

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 6 July 2022

The **SPEAKER** (Hon. D.R. Cregan) took the chair at 10:30.

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

The SPEAKER read prayers.

Bills

ABORIGINAL REPRESENTATIVE BODY BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (10:31): Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to give Aboriginal people a voice that will be heard by the Parliament of South Australia, the cabinet, state authorities and other persons and bodies; to establish the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement; to establish the Aboriginal Representative Body; to repeal the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee Act 2003; to make a related amendment to the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991; and for other purposes. Read a first time.

Second Reading

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (10:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

In bringing this bill before the Fifty-Fifth Parliament, I am quick to acknowledge the former Premier, the member for Dunstan, and his work to bring a bill in almost identical form to the Fifty-Fourth Parliament—a bill to establish a Voice to Parliament—and the work that was done for years in the lead-up to that. I pay tribute to the member for Dunstan and recognise that this is really a reintroduction of what represented work that was done over the course of years and, in many ways, was led by the Commissioner for Aboriginal Engagement, Dr Roger Thomas. I will say a bit more about that in a moment.

Having referred to and paid tribute to the work of the former Premier, the member for Dunstan, I draw members' attention to his second reading speech, as Premier, on 13 October last year. My contribution this morning, in the short time that is available to me, will very much draw upon, reiterate and amplify the contribution that the member for Dunstan made on that occasion.

In doing so, it is timely to remind the house that as recently as the course of the estimates process and the estimates debate that has just been undertaken, on 21 June this year, when, as it happened and as a result of the estimates schedule I was otherwise engaged in a parallel committee, the member for Dunstan was kind to take on that responsibility to analyse the budget and ask the minister, the Hon. Kyam Maher from another place, to address specifically what the new government's attitude was towards a Voice and, indeed, to steps to be taken in relation to reconciliation generally.

I think it is fair to say that much has been made by this new government of a process of consideration towards just what a Voice might constitute. What we have heard from the new minister is as much as to indicate that the new government considers that, yes, indeed, a Voice is a necessary precursor to any further step that might be taken. That is a shift from the position the last Labor government took in the Fifty-Third Parliament when, in the final days of the parliament, we saw a bill relating to Treaty presented to the parliament which quickly foundered when confronted by the challenges of the real world engagement necessary in order to establish what a Voice really means.

I go back over that history and to the 2017 bill that the now Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Kyam Maher, once again introduced in the Fifty-Third Parliament right up to 21 June this year, when once again the questions were put to the now Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, 'What do you plan? What thought have you put into this process ahead of coming back into government?'

One might reasonably expect that a body of work—indeed thought, a philosophical approach, a series of principles—might have been developed to identify any alternative to the approach that is laid out in this bill, which was brought to the parliament by the then Premier, the member for Dunstan. The member for Dunstan put the question directly to Minister Maher on 21 June, and for members and those following this debate, and for the purposes of the medium term, that may be found at page 153 of the *Hansard* for 21 June.

The member for Dunstan put it directly to Minister Maher, asking him whether he was aware of legislation that was introduced into the parliament in October last year—that is this bill, and that is this topic, as I have referred to, addressed by the then Premier on 13 October—and observing that it followed more than two years' consultation on a Voice to Parliament, adverting to the fact that this bill remained a thoroughgoing body of work and remained the means by which the now opposition proposes to progress in this regard and foreshadowing its introduction, which I am doing today.

Relevantly, for the purposes of this new government's agenda, the member for Dunstan asked the minister whether or not the new government would now support this bill, or was there a process of further work or consultation that the new government had in mind. The answer that was given was that, no, this government will do its own work.

Again, I want to make this very clear on this occasion to the house: the member for Dunstan put the minister on notice that he thereby recognises that if that were to happen, and again against the background of no indication of any particular alternative work that has been done in parallel, that he realises that this will be a very significant hiatus in the establishment of the Voice. The minister again indicated that the government would do its own work.

The member for Dunstan—again, I compare where we were at in October last year to as recently as the estimates of this year—adverted to a consideration of the extent of consultation and notice around this bill as opposed to the work and consultation that led up to its introduction. He adverted to some criticism that was made at the time about the extent of consultation on the bill itself. Again, he put it very directly to the minister: was he aware of anything specific in the time between October and June—which the now government had identified as a failure of that original model—having been put forward?

The minister adverted in the broad, I think it is fair to say, to two matters. One is there might have been a concern that, because this Aboriginal representative body would have a direct line to a parliamentary committee, which is to be reformed specifically for the purposes of its engagement and terms of reference to interact with, not to mention the direct interaction with cabinet and the direct interaction with senior levels of the bureaucracy, somehow the nature of that interaction with the parliament might be a criticism of the bill.

The other issue—I think more of a temporal issue—rising no higher than the nature of the initial model, is the extent to which individuals be appointed to the representative body prior to elections. The point being that criticism of this bill, and the years of work that led to it, was very much limited to what I would describe as matters about which one could navigate in transition or have reasonable argument in respect of the particular detail. But what we are told, as recently as the estimates, is that in fact we basically have a blank sheet of paper from this government.

Again, against criticism about the extent of consultation on the specific bill prior to October and the years of work leading up to it, against the background of all of that and what has been really trumpeted as a key aspect of the agenda of this new government, we have seen nothing resembling a coherent or credible body of work that provides some alternative to the structure and process set out in this bill.

I have taken some time to emphasise that this bill constitutes the result of work over a sustained period of time, and the government, in coming along now and talking a lot about the topic, has not yet said anything about how it will proceed. I think we have a concession that if the

government is not interested in supporting this bill we are in for a long wait indeed before we see anything in practice. That is just so we are clear about all of that.

I commend once again the contribution of the former Premier, the member for Dunstan, in his second reading speech on 13 October. It is there on the record and will remain so. In doing so, I particularly want to commend the work and the broad consultation that has been conducted by Dr Roger Thomas. Dr Roger Thomas—I will always be proud to say it, and whenever I see him I think we share that experience; it will be the memory of a lifetime—came and addressed this parliament, from the floor of parliament, in December 2020.

