hospital.

I commend the efforts of the Hon. Stephen Wade for his endless commitment to the Repat. I have utmost respect for the many veterans who are maintaining the rage with an ongoing vigil on the steps of Parliament House. As the weather continues to be particularly unpleasant, their commitment to the cause is unwavering, and each day that I arrive here for work, they are still there. All power to them.

The recent establishment of the Save the Repat Steering Committee is a further valuable plank in the strategy to prevent the closure of the hospital. The committee brings together veterans, community members and medical professionals and includes:

- Augustinus Krikke, a veterans' spokesperson;
- Professor Ian Maddocks, former South Australian of the Year and an expert in palliative care and a resident of the electorate of Bright;
- community advocate Lyn Such;
- former head of Veterans SA, Bill Denny;
- Professor Annette Summers; and
- the leader of the Liberal Party.

I want to briefly mention the \$3 million promotional campaign that has been undertaken by the government to promote Transforming Health. This is using taxpayers' money to spin the government's position and, in my view, is entirely unconscionable. How can a government seriously justify spending this money on propaganda and spin? This has included not only all manner of glossy flyers being churned into letterboxes across the southern suburbs, but also online campaigning, social media advertisements and even telephone canvassing.

The government is abusing the privileges of office by exploiting the Public Service and instructing public servants to undertake what is nothing short of a political campaign. This is not the first time public servants have been used as political fodder, and I am sure it will not be the last. We have seen the More Than Cars campaign and the pensioner concessions campaign used to spray the politics of fear into our communities. What will be next?

I think the state Labor government thinks that the opposition is simply harping on about saving the Repat because it gives us something to do, because it is something to take an anti-stance on and because it is a reason for us to get up in the morning. I fear that in a few short years the Repat site will be filled with trendy high-density apartments and urban infill. This would be an absolute tragedy for our health care in Adelaide's south. With that, I support the bill.

Ms HILDYARD (Reynell) (16:39): I rise to speak in support of the Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill. This bill will make a number of technical amendments to the Health Care Act 2008 and I would like to particularly address one of these, namely the issue of the

employment of medical officers, nurses and midwives within the South Australian Department for Health and Ageing.

The department employs medical officers who may be employed as public health medical practitioners, or medical administrators, and it also employs nurses and midwives who all undertake key clinical advisory functions related to their profession. These clinical advisory functions are essential to the department's support of public health and health service provision.

For example, nurses are employed in overseeing the management of vaccine services across our state. They provide professional advice to community immunisation nurses and general practitioners, as well as other health professionals in the community on the National Immunisation Program Schedule and the Australian Immunisation Handbook, which provides clinical advice on the safest and most effective use of vaccines and their practice. These dedicated nurses are the backbone of the state's immunisation program, making sure that vaccine is distributed where it is needed as well as ensuring consistent and appropriate vaccine practices across public and private health systems.

As another example, medical officers are employed in communicable disease control and these officers support and enable the public health protection requirements that are set out in the South Australian Public Health Act 2011, regarding notifiable and controlled notifiable conditions. They monitor and respond to any notifiable conditions that are reported ensuring and providing timely intervention to protect public health.

The proposed new section 89 in the Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill 2014 that will be inserted into the Health Care Act 2008, addresses and remedies a longstanding technical issue that was an unintentional consequence of the passage of the act. The Health Care Act 2008 repealed the South Australian Health Commission Act 1976 under which the administration and management of health services within the state was undertaken by a statutory authority under which all staff are employed.

When the Health Care Act 2008 came into effect, staff working in the department came under the employment arrangements of the Public Sector Act 2009. In establishing the mechanisms for employment of staff, it had been thought that medical, nursing and midwifery officers could be employed to work in the department pursuant to their professional industrial awards under section 34 of the Health Care Act 2008.

This section is within part 5 of the act that deals with hospitals and their management arrangements. I understand that the department was subsequently advised that the purpose of engagement of staff under section 34 was to facilitate the functions of an incorporated hospital. The department is an administrative unit for the purposes of the Public Sector Act 2009, and so medical officers, nurses and midwives would need to be employed under the latter act.