As Speaker, I was proud to ask him to address this place. It was then that he reported on the results of his work, challenged as it was, of course, by COVID but nonetheless concluded and brought to the parliament. It is the work of Dr Roger Thomas and the communities he consulted and the work led in government by the Premier that I wish to recognise and celebrate in bringing this bill back to the parliament today. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS REDUCTION (TARGETS) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (10:48): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction (Targets) Amendment Bill 2022 to update the emissions reduction and renewable electricity targets in the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007 in line with global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to limit the worst effects of climate change.

The changes will enshrine provisions that relate to the previous Liberal government's policy targets and those currently built into the state's climate change action plan, which is scheduled to run from 2021 to 2025, focusing on greenhouse gas emissions reduction and renewable energy generation, and placing this in legislation. These policy targets are net zero emissions by 2050, to reduce net emissions by more than 50 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels, and to achieve 100 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030.

The emissions reduction targets are aligned with the Paris Agreement and the climate change goal to limit global warming to well below 2° Celsius, preferably to 1.5° Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels. Legislating these targets will send a strong signal to South Australians, and more broadly to people and businesses across the nation and across the globe, that South Australia is serious about reducing emissions and addressing the impacts of climate change.

Declarations of emergencies and catastrophising climate change for political points will do little to address the issue or to progress South Australia. Real targets and action-based plans and responses provide the most credible pathway forward and, of course, create a legitimate foundation to drive serious economic outcomes at the same time.

The previous Liberal government put in place a clear path for responding to climate change by building a strong, climate smart future. Its climate change leadership was characterised by an acknowledgement of the risks and challenges that climate change poses; a commitment to reduce our emissions to nation-leading, ambitious target levels; and a desire to adapt and pursue climate change related opportunities, including by engaging and driving opportunities through business and through the market.

The draft bill amends the targets set out in section 3 and section 5 of the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007. The principal greenhouse emissions reduction target, the South Australian target, is:

...to reduce by 31 December 2050 greenhouse gas emissions within the State by at least 60% to the amount that is equal or less than 40% of 1990 levels...

This will be replaced with the target relating to net zero emissions by the year 2050.

A new interim target that relates to the previous Liberal government's policy target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030 will also importantly be included as a more short-term goad to action. The two existing renewable electricity targets to increase renewable electricity use and generation by at least 20 per cent by 2014 were achieved in 2010 and 2011 and will be replaced. The bill replaces these targets with the new target reflecting our renewable energy ambitions to achieve 100 per cent renewable electricity generation by the year 2030.

The bill makes minor flow-on amendments as a consequence of these changes to the targets. While in government, we were able to ascertain confidence that, with bipartisan support and a focus on practical action, our state will achieve our targets and maximise the economic benefits from a shift to a low emissions future.

The eminent climate economist Professor Ross Garnaut in his 2020 report for the government of South Australia, known as South Australia's Climate Change Challenges and Opportunities, stated that a 50 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030 is within reach, with major contributions from economic sectors, such as low emissions manufacturing and mining, renewable electricity and hydrogen, and transport and carbon storage both in the land and in the sea.

Professor Garnaut also stated in his report that regional South Australia in particular can prosper exceptionally by embracing zero emissions opportunities. South Australia has already reduced its net greenhouse gas emissions by 33 per cent from 2005 levels, based on the 2018-19 data released in 2001. In the same period, gross state product grew by 26 per cent. The vision and investment made by government and the willingness of the private sector and our regional communities to embrace a low emissions future have been key to our success to date.

Under the previous Liberal government, we worked hard to rapidly increase renewable energy in this state. We put in place pathways to solve the challenges of integrating high proportions of intermittent renewables through increasing battery storage, fast-tracking a new energy interconnector with the state of New South Wales and supporting innovative approaches to managing energy demand. With world-class natural resources in solar and wind, South Australia is currently ranked second only to Denmark for the annual variable renewable energy that it generates.

In just 15 years, South Australia has transitioned its energy system from 1 per cent renewable generation to over 60 per cent, and we are well on our way to achieving 100 per cent net renewable electricity generation by the year 2030. The South Australian Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025 anticipates that our state could achieve a level of renewable energy that is more than 500 per cent of current local grid demand by the year 2050.

Under the previous Liberal government, the state invested in multiple hydrogen projects, including the installation of Australia's largest electrolyser at Hydrogen Park SA. The Hydrogen Park project is allowing 700 homes in Mitchell Park to receive cleaner blended gas comprising 5 per cent renewable hydrogen. We took to the 2022 election a plan for including a hydrogen hub at Port Bonython in the Upper Spencer Gulf, creating close to 6,000 jobs, tens of billions of dollars of investment and the production of over 1½ million tonnes of hydrogen per annum.

That government's Electric Vehicle Action Plan was a commitment to projects to accelerate the uptake of electric vehicles and to use electric vehicles to help stabilise our power grid. Projects to secure private investment in an electric vehicle charging network, subsidies for the purchase of new battery electric vehicles and free motor registration for eligible electric vehicle motorists were commitments towards incentivising the use of electric vehicles in South Australia.

Our state must continue to harness its renewable energy resources to develop new export markets and new manufacturing and industry based on our clean energy advantage. This will also help other countries achieve their emissions reduction targets. The economic opportunities before South Australia are significant. Renewable energy provides a sound foundation from which to build to achieve this state's 2030 and 2050 emissions reduction targets.

We also need to reduce our emissions across other economic sectors and embrace other low emissions growth opportunities. This will require action by government, business and the community. Through the state's Climate Change Action Plan 2021-2025 and related plans and initiatives that the previous Liberal government established, we can further reduce emissions in

sectors such as transport, agriculture, mining, building and construction, business and industry and waste management and resource recovery.

There are promising signs in our state's development of commercial production of a seaweed that can reduce livestock methane emissions. There are also promising signs that we can expand blue carbon and carbon farming projects that increase carbon storage, particularly in the primary industry sector. These projects have both economic and environmental benefits. Heavy industry and mining being supported to decarbonise is also important. For example, the previous Liberal government made sure that South Australia has the regulatory framework in place to support large-scale carbon capture. This enables projects such as Santos's Moomba carbon capture and storage project in South Australia, with startup expected in 2024.