I note the preferred approach that has been adopted for the purposes of this legislation is similar to the mechanism used by the Department for Education and Child Development to employ teachers within that department pursuant to their professional award under section 101B of the Education Act 1972. This mechanism was introduced to overcome the very problem that this bill seeks to resolve by enabling clinicians to be employed within central government agencies under their professional awards.

Using a similar approach through this amendment is important because it ensures that professional requirements including registration requirements such as recognition of qualifications, continuing professional development and other requirements for clinicians are appropriately recognised and ensured just as they are in our health services. It provides a better mechanism compared with the only other option which would involve employment through the Public Sector Act 2009 and its associated instruments such as the South Australian Public Sector Salaried Interim Award and the South Australian Public Sector Wages Parity Enterprise Agreement (Salaried) 2012, none of which recognise the qualifications, entitlements and continuing professional development requirements for clinicians.

I understand that the representatives of medical officers, nurses and midwives, namely, the South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association of South Australia (SASMOA) and the South

Australia Branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) have been consulted about this proposed change, and they have indicated that this amendment would not present any problems, as long as the conditions of employment of such staff were not reduced.

I understand that this is a technical matter and I am reassured that there is no likelihood that any employee's condition would be affected by this amendment; indeed, it gives full recognition to their current awards. I commend the bill.

Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (16:45): I rise in support of the Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill 2015. The Mount Gambier hospital has just undergone a \$27 million upgrade and it is greatly welcome. I had the privilege of a tour through the hospital in February this year. What I observed were state-of-the-art facilities and, certainly, the chemotherapy section of the hospital is a welcome improvement upon what patients have had to endure before.

One disappointing thing is the mental health beds. Our beds were ready to go pretty much at the start of March, but I have been informed this week that they will not be opening in April as was predetermined and promised. That has now been pushed back to the end of June due to staffing issues. The one thing that staggers me a little bit is that this development has been going on for two years and we get to the end of the development and say, 'Oops! We need some staff.' The recruitment process had not occurred in a timely fashion, and now our mental health facilities, a much-needed service, particularly in light of the ice forums going on in Mount Gambier at the moment, will not be open until 29 June.

There are 15 positions to be filled; many have been sought but have not been put on yet. Having a local mental health facility will save travel time to Adelaide and enable those requiring a higher level of care in Adelaide to return to Mount Gambier, where they can continue their rehabilitation and recovery. But it staggers me that when you build something two years out, you do not think that perhaps we need some staff to fill it and address that in a timely manner. It is probably a little bit like organising the transfer from the Royal Adelaide Hospital to the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and not factoring in some funding to transfer the equipment and staff over there. I think it might be about \$176 million—somebody has to pick that up, and it will undoubtedly be the taxpayer again.

I also want to talk about the renal dialysis unit in Mount Gambier. On that tour, I was shown into a section of the hospital which comprised a single room. Within this room, which was just a conventional room, probably six metres by six metres—the size of a typical double-bay garage or carport—there were four beds in a configuration all facing one TV on the wall. The infection control is actually a yellow line painted on the floor to separate the four beds, with a makeshift office in the corner and staff at a desk in that office, as well.

This renal dialysis unit is used from morning through to night. It is fully booked and people are hooked up to dialysis for up to eight hours at a time while receiving this treatment. I implore the state government to put this improvement to the top of the list, and I have had a meeting with the minister, Mr Snelling, to make sure this gets the attention it needs.

I will quote Jim Lewis, who is an elderly patient of the renal dialysis unit, and these are his words:

...the room is crammed with four chairs, four machines, a makeshift kitchen and an office space for one person shared by all staff...Most of us are on dialysis three days a week, five hours a day and are too old for kidney transplants...We will spend the rest of our lives reliant on this unit. It would be great if we could look forward to some improvements to the unit in the near future.

It really does beggar belief when you go through a state-of-the-art hospital into a room with these types of cramped facilities. I encourage the health minister to make this a top priority.

I stand for decentralisation, a system where decisions are made as close to the people as possible, and I see hospitals as no different. Currently, we have moved away from health boards, which I thought had a very good place in our system, particularly for larger regional centres like Mount Gambier, where the board would determine certain things—and I will talk about that in a minute. A board is responsible for the governance activities of the hospital. There is always a clear distinction between the strategic role of the board and the operational role of the executive. The board controls the service for which it is established, whilst the chief executive and leadership team

are responsible for implementing the board's directions for the day-to-day management of the service.

Functions of the board include: developing the strategic direction and priorities for the operation of the hospital; monitoring the compliance and performance; ensuring safety and quality systems are in place and focused on the patient's experience, quality outcomes, evidence-based practice, education and research; developing plans, strategies and budgets to ensure the accountable provision of health services; ensuring risk management systems are in place and overseeing the operation of systems for compliance and risk management reporting to all stakeholders; and establishing and maintaining effective systems to ensure that the health services meet the needs of the community.

That is the point that I want to make. The people best placed to make decisions about the needs of our community are those who are based in our community, not based in Adelaide, some 460 kilometres away. The residents from Mount Gambier and surrounding districts are faced with few options should they need emergency or critical medical care. They rely on the hospital to meet their urgent needs, since the travel time to Adelaide or Melbourne is in excess of five hours each way. Having access to a full range of services at Mount Gambier Hospital means a patient can be supported in the hospital by relatives and friends who would find the trip to Melbourne or Adelaide far more onerous.

For some illnesses, particularly stroke, cardiac failure and other chronic conditions, treatment within the first hour, also known as the golden hour, can be of life-saving importance. For these patients, it is not just a matter of having access to an accident and emergency unit or any doctor: it is a matter of having a doctor available who has the ability to treat you for the condition that you have. A fully functioning general hospital in Mount Gambier is vital and of vital importance to not only the residents of Mount Gambier but our catchment area, which is up to two hours in any direction. It is on this point that I call on the state government to do more.

Unfortunately, there is cynicism that much of Transforming Health is city-centric and is at the peril or detriment of country areas. Many country doctors I speak to feel ignored and undervalued, and this is playing out in real time due to the dispute between the Rural Doctors Association, trying to negotiate a three-year deal, and the government, under an industrial agreement. They have pretty much been told, 'If you do not sign by the end of May, you can "sign up or ship out".' I just cannot believe the arrogance of a minister or a government that would be saying that to country doctors.

Already we have trouble recruiting doctors into regional areas. As of Friday last week, there were 30 GP positions unfilled in rural and regional areas. As of last Friday, up to half the doctors have failed to sign the enterprise agreement. They argue to me that they have been on a wage freeze for three years—three years, yet this government's approach is 'sign up or ship out'. It is appalling for country residents; it is appalling for country doctors. It shows a lack of empathy, a lack of awareness of what is going on in country areas. Let me tell you, that if these doctors do ship out, then there are going to be more and more country people coming up to Adelaide and clogging up the Adelaide health system.

I have also been aware in some country areas of aged-care facilities that are closing due to this industrial disagreement with the government. I implore the government to take serious action in these negotiations with the doctors' association and negotiate a three-year deal that is fair and reasonable for country doctors.

Sitting extended beyond 17:00 on motion of Hon. G.G. Brock.

Mr KNOLL (Schubert) (16:57): I rise today to speak on the Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill and talk about the perennial issue that exists in my electorate, just for something different. I say from the outset that I asked questions in this place of the Minister for Health on Transforming Health proposals as they affect country areas a couple of months ago. After a couple of supplementary questions, we got to an answer where he said, 'Transforming Health is primarily based on metropolitan hospitals,' which is his way of saying it is completely based on metropolitan hospitals. There was some consternation and in my electorate I have received responses from people saying that it is disappointing that the government is not looking at regional hospitals as part of this.

Having said that, as the Transforming Health proposals have become clearer to South Australia, and especially to my electorate, I think the local residents of Schubert are quite glad that Transforming Health does not deal with country hospitals and regional health care, but there is a growing angst, and one that I am unable to quell, within my community about potential further changes to our health system and our hospital system when Transforming Health does eventually come to the country. That is something that the minister has outlined, that Transforming Health, as it exists currently, is stage 1, and that down the track the country healthcare system and the country hospital system are next on the chopping block.