South Australia is at the forefront of innovation and waste recycling and resource recovery, leading to the circular economy. Having already reduced its waste to landfill by one-third since 2003 to achieve a diversion rate of more than 80 per cent, the state is now targeting zero avoidable waste to landfill by 2030, with the Australian government and the previous Liberal government supporting eight new projects worth \$111 million to modernise the recycling industry and improve capacity to process plastic, glass, paper, cardboard and tyres within our state.

The previous Liberal government released South Australia's first comprehensive strategy for reducing and preventing food waste going to landfill in 2021 and set a goal to halve the amount of food waste by 2025. It was working with other jurisdictions to improve their standards for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions in the National Construction Code and relevant South Australian standards. We committed to continue to identify and implement improvements in land use planning policies and assessments for low emissions planning and development outcomes.

This is a brief snapshot of the many practical actions and projects we commenced in our time in government to reduce emissions and tackle climate change. We knew that we could not rest on our laurels. This is why it is important to commit to enshrining our ambitious targets in legislation. I am once again introducing a bill to send a strong signal to South Australians and the business sector that South Australia is serious about reducing emissions and addressing climate change and capturing the significant economic-related opportunities before our state.

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

Leave granted.

EXPLANATION OF CLAUSES

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

Part 2—Amendment of Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007

3—Amendment of section 3—Objects of Act

This clause amends the provisions that set out, as objects of the Act, the specific targets under the Act. It revises the SA target to refer to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to achieve net zero emissions by 31 December 2050. It also inserts a new interim target (the *2030 interim target*) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 50% below 2005 levels by 31 December 2030. It also revises the current renewable electricity target to achieve 100% net renewable electricity generation in the State by 31 December 2030, and makes other consequential changes.

4—Amendment of section 4—Interpretation

The amendments to this section insert definitions of 2030 interim target, net zero greenhouse gas emissions and renewable electricity target.

5—Amendment of section 5—Targets

This clause amends the provisions that set out specific targets under the Act and reflects the targets expressed in the objects of the Act. It revises the SA target to refer to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to achieve net zero emissions by 31 December 2050. It also inserts a new interim target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to

at least 50% below 2005 levels by 31 December 2030. It also revises the renewable electricity target to achieve 100% net renewable electricity generation in the State by 31 December 2030. The clause also makes amendments to refer to a 2005 baseline rather than a 1990 baseline for the purposes of determining the method of calculating greenhouse gas emissions in relation to the new targets, and makes other consequential changes.

6—Amendment of section 6—Functions of Minister

This clause makes a consequential change to include specific reference to the *2030 interim target* in relation to the function of the Minister to promote early action to meet the SA target, or any sector-based or other interim target under the Act.

7—Amendment of section 14—Policies

This clause makes a consequential change to include specific reference, in relation to developing policies, to the generation (and not just use) of renewable energy in seeking to apply up-to-date practices and methodologies in calculating renewable energy.

Mr ODENWALDER: I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes 24
Noes 14
Majority 10

AYES

Andrews, S.E.	Bettison, Z.L.	Boyer, B.I.
Brock, G.G.	Brown, M.E.	Champion, N.D.
Clancy, N.P.	Close, S.E.	Cook, N.F.
Fulbrook, J.	Hildyard, K.A.	Hood, L.
Hughes, E.J.	Hutchesson, C.L.	Koutsantonis, A.
Michaels, A.	Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)	Pearce, R.K.
Piccolo, A.	Picton, C.J.	Stinson, J.M.
Szakacs, J.K.	Thompson, E.L.	Wortley, D.

NOES

Basham, D.K.B.	Bell, T.S.	Cowdrey, M.J.
Ellis, F.J.	Hurn, A.	McBride, P.N.
Patterson, S.J.R.	Pederick, A.S.	Pisoni, D.G.
Pratt, P.	Speirs, D.J. (teller)	Teague, J.B.
Telfer, S.J.	Whetstone, T.J.	

PAIRS

Malinauskas, P.B.	Marshall, S.S.	Mullighan, S.C.
Gardner, J.A.W.	Savvas, O.M.	Tarzia, V.A.

Motion thus carried; debate adjourned.

ELECTORAL (TELEPHONE VOTING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 15 June 2022.)

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (11:05): I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes 24

Noes 14

Majority 10

AYES

Andrews, S.E.
 Brock, G.G.
 Clancy, N.P.
 Fulbrook, J.
 Hughes, E.J.
 Michaels, A.
 Piccolo, A.
 Szakacs, J.K.

Bettison, Z.L.
 Brown, M.E.
 Close, S.E.
 Hildyard, K.A.
 Hutchesson, C.L.
 Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)
 Picton, C.J.
 Thompson, E.L.

Boyer, B.I.
 Champion, N.D.
 Cook, N.F.
 Hood, L.
 Koutsantonis, A.
 Pearce, R.K.
 Stinson, J.M.
 Wortley, D.

NOES

Basham, D.K.B.
 Ellis, F.J.
 McBride, P.N.
 Pisoni, D.G.
 Telfer, S.J.

Bell, T.S.
 Gardner, J.A.W.
 Patterson, S.J.R.
 Pratt, P.
 Whetstone, T.J.

Cowdrey, M.J.
 Hurn, A.
 Pederick, A.S.
 Teague, J.B. (teller)

PAIRS

Malinauskas, P.B.
 Marshall, S.S.

Speirs, D.J.
 Savvas, O.M.

Mullighan, S.C.
 Tarzia, V.A.

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (JUSTICE MEASURES) BILL*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 June 2022.)

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (11:10): I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes 24

Noes 14

Majority 10

AYES

Andrews, S.E.
 Brock, G.G.
 Clancy, N.P.
 Fulbrook, J.
 Hughes, E.J.
 Michaels, A.
 Piccolo, A.
 Szakacs, J.K.

Bettison, Z.L.
 Brown, M.E.
 Close, S.E.
 Hildyard, K.A.
 Hutchesson, C.L.
 Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)
 Picton, C.J.
 Thompson, E.L.