Can I say that, if this government does not have any compunction when it comes to making cuts to hospitals that affect marginal seats, they will have no compunction when it comes to making cuts to country health where they do not believe there are any votes there for them, and that worries me. It worries me greatly, and it worries my constituents greatly. I genuinely would have had dozens of people come to my office, call my office, email and send letters saying, 'We are worried about the future of the Tanunda Hospital.'

I have got a situation where my daughter goes to child care a couple of days a week—in fact, she is there right now—at a beautiful little centre called Barossa Valley Community Kids that exists behind the Tanunda Hospital. It is a brilliant little centre that only has 12 kids. There are a couple of members of staff there who have been there I think almost since the inception of the creche, and my daughter loves that centre.

The centre manager Kia does a great job. She is young, vibrant and enthusiastic. There are a couple of carers who have been there for a bit longer—Lynn and Diane—who Ruby talks about every night when we get home. Kia came to me a couple of months ago and she said, 'Stephan, what is going on with the Tanunda Hospital? Is it going to close?' I said, 'I can't give you a firm answer to that.'

She said, 'The issue is we currently have a peppercorn rent to exist in our little creche facility, which is a not-for-profit facility, behind the Tanunda Hospital, and we are worried because we need to do upgrades to the toilet block and things like that, but we don't want to spend that money if we are going to get kicked out of here.' I said, 'I cannot give you any assurance that you will be here for the longer term.'

They have got a lease for the next few years but, when you are paying nominal rent, the cost of breaking that lease is not that much. Normally, when you break a lease like that, from the landlord's side, you can compensate for rent not paid, but that is going to be difficult to enforce in this instance. They are genuinely worried about the future of their centre because, if they have to change and move to a completely different cost structure, then it is going to impact on the care that kids in the Barossa have. I understand how important it is to help mothers and fathers be able to carry on employment by having their kids in child care. So, they are one group who are worried.

I have also spoken to a prominent local, Bill. Bill is retired now, but he was a dentist in the Barossa, and he is a great bloke of the community. He came to me and said, 'Stephan, I am worried about the Tanunda Hospital.' I said, 'Bill, there is not much more I can say to you at this point except that, if there is any proposal to touch the Tanunda or Angaston hospitals, or indeed the Kapunda Hospital, without provision of a new health facility, there will be riots on the streets of the Barossa.'

I am not mucking around here. The previous member for Schubert spent 20 years trying to get a hospital, and that community is expecting a new facility. If they have come to a situation where instead of getting a new hospital they get one less hospital, I can guarantee 10,000 or 15,000 signatures coming to this place, and I can envisage rallies on the steps of Parliament House in response to that, so that is a warning to the government. The Barossa as a community gives so much to South Australia and genuinely asks so little of the government. Please, do not go down this path. We wait with bated breath, we wait with angst, but we will see what comes next.

As I think the member for Mount Gambier alluded to, there are a lot of capital works that have been undertaken by the health department over the last few years in relation to country hospitals that are coming towards completion. We have got the Berri hospital redevelopment, which was due to be finished at the end of last year at a cost of \$36 million. There was the Mount Gambier and Districts Health Service, which the member for Mount Gambier talked about, at a cost of

\$26 million. There is the Port Lincoln Hospital and Health Service redevelopment at a cost of \$39 million, the Whyalla Hospital redevelopment at a cost of \$68 million, and the other one I have forgotten is the South Coast primary health care at Victor Harbor at a cost of \$10 million.

All these projects are coming towards completion. I thought in my naive little mind that, if there is some sort of recurring capital budget as part of the Department for Health and Ageing, new projects could start to come on board, but that does not seem to be the case. There is a great vacuum cleaner, a great Dyson bagless, which is about 10 times the size of Parliament House, that hoovers up any spare dollar within the hospital capital budget, and that is called the new Royal Adelaide Hospital. I am genuinely of the belief that there is no money for anything else because we spend all of it on North Terrace. Whilst the new RAH will be brilliant for those who get to use it, it will not be brilliant for those who do not get to use it.

Dr McFetridge: Third most expensive building in the world.

Mr KNOLL: That is right, it is the third most expensive building—

Dr McFetridge: In the world.