Boyer, B.I.
 Champion, N.D.
 Cook, N.F.
 Hood, L.
 Koutsantonis, A.
 Pearce, R.K.
 Stinson, J.M.
 Wortley, D.

NOES

Basham, D.K.B.
Ellis, F.J.
McBride, P.N.
Pisoni, D.G.
Telfer, S.J.

Bell, T.S.
Gardner, J.A.W.
Patterson, S.J.R.
Pratt, P.
Whetstone, T.J.

Cowdrey, M.J.
Hurn, A. (teller)
Pederick, A.S.
Teague, J.B.

PAIRS

Malinauskas, P.B.
Marshall, S.S.

Speirs, D.J.
Savvas, O.M.

Mullighan, S.C.
Tarzia, V.A.

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

The SPEAKER: I am informed by the Clerk that there is a super subtle difference between a postponement and an adjournment, an adjournment being required where debate has already commenced.

ANIMAL WELFARE (JUMPS RACING) AMENDMENT BILL*Second Reading*

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (11:14): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of this piece of legislation that has come down from the upper house with broad, if not universal, support. What this legislation does is to create certainty for an industry that has had a degree of uncertainty and, one might say, a bit of internal turmoil in determining what it wants to do about the sport of jumps racing. The industry itself has made the decision as a whole, if not in uniformity, to desist from offering jumps racing in South Australia.

In so doing, it joins all other jurisdictions but Victoria. Queensland, in fact, stopped in 1903; Western Australia in 1941; New South Wales banned the practice through legislation—the only other state to ban it through legislation—in 1997; Tasmania in 2007; and last year Racing SA made the decision that it would no longer continue to offer jumps racing events. There was, as I understand it, a Senate committee held in 1991 that recommended a phase-out and I suppose, apart from Victoria, this is the last of those stages of phase-out.

There are multiple reasons why this is an appropriate step to take, albeit one that needs to be taken carefully and with due consideration. It is not lightly that a parliament moves to ban an activity, even if that activity has already ceased to exist voluntarily. Reasons that this has been suggested as a sport that no longer has a place—and indeed, the reasons that Racing SA gives for no longer offering the sport itself—are financial, economic and logistical reasons. When Racing SA made the announcement last year, they said:

Despite the efforts of all industry stakeholders to maintain a jumps racing program in SA, declining participation levels and horse numbers have made the industry unsustainable and unworkable.

Racing SA's current data shows that there are fewer than 10 jumps horses currently in South Australia compared with more than 2,400 registered thoroughbreds across the state. A total of 12 jumps races were held in 2020 to 2021, with field sizes falling to fewer than five horses per race. This compares with the growth being experienced in flat races, where field sizes grew to an average of 9.7 runners.

As I understand it, usually the prize that is offered does not cover the cost of training, and the majority of owners have been making a loss for a substantial period of time. Further, I understand

that there are currently no jumps racing jockeys who reside in South Australia. It seems that this is a sport that has essentially moved on already.

There is an argument that goes to the question of whether jumps racing is a natural activity for horses, and I accept that there will be multiple sides of that debate. I refer to the University of Sydney's Dr McGreevy who has suggested—and I am paraphrasing rather than explicitly quoting—that wild horses jump only when it is unavoidable and when they are fleeing danger. The University of Kentucky's Dr Tobin has argued that the bone structure of horses is not designed for the kind of activity required by jumps racing, which is frequent jumping over a prolonged period of time. This may explain why there has been a growing chorus of people regarding jumps racing as a cruel activity with unacceptable injuries.

The RSPCA, I think, have best summarised the case on that front in their most recent correspondence with me, and I imagine with other members of parliament. They have undertaken a study of the activity of jumps racing in Victoria in the most recent season, responding to the argument that has been rehearsed occasionally here, not only in the media but in the other place in debating this very bill, that jumps racing has been made safer through a new version of hurdles.

Looking at the stewards' reports for all the jumps race programs in Victoria this year, twice as many horses bumped or collided with other horses in jumps racing compared with flat races, four times more horses and jockeys fell in jumps races than in flat races, three times more horses were injured in jumps than flats and twice as many horses bled from the lungs following jumps races due to overexertion than in flat races. Indeed, there were 12 jumps races held in Victoria and there were 12 horses that fell—so an average of one per race, although I believe that in some cases there was more than one in a race.

Four per cent of horses fell in jumps races in that period, with no horses falling in flat races. Twelve per cent of horses sustained injuries in jumps racing, compared with only 4 per cent in flat races. That argues for a concern on animal welfare grounds. So, too, does it argue that the reason it has become unsustainable is that the public in general has decided that this is not a sport they wish to view and has therefore contributed to the sustainability.

I would like to quote from a speech that, although delivered by the Hon. Connie Bonaros, I believe was written on behalf of the Hon. Frank Pangallo, who was not able to attend the debate in the other place at the time. She said:

Since 2009, there have been 19 reported deaths as a result of jumps racing in South Australia. In more recent times, at Oakbank's replacement meeting at Pakenham in April, where not one South Australian trainer was represented at the meeting, three horses fell and an additional four had to be retired from the race, meaning...14 per cent of horses failed to finish...

At the recent Warrnambool May Racing Carnival, the biggest jumps carnival in Australia where, again, not one South Australian trainer was represented in jumps events, four horses fell and...three had to be retired...meaning seven out of 70, or 10 per cent, of horses failed to finish.

There is a clear concern observed from the facts that there are more risks for horses and, indeed, for jockeys through jumps racing, and it is likely that the public response to that has led to this decline in the industry being sustainable in any way. While it is difficult to agree to ban a sport—to ban an industry may be overstating it, given that there are only 10 horses and the events have already stopped—it is something that I believe this parliament should do in all good conscience in order to create certainty for the industry.

The reputational harm of jumps racing is one reason, I believe, that Racing SA have decided that they need to step away from jumps racing; that people in observing jumps racing can be forgiven for thinking that that represents the risk for all racing, which it simply does not; and that certainty will probably assist a number of people in the industry who are concerned about the rolling internal turmoil that has been occurring over the last several months; indeed, I have had much representation to that effect.

In summary, this bill not only creates certainty and is consistent with what is clearly the position of the majority of the public, and is consistent with the position that the industry has taken, but it is not stopping anything that is occurring currently. It is not occurring for reasons that the racing industry has been very clear to articulate.

It is in this legislation, however, very clear that we are not attempting to prevent and will not prevent any training to occur. If there is training that is occurring—I imagine particularly in the South-East, but not exclusively—that might go over the border for participation in events in Victoria, that is of course okay. It is also as explicit that other events that involve some jumps, including showjumping, equestrian eventing, cross-country and so on, will not be prevented, nor, too, will the activity of publishing the information about the racing and advertising jumps racing occurring interstate. All this does is confirm the position already taken by Racing SA that there will be no more jumps racing.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Tammy Franks on having persisted in bringing this legislation forward on multiple occasions. I would like to thank my caucus in supporting that we might make this decision to be consistent with animal welfare standards, with what the industry wants and with what the public expects. I commend the bill to this house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Colton, I recognise the presence in the gallery of guests of the member for Waite, in particular young Mr Harrison Giles-Smith. Welcome to the Giles-Smith family and, in particular, welcome to Harrison.

Motions

STATE BUDGET 2021-22

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (11:25): Thank you, sir, and welcome, Harrison. I move:

That this house commends the Marshall Liberal Government for its strong budgetary management, confirmed by:

- (a) meeting its commitments to eliminate payroll tax on small business, slash the emergency services levy for families and business and cut water bills, while providing support to families and businesses during COVID-19 totalling more than \$4 billion;
- (b) delivering a 2021-22 budget which returns the operating balance to surplus in 2022-23; and
- (c) delivering upgrades to South Australia's credit rating by rating agencies.

When we came to government in 2018, South Australia's economy was lagging behind. That is because our taxes were too high. It was the same with our water prices: they were too high for far too long. The former Liberal government changed this. We delivered on our commitments to eliminate payroll tax on small business, slash the emergency services levy for families and small businesses, and cut water bills.

Under Labor, payroll tax—a tax on jobs growth which disincentivised business from growing—was paid by all South Australian small businesses with a payroll under \$1½ million, costing businesses up to \$44,500 extra a year. This was abolished in our first year in government, saving over 3,000 South Australian small businesses from this job-wrecking tax. Our abolition of payroll tax for small business was a \$157 million investment in the engine room of our economy here in this state.

We cut emergency services levy bills by \$95.5 million a year, providing an average saving of \$184 per household back into the pockets of South Australians, an approximate 50 per cent reduction compared with the former Labor government's position. From 1 July 2020 average households began saving approximately \$200 each year on water bills, while average businesses began saving \$1,350.

As you are aware, Mr Speaker, this was on the back of an independent inquiry into water pricing in South Australia that was conducted in 2019. It found that the former Labor government ignored advice and criticism by the Essential Services Commission of South Australia (ESCOSA) and other stakeholders by deliberately inflating the value of SA Water's regulatory asset base by at least \$520 million, in 2012 dollars, to the value of \$7.77 billion to maximise profits and protect government revenues, but this drove up water bills for South Australians.

At the same time as lowering costs for South Australians, we did more to transform our state's economic opportunities than Labor did in the 16 years it was last in office. In four years, we delivered near record low unemployment rates and historically high economic growth. In 2018, when we came to government, Labor had failed to turn a surplus in seven of the previous 10 years. There were structural issues riddled through the budget. Forward assumptions and projected surpluses had been predicated on savings tasks being achieved, particularly in health, and we now know that these were never achieved.

One-off budget-boosting hits were a staple when the member for West Torrens was in the business of selling anything that was not nailed down. The Labor Party's privatisation legacy is long: SA Lotteries, the forests, the lands titles office and the Motor Accident Commission. These privatisation activities robbed the state of future revenue streams and, further, put pressure on the long-term budget position.

The structural budget changes that were pushed through in 2018 saw S&P upgrade the state's credit rating to AA+, having been downgraded twice under the former Labor government in 2012, from AAA down to AA+, down to AA. At the same time, in 2012 Moody's also downgraded the state's credit rating. Then we entered 2020, and the world came to grips with what we now know as COVID-19. I still remember the early media commentary around the virus: what was it, what will it end up being, will this be our first pandemic in so many years, and what impacts can or will it have?

We now know that the WHO declared COVID-19 a worldwide pandemic on 11 March 2020. In early 2020, the Australian border closed and state borders closed quickly after. An unparalleled health crisis and an unparalleled economic crisis came, coincidentally in parallel. South Australians would agree that this was nothing compared with the financial and economic challenges we were to confront.

Not a single member here would have imagined or wanted a scenario where we were preparing budgets in the context of the Governor of the Reserve Bank, the federal Treasury Secretary, and national and business economic commentators all urging governments of all persuasions to keep spending and incurring massive increases in debt and deficits and to continue to expand their balance sheets, but this is what confronted the previous government.

This was a liquidity crunch like no other we have seen, and the former government did what was required and the results speak for themselves. The biggest impact of course was felt during the second quarter of 2020, when the country virtually came to a standstill, from both a movement perspective and a liquidity perspective. Consumption dropped, as did government revenues, jobs were lost and stress levels were high. Support was needed and a rebound plan necessary.

The former Liberal government provided a more than \$4 billion stimulus package to support households and businesses during the period of COVID-19. This was seen by way of business support grants, tax relief, water bill relief, a rental freeze, grant schemes, support for major event cancellations, school and preschool maintenance projects, \$10,000 grants for small businesses, and multiple other rounds of support. Port upgrades, housing construction stimulus, tourism sector support, hospital, sporting club, roads, jetties, visitor centres and other infrastructure projects kept our economy afloat.

These are just a few of the measures that were delivered, along with infrastructure spending, that kept our economy ticking along over that period. We funded what was required from a health perspective over that period. Essentially, we provided all the funding that was necessary to keep South Australians safe, to save as many South Australian lives as possible.