Mr KNOLL: —in the world. So, that is another great win for South Australia. I genuinely do not think that there are funds there for a new hospital, but the fight continues. The reason for a hospital is fairly clear. We had a business case in 2006, we had a revised business case in 2010 and I believe there to be a new business case that will be completed (I hope) some time this year by Country Health SA on the need for a new Barossa health facility, and I think it will say what it has said previously, without having seen it or been involved with it. I think there is a consistent theme that Country Health has put forth to the department over a long period of time, which is that we need a new hospital.

The reason is this: the Barossa Council, which this hospital will sit in the heart of, is the tenth fastest growing council in South Australia. That by itself indicates that there is a need for an upgrade to the health facility. But more than that, it is the changing demographics around there that make the difference too. We have Gawler, which has grown by 1.3 per cent per annum, which is well above the 0.84 per cent growth per annum of the rest of the state; it is a high growing area. The increase in demand will be soaked up by the Gawler health facility. We are seeing developments at Gawler East with Springwood, there is the potential Roseworthy development, there is Concordia and there is Orleana Waters. If we head further down to the northern suburbs, there is the Playford Alive Renewal SA development and there is the Blakeview development.

The 30-year plan designates that the northern suburbs are going to take a huge amount of new residents and new growth and that demand will be sucked up by the Lyell McEwin Hospital. So, in the northern suburbs you will have the Lyell Mac working to capacity because of demographic growth there, you will have the Gawler health facility used up by the increased growth in Gawler and then anything further north of that into the Barossa and the growth that it has by itself will need to be catered for by itself. It cannot go to Gawler, it cannot go to the Lyell Mac. That demand will need to be met within the Barossa itself. That is why I think it is very important that the government gets on and commits to building a new Barossa hospital.

For years, the member for Schubert, in its title honorary, has been coming into this place, banging on the tables and saying, 'We need a new health facility for the Barossa,' but I do not think that is enough. I am currently doing some work to help the government, to provide options for how we build this facility, and there are a number of options. The business case traditionally has said, 'We need a new hospital. These are the demographic reasons why. These are the health reasons why. Here are some of the internal savings we can make as part of it,' and that is where it stops. I believe that in order to make a better business case overall for funding we need to take that a step further.

Some of the work I am doing at the moment is around different funding models. We are exploring a model at the moment where we may try to get the hospital cooperatively funded because I am sure the Barossa community is willing to invest in a hospital that it can then lease back to the state government. That is one model where the Barossa has some history. We have the Barossa Co-op, which has 17,000 members, which is basically every single person in the Barossa (I have

\$20 worth of shares myself). It is a brilliant co-op that delivers for the community. The Barossa understands it, it loves it, it is one of the most favoured institutions and I think the people of the Barossa will get a cooperatively funded new Barossa hospital.

There are also opportunities for public-private partnership where a private developer could come in and build the hospital and either sell or lease back the public hospital part of the development to the state government and there would be allied health services and private rental space that the private developer could then lease out to Benson Radiology, medical practices, allied health services, to be able to offset the capital cost. I have a council that has stated publicly numerous times, 'We will give the land for free to the state government. You guys decide where you want to build it and we will make it happen.' I have heard that commitment on so many different occasions, and that is a way that the government can save money.

There is also around \$1.5 million sitting in a fund specifically to go towards a new Barossa hospital, and on top of that we have two ageing facilities in the Angaston and Tanunda that could be sold off to help offset the capital cost of a new hospital.

Mr Picton: I thought you didn't want to have only one hospital.

Mr KNOLL: We are happy to have one hospital, as long as it is new, instead of a facility that was built before the Second World War—in fact, I think, if I am not wrong, it was built before the First World War. The Angaston Hospital was built in 1910, and the Tanunda Hospital was built in 1955, and it looked all of its years in the couple of times I have had to go into the facility. The people of the Barossa deserve better. When the people of Adelaide are getting a brand-new, state-of-the-art, third-most-expensive-building-in-the-world facility, I think it is only right that the people of the Barossa who contribute—

The Hon. P. Caica: Serving the people of the Barossa.

Mr KNOLL: The Barossa is one of the most productive areas of South Australia. If we do not start investing in the places that actually deliver the jobs, and deliver the growth and the exports, those regions are going to suffer.