From early 2020 onwards, we supported quarantine facilities, testing stations, vaccines, app development, emergency services activities, arrival checks, cleaning, PPE, masks and RAT tests. While managing the largest health and economic crisis, we also continued to deliver state-changing infrastructure projects at Lot Fourteen, on our road network from Port Augusta to Portrush Road and across nearly every area of our state. We worked on the road maintenance backlog left to us by the former government, we upgraded hospitals and we built new schools and significantly upgraded others.

Yes, government debt has increased—necessarily so. In the general government sector, this reflects the government's response to, and the revenue reductions from, the COVID-19 pandemic, public infrastructure spending—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COWDREY: —additional funding for health—

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for West Torrens is called to order.

Mr COWDREY: —as well as costs associated with responding to the recovery from the 2019 bushfires, a significant event that we should never forget and one that I know you, sir, will never forget. But what was the alternative? Was it that we did not support—

The Hon. N.D. Champion interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Taylor!

Mr COWDREY: —the cash injections—

The Hon. N.D. Champion interjecting:

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

Mr COWDREY: —to business in their time of need?

Mr Tarzia interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hartley!

Mr COWDREY: Was it that we continued to demand tax from people who could not afford it or that we did not intervene and provide stimulus spending that created and retained jobs around infrastructure projects? The then opposition were all too quick to demand more support but also all too keen to criticise increased debt. You cannot have your cake and eat it too.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COWDREY: The measures introduced by our government, both pre COVID—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for West Torrens is called to order.

Mr COWDREY: —and in response to COVID, were framed in two ways—

The Hon. N.D. Champion interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Taylor!

Mr COWDREY: —to create jobs and to sustain jobs and to provide business with confidence to employ more South Australians and to continue to invest in our state. We left government with nation-leading business confidence. Even so, our careful budget management means we will return to an operating surplus this financial year, as confirmed by the Mid-Year Budget Review and the current government's own budget.

Our state's financial position has also been boosted by government revenue receipts from upward revisions based on the strength of our economic rebound. This was no easy feat, based on what we faced over the past few years. Some said that the State Bank collapse was the biggest economic challenge we would ever face. It is clear that those events now take a back seat to the events that we have faced since early 2020.

While it was challenging, we are proud of the economic management that we put forward over the past four years. We did what was required of us to fix the ongoing structural issues and the mess that was left to us by the Labor Party and then respond in a sensible and measured way to COVID-19. Our response was nation leading and resulted in significant job creation, record growth and nation-leading business confidence. The Liberal Party will always deliver strong economic management that is suitable for the times and the challenges that we are presented.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (11:37): Obviously the government opposes this piece of rewriting of history. I would just point out to the shadow treasurer that if everything he said were true about business confidence and business delight at their stewardship of the economy why did business so comprehensively reject them at the last election? Why are so many business leaders out there saying that they voted Labor for the first time in their lives? Perhaps it is not because of the member's speech and the tinted glasses through which he looks at the last four years. Perhaps it is because, over the last four years, the former Premier and his Treasurer set about dismantling the Liberal Party's core value of being pro business.

When we talk about debt, the former government inherited a general government sector debt of around \$6 billion and, in their first budget, they increased that debt by \$10 billion before we had even heard of the term COVID-19. What was that \$10 billion for? It was for recurrent spending—they were borrowing money to spend on recurrent expenditure. Yet the shadow treasurer gets up to talk about their fiscal genius in running a budget.

Then, of course, they talk about their tax cuts. The shadow Treasurer claimed that every small business paid payroll tax, ignoring that there was a tax-free threshold of up to \$600,000. Did he correct the statement in the parliament, or did he just not know that there was a tax-free threshold? Of course there was a tax-free threshold, and payroll tax was cut by the previous government. It was reduced.

But, of course, we cut taxes on a scale members opposite only dream about. We abolished an entire stamp duty on all commercial transactions. That tax cut is worth billions, not hundreds of millions, and the changes that has made to family businesses in South Australia are being borne out even today. Changes to motor registration, which the former government took credit for, were as a result of the ending of the Motor Accident Commission issuing third-party premiums and that being open to competitive processes by insurance companies, which members opposite opposed and then tried to take credit for. They are happy to spend the money on Labor projects that we had announced in the 2017 budget, claiming them to be their own.

Then we get to tax cuts. Well, let's talk about land tax, which I did not hear very much about in the member's discussion. Land tax in South Australia is a vexing issue. Why? Most South Australian investors are investing in property for a reason. They can see and touch it, it is close to them, it is easy to manage, it is a market that is well known, it is stable. What did the Liberal Party do? The Liberal Party decided to bring in aggregation laws that have fundamentally made it almost uneconomic for any small to medium-sized businesses, entrepreneurs or mum-and-dad investors to purchase another property.

Why did they do that? Because they could. They had banked in the 2022 election and banked in the 2026 election, and arrogance had overtaken them within months of taking office: a Premier who was out of touch and not listening, enjoying the high life rather than doing his job, and a former Treasurer who had cast a spell over the entire cabinet and did as he pleased.

The result is that after one term they are in opposition, and we get motions congratulating themselves on losing. If everything you had said in this motion were true, you would be standing here and I would be over there, but of course that did not happen. Why? Because what we just heard was a fairytale. It is not true. It did not happen. It is not the perception of what people went through. People did not see the economic management of the former government as something that was worthwhile or helping business. In fact, businesses could not wait to see the back of them.

If the swings that they received on the weekend in Bragg are not a signal that your base is leaving you, then what is? So self-congratulatory motions serve no purpose. In fact, you should know better, because I think the member is better than that. I have to say their record of management of

budgets is deplorable, and in the last two governments it has been the same Treasurer. They could not find one after 16 years and went back to the same bloke they had previously.

From our last budget in 2018 state debt has doubled under the previous government, doubled in four years: a debt-to-revenue ratio that went from below 35 per cent to over 100—and we are being lectured about economic management. If we had not acted in this budget through the Treasurer's sound management and the cabinet's prudent support of his measures, government debt would have been \$64 billion by 2035-36.

After having cut taxes like the emergency services levy and reducing payroll tax, how did they pay for those? Well, in the subsequent budgets they increased public hospital parking fees, they increased the cost of a tradie getting a certificate, they increased car registration and licence fees and then they went after land tax. They went after their base, and they went after them hard.