The last part, which I think is something I am really keen to explore, is medical tourism. I think there are opportunities for elective dental surgery, orthopaedic surgery and cosmetic surgery all to be done in the Barossa. As part of the recovery program, you can stay and enjoy what is I think the best region in South Australia. I am exploring different models that work overseas for a variety of different reasons, but I think that medical tourism as maybe a public-private partnership, or some sort of co-located private hospital with a public hospital, could be another model to help offset the capital cost and bring about a facility for the community that also helps to bring tourist dollars into South Australia.

I will be saying more on this topic over coming months and years as the work continues. Certainly, after the next business case is brought out, I will be putting together an addendum to that business case to actually look at the next step of how we get it funded. It is not just, 'We need a new hospital,' the next question has to be how we fund it. I would like to help constructively provide some answers in that area so that, after what has now been 22 years' worth of waiting, the people of the Barossa can actually get what they so richly deserve.

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (17:12): I commend all who have spoken on this bill but, member for Schubert, you have succeeded the previous member wonderfully well and you are a very creative mind that is outcome focused.

The Hon. J.J. Snelling: Future leader.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Many years down the track. After the member for Dunstan has been premier, there is probably a good chance of that.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind members the bases are fully loaded in the book, and I am going to drag it out again because we do not want the last hour of the day to disintegrate, do we? I am going to ask members—

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am going to ask members to observe the Speaker's favourite ruling at the moment, which is No. 142, and warn that I will have to let him know if anyone transgresses. The member for Goyder will be heard in silence. Member for Goyder.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Well said, Deputy Speaker. The member for Schubert actually presents a rather compelling argument. I have no doubt that the time he spends in here will be focused on an outcome for his community, as was the previous member for Schubert's. Ivan Venning was a great bloke, and I think we would all acknowledge that. A friendly man—

The Hon. G.G. Brock: He still is.

Mr GRIFFITHS: He still is, yes. The only time I have ever seen him upset, I thought, beyond control was when he was talking about the Barossa hospital. I must admit that he went absolutely ballistic about the fact that he wanted it to be done.

I am very pleased that the minister is here because on Tuesday, I believe, the minister was asked a question about the financial commitment to regional health, and I believe he quoted \$779 million in 2014-15 and \$766 million in 2013-14. They are impressive dollars, minister, and I understand that, but the sums equate to that of a \$13 million increase from last financial year to this year or about 1.7 per cent. I believe when I—

The Hon. J.J. Snelling: Money well spent.

Mr GRIFFITHS: Money well spent, yes, but my question related to the level of commitment from the previous financial year because it is around one-fifth of the total increase in health spending per year that you, minister, are dealing with. Regional communities are not quite benefiting in the same way as overall health spends are, and that was the reason for my supplementary question.

On the same day, I believe I asked a question of the Minister for Ageing about the Mallala hospital and aged-care facility, and he responded along the lines of, 'It's Liberal Party policy to take it over when they are in financial trouble.' That was not the question. The question was based around what level of oversight exists from a state department to assist community facilities (and this is very strongly a community-run facility) in helping them to ensure they are getting good advice. It was not anything else or any other policy matter; it was about the level of oversight that exists.

I put on record and pay my respects to the efforts of the Balaklava, Wallaroo, Yorketown and Maitland hospitals, and I appreciate the level of support provided by the Minister for Health for them and the investment that has taken place in several of those hospitals in recent years as well. I commend the Health Advisory Committees, the staff and, indeed, the generations of people who have actually made what is there possible because they have played absolutely key roles.

The member for Morphett referred to what we term 'Country Health Mark 1', which was in 2007 or 2008, I think, when the communities in regional South Australia rose quite significantly to express their view that they would do absolutely anything to ensure that Health exists and their hospitals remain. In my own electorate there were what I will call rallies; there were 700 people at Yorketown, 500 people at Balaklava and 400 people at Maitland and the word, very strongly, was 'Do whatever it takes to ensure they remain.' So when we talk about Transforming Health, there is no apparent impact on regional communities at this stage but it has to become a focus that all of us will debate.