I have to say that we are projecting surpluses across the forward estimates because we want to support jobs, we want to prudently manage our debt and we want to make sure that we maintain a level of fiscal discipline. What we will not allow is one man, like the former Treasurer Rob Lucas, to treat the state treasury as his personal plaything and to treat the wallets and budgets of households across South Australia as if it is his discretion to do with as he pleases, like he did with land tax.

In terms of the credit ratings, the former Labor government provided budgetary management at a level that was classified as AA+ (stable). That then, under the Marshall government, went to AA+ (negative outlook), yet the Premier during the election campaign was publicly saying that they inherited a poor credit rating, but they were downgraded from where we left them. I would enjoy the former Premier saying that statement in the parliament now and see how he goes, but of course he will not because that would be misleading.

The rhetoric of the opposition is that they think if they say something enough, even though it is factually wrong, people will just believe it. Well, the people of South Australia did not believe them. They trashed the budget over the last four years, and their reckless management of South Australia's economy has been punished. They got punished at the polls and they got punished again on the weekend, and they still have not learned because they are turning up and moving motions in the parliament as if they have learnt nothing. Everything was fantastic over the last four years, there were no concerns, nothing to learn from, we made no mistakes, our management was perfect—that is the message the people of South Australia hear from these types of motions. How about listening?

After we were in office for 16 years we embarked on a program of out there and listening, and the Leader of the Opposition at the time, Mr Malinauskas, said this: 'If all of our policies were right we would have been re-elected, but they weren't, so we have to listen about what we got wrong.' What part of this motion says, 'We will listen to the mistakes we made'? None. This motion says, 'The public got it wrong, we were right, they just do not understand our genius.' That is what that motion says.

Mr Brown: Keep thinking it.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Whoever asks—keep thinking it, don't go changing, don't change your strategy, keep on pretending you were robbed.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:47): I rise to speak on the motion in regard to the fiscal management of the former Marshall government. I am very proud to have served in that government and proud that the member for Colton has brought this on. This motion is as follows:

That this house commends the Marshall Liberal government for its strong budgetary management, confirmed by—

- (a) meeting its commitments to eliminate payroll tax on small business, slash the emergency services levy for families and business and cut water bills, while providing support to families and business during COVID-19 totalling more than \$4 billion;
- (b) delivering a 2021-22 budget which returns the operating balance to surplus in 2022-23; and
- (c) delivering upgrades to South Australia's credit rating by rating agencies.

Before I go into some of that, we have just been preached to by the member for West Torrens who obviously has a short memory of a lot of the budgetary mismanagement that Labor had in the past.

The former member for Port Adelaide, Kevin Foley, had a building that he committed to sell that he did not own the land under. The government of the day—the previous Labor government before we came into power—and Kevin Foley, the previous member for Port Adelaide, were so committed to selling this building until someone suddenly tapped them on the shoulder one day and said, 'Hang on, you can't do that. You actually don't own the land, and you don't own the building.' How disgraceful.

An honourable member: Outrageous!

Mr PEDERICK: It is outrageous. Then we saw what was sold off by the people opposite when they were in government previously: the Lotteries Commission, the lands titles office, the Motor Accident Commission—

Mr Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Florey!

Mr PEDERICK: —and the forests, which they did not sell: they gave away—

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for West Torrens!

Mr PEDERICK: —for \$650 million. It was worth at least \$1 billion and you know it, member for West Torrens—you know it. The former member for Mount Gambier had to step aside. The former minister, Minister McEwen, had to step aside from his role because he knew how disgraceful it was for his community in the South-East. He knew how disgraceful a position it was. He was done over by his own mates in the Labor Party to give away the forests.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: The minister smirks and carries on on the other side, but he is well aware—

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for West Torrens!

Mr PEDERICK: You had your time. He smirks and carries on over there, as he does. They gave it away, disrupted the South-East, disrupted the livelihoods of all those people reliant on those forests. It was not just part of South Australia; they had forests in Victoria as well. I was the shadow spokesperson at the time and, as I said, the former minister, Minister McEwen, stepped away, scuttled out of sight, he was so disgraced. He was being done over by his Labor mates. That is what happens when rats get caught up in a ship like that.

It was disgraceful for the economy of the South-East. Then we have the member for West Torrens presiding over the Gillman land deal, which was going to bring thousands of jobs for the oil and gas industry in South Australia. How did that go? How well did that go? Not one job—not one job. The only jobs that came out of that process ended up in a courtroom under an ICAC probe. That is what happened with the Gillman land deal—not one job for the vital oil and gas industry in South Australia.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Florey! Member for West Torrens!

Mr PEDERICK: I want to now talk about what we have—

Mr Odenwalder interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Elizabeth!

Mr PEDERICK: I want to now talk about the issues—

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: No, it's alright—go to town. I want to now talk about what we did do in the Marshall Liberal government—

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for West Torrens!

Mr PEDERICK: —reducing that payroll tax burden on 3,000 businesses, saving \$157 million, a great job to assist small and medium businesses in South Australia; \$95 million on the emergency services levy, every year that was saved—\$380 million that was saved for the citizens of South Australia for the vital provision of emergency services vehicles in this state, but we still managed to provide those vehicles.

The emergency services levy funds right across the board, whether it is the Metropolitan Fire Service, the Country Fire Service, the State Emergency Service, the Volunteer Marine Rescue and SAFECOM or the rescue components of Surf Life Saving South Australia, the South Australia Police rescue and the State Rescue Helicopter Service.

This came in, but also recognising some organisations that were made exempt, noticing the contribution they made to emergency services across the board. These are vital funds, but we managed to save that amount of money over four years to assist the people of South Australia in their budgetary outcomes.

I look at what happened with SA Water. We reduced water costs for people right across the state, whereas the previous government overinflated the asset base of SA Water by over \$500 million and so overcharged the good people of South Australia. That means the farmers, like in my area—and I am on the same pipeline, the water for my property comes off the Keith pipeline, and there are other pipelines from the River Murray that go right around the state, right over to Ceduna, to the Yorke Peninsula, the Mid Murray, over a fair swag of the state's landmass—were being overcharged.