In talking about the Moonta hospital, though, which is a hospital and an aged care facility, it is important to put on the record that, sadly, 18 months ago it closed the hospital-bed component of its operation. I know that the Minister for Health's office was advised of that and the shadow minister for health was advised of that late in December 2013. That devastated the community. I attended a public meeting there where everyone was talking about how they could rally behind it, how they could get it back, but it is an example of the financial pressures that regional facilities face, and it is in community hospitals and aged care facilities.

Now it is a great sadness to have, within the same electorate, the Mallala hospital and aged care facility close on 1 April. I know that in a conversation I had with the member for Frome, the Minister for Regional Development, he talked to me about having scheduled a meeting with, I believe,

the Mallala council to talk about efforts that can be made to assist that community. For Mallala, in particular, it is \$2 million per year taken out of the local economy, and for a small town that, yes, does have growth opportunities between themselves and Two Wells, it is a devastating issue. So I implore members to do all they can to assist the Mallala community in overcoming that.

I am pleased that we have had a bit of licence provided to us to talk about health in our areas. As the son of a lady who was a nurse for 50 years it has been part of my growing up, part of my DNA, to be respectful of it, to understand, in some small way, some of the challenges that are faced by staff, the difficulties in recruiting staff, the opportunities for them when they do come there, and the need for turnover to occur sometimes for professionals. There has been such a significant change in the generation of where our doctors are coming from that you are not going to have the situation any more of, in the community I live in at Maitland, Dr Bill Chappell, who was the sole GP for about 50 years and a man who was revered above all others in the town. He has had some troubles in recent times, but I have to say that no matter what it is the community has rallied around him. The community has helped him because of the respect and the knowledge they owe him. It really does come down to that.

I just wanted a few minutes to talk about some health issues in the electorate. I commend the bill, and look forward to its passage.

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Health Industries) (17:18): Thank you for all those contributions on the bill. I think it was a fairly wide-ranging debate; anything that touched on health care anywhere at any time managed to make its way into the debate, but I always think it is good to give all members an opportunity to vent.

The Health Care (Administration) Amendment Bill 2015 is a bill to make a number of technical amendments to the Health Care Act 2008. They include provisions which allow the following:

- to allow fees for services provided by the SA Ambulance Service that do not involve transportation in the ambulance—that is, Treat no Transport services—to be set through the Health Care Act 2008 rather than the Fees Regulation Act 1927;
- provide a mechanism for the employment of medical practitioners, nurses and midwives in the Department for Health and Ageing (so basically central office);
- the dissolution of three now non-operational incorporated associations and a formal transfer of the assets to the appropriate health advisory council;
- amendment to section 29(1)(b) of the Health Care Act 2008 so it is clear that a specified person or body does not need to be providing services and facilities to an incorporated hospital for the business or operations of that body to be transferred to that incorporated hospital;
- the Governor, on application from the minister, to make proclamation to transfer the assets, liabilities and undertakings from one incorporated hospital to another, without the incorporated hospital to which these first belonged having to be dissolved;
- to remove section 49(5) of the act that allows the minister to determine the constitution of the SA Ambulance Service—the functions and powers of SAAS are already set out in the act and a constitution has not been determined and is not required for the effective functioning of SAAS;
- an amendment to ensure that SAAS staff and medical practitioners, nurses and midwives to be employed under the new section 89 are covered by the conflict of interest provisions;
- an amendment to clarify terminology used in section 93(3) of the act so as to limit disclosures of information required—under this section, the disclosures that are required are 'required or authorised by or under law' to reflect more accurately when and how legal disclosures of information may be made;

- an amendment to add the term 'substitute decision maker' to the list of persons who may request or provide consent for information about a person to be released, so that the wording aligns with the provisions of the Advance Care Directives Act 2013;
- transitional provisions regarding the continuity of employment and conditions of employment of medical practitioners, nurses and midwives in the central office; and finally
- transitional provisions regarding the cancellation and incorporation of certain associations.

I am pleased to hear members of the opposition in this place have indicated support for the bill. It is good to hear and I thank the opposition for their support.

We heard the member for Flinders indicate his interest in seeing resolution of long and outstanding transfer of assets of three non-operational incorporated associations to the relevant health advisory council (namely Lumeah Homes Inc., Miroma Place Hostel Inc. and Peterborough Aged Care and Disabled Accommodation Inc.) and proclamations for the dissolution of these associations. The transfer of these assets to the local health advisory council ensures that these assets stay with the communities that contributed their money and labour for the greater and common good of their community.

As has been pointed out by the member for Flinders, it is important that these assets stay with those communities, in recognition of the fact that the community developed and contributed their time and money to their establishment. These assets belong to the communities and the provisions of this bill reflect and respect this by ensuring these assets go to the relevant health advisory council. The three HACs involved are the Lower Eyre Health Advisory Council, the Lower North Health Advisory Council and the Mid North Health Advisory Council. All of them some time ago formally agreed to the transfer of these assets and they have known that this transfer would occur once the bill was passed. I hope we can finally realise their expectations sooner rather than later, since they have been waiting long enough for this to occur.

The member for Chaffey indicated his belief that there are many questions still to be answered about how amendments to the Health Care Act 2008 as proposed in the bill will impact on health care in regional and rural South Australia. In the case of the Treat no Transport ambulance fees, there will be no effect. The bill will simply change the legal mechanism for enabling these fees to be set to one that is aligned with the setting of all the other fees under the Health Care Act 2008.

The proposed amendment to section 32 will be beneficial to the health system, since it will allow a transfer of functions between incorporated hospital sites without one having to be dissolved. This is an important capability that is required for managing any modern health system to ensure that services are provided at the most appropriate incorporated hospital site in response to changing and emerging community health needs. It is a sensible amendment that will assist regional and rural health services respond to the needs of their communities.

The member for Morphett raised a concern about clause 5, stating it was not clear what the 'etc' referred to in this provision. The use of 'etc' in this way is a well-known drafting convention which is regularly used to indicate that a clause or section refers to several matters, as can be seen from the proposed new section 32A(b) which mentions, in addition to the transfer of functions, the transfer of assets, rights and liabilities of an incorporated hospital—this latter part of the clause is what the 'etc' refers to. There is no mystery here.

I also understand that the use of the term 'health services' in clause 8 is troublesome to some of the opposition. The clause will provide for a new section 89—Other staffing arrangements, providing a mechanism for the employment of medical practitioners, nurse and midwives in central office. This clause will only apply to the employment of medical practitioners, nurses and midwives in the Department for Health and Ageing since all other health practitioners who are employed in the central office are employed under the Public Sector Act 2009. The term 'health services' can, therefore, only have a specific meaning in this context related to those health services provided by medical practitioners, nurses and midwives.

The bill provides a mechanism for the employment of medical practitioners, nurses and midwives in the Department for Health and Ageing, namely central office, under their professional awards. The medical practitioners, nurses and midwives employed in central office play a vital and essential role. They provide a range of clinical and professional advice that supports the provision of high-quality healthcare services at the coalface in hospitals and other health facilities. It is always easy to think that medical practitioners, nurses and midwives who are employed in the central office are not engaged in the real business of providing health care. I can assure the house that this is not the case. They are just as important and play a critical part in the functioning of the health system as a whole.

Many of them are front-line workers in their own right, providing important public health protection. For example, nurses are employed in overseeing the management of vaccine services across the state. They make sure vaccines are delivered to where they are needed in a timely and efficient way. Medical officers are employed in communicable disease control as well as providing professional advice regarding medical services and practices to support effective health service delivery by the health system.

The member for Morphett in indicating his support for the bill also indicated that there may be issues and questions that will be raised about this bill in the other place. The government has provided responses to any concerns that have been raised during the briefings, and there has been plenty of opportunity for the opposition to come back. Indeed, I think this might be the second or third time that this bill has, in fact, gone through this chamber. It would be very nice to have the support of the opposition, particularly given the issues relating to the transfer of those assets from those about-to-be dissolved incorporated bodies to ensure that the funds that have been raised by those regional communities can remain in those regional communities. I would be very grateful for the support of the opposition for the speedy passage of this bill, not only through this chamber but also through the other place.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

The Hon. J.J. SNELLING (Playford—Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Health Industries) (17:28): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (PROSECUTIONS UNDER REPEALED ACT) AMENDMENT
BILL**

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill without any amendment.

At 17:30 the house adjourned until Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 11:00.