People were working out different ways that they could use that salty groundwater, which is too salty through our water from Tailem Bend down to Keith, and 'shandy' it with desalinated water from out of that groundwater with the River Murray water to save costs. They were putting in their own water catchment areas with tarpaulins and dams to save water. This is people spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to make sure that their water prices could be sustainable for them into the future.

We did have a solid commitment and I think we did a magnificent job during the COVID-19 onset into South Australia in March 2020. The shadow treasurer has pointed out the projects that we took on and how we managed that and I think we managed it as well if not better than anywhere else in the world. I think this state was the safest state in the safest country in the world in COVID-19 management. When you think about the previous pandemic, the Spanish flu, it was 100 years ago, and the things we had to put in place on this occasion were harsh, particularly for the people in border communities, which I represent with Pinnaroo and then Murrayville on the other side and associated communities.

It was tough. A lot of people in areas that were not impacted as much as the border communities have no idea about the tests they were having weekly. This was so that they could cross borders in order to work their businesses, work their farms and just get on with life, just to get the health people across the border, just to get the teachers across the border and to get the biosecurity workers across the border. We poured in hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars to support communities, to put those healthcare workers out on the frontline and help keep South Australia safe.

I commend this motion by the member for Colton and I support the work of the previous Marshall Liberal government that I was incredibly proud to serve under.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta) (11:57): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this motion on behalf of residents in the seat of Morialta for whom the issues raised in this motion are tremendously important. I commend the member for Colton, the shadow treasurer, for bringing it to the attention of the house. At its heart, this motion talks about the cost of living and the cost of doing business here in South Australia. Indeed, it notes that it was a priority for the Marshall Liberal government, in office from 2018-22, to run strong budgetary management to enable relief on the cost of living for residents and householders, relief for the cost of doing business in South Australia and particularly for small businesses. So many of those small businesses are run by people

who live in my electorate and, indeed, who are employing people who live in my electorate of Morialta.

Of course, during that four-year period, there was the extraordinary and pretty much in modern terms unprecedented challenge of the coronavirus pandemic. When we had that pandemic and the challenges that we faced we responded in a way that was completely supported by the Reserve Bank governor who urged premiers and urged governments to put money in the economy, to support businesses, to support communities in a way that in normal times would be a large, large, large amount of money. But we did that because it helped keep our state safe. It helped ensure that people could stay in jobs and, indeed, the state has benefited through improved credit ratings.

I want to talk particularly about the cost of living and the cost of doing business. Between 2018 and 2022, South Australian families saw significant benefits through reductions in their electricity bills and reductions in their water bills. The way the Marshall Liberal government approached water pricing, by reviewing the real value of the asset so that the government was not benefiting from more money coming into government coffers from SA Water through an inappropriate valuation of the asset, returned money to families. Families in Morialta are hundreds of dollars better off as a result of that. The reduction in electricity bills between 2018 and 2022 was significant.

The elimination of payroll tax is not just a significant benefit for small businesses, it is not just a significant benefit for the people who are more likely to be employed as a result of the abolition of payroll tax on any business with a payroll of less than \$1.5 million, but it is a statement by the state government, by the former Marshall Liberal government, that payroll tax has no place in blocking the employment of people in South Australia. Some people may have forgotten that payroll tax was instituted as a measure to suppress employment.

Payroll tax was introduced during the war when the government wanted to make sure there were more young people available to serve in the armed forces, not taking up positions in businesses. It was designed to stop businesses from employing people but, for decades and decades, governments became addicted to the revenue created by payroll tax, particularly the wicked revenue created by payroll tax on small businesses. It took the Marshall Liberal government to dramatically lift the threshold so that no small business employing 10 or 15 people would pay payroll tax any longer, and certainly no small business with a payroll under \$1.5 million.

That was one of the reasons I got interested in politics—my family's business. In the early 1990s, the recession we had to have had happened. As a young person, as a teenager who was potentially more interested in politics as a result of this than most 13 year olds would be, I saw on the TV that there were people lining up wanting jobs. I heard from my dad, chatting to his accountant with my mum, that they were being encouraged to think about the implications of payroll tax on the business if they employed more people, if they took all the jobs that they were able to get, because they would go over the payroll tax threshold. It would not necessarily be in the company's interests.

Ever since then, I have had a very strong interest in ensuring that small businesses are enabled by government to employ people, that small businesses are enabled by government so that people who are putting skin in the game can get the reward for effort and can employ other South Australians. I was very proud to be part of a government that abolished payroll tax on small business. It goes down as one of a great number of legacies of Steven Marshall's term as Premier of the Marshall Liberal government that we can be very proud of.

I understand the government has indicated that they are going to be opposing this motion. That is disappointing, and I think they should reflect on that. Government members should reflect on what it says to the community in South Australia that the government would oppose a motion that heralds the benefits of reducing the cost of living for South Australians and reducing the cost of doing business for South Australian businesses. It has no practical impact on the way they do their business, but it makes a statement that they do not support the reductions that were undertaken by the Marshall Liberal government, that they do not support the abolition of payroll tax on small business. That is the only conclusion we can draw if the government does vote against this motion.

If members opposite vote against the motion, what they are saying to their communities is that they do not support reducing the ESL levies, they do not support reducing water bills and they do not support the abolition of payroll tax on small business. They should think about that as they

are making their vote. I encourage all members to support this motion, and I once again place on the record my commendation for former Premier Marshall for, amongst many achievements, the reductions in cost-of-living pressures on South Australians and the abolition of payroll tax on small businesses.

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (12:04): I quickly thank members for their contributions to the motion this morning. As I respond to a couple of the points made, I think the opposition leader has already made it very clear publicly in regard to some of the points the member for West Torrens raised that by no means does the Liberal Party or the opposition believe that we got everything right over the last four years. Clearly, that is a statement that would not be true.

We have committed ourselves to going back out into the suburbs and into country towns to listen and to learn. That is what every good opposition does. We will be using the next four years to develop a suite of policies that we will take to the next election that will outline our vision for South Australia moving forward, one that will be positive and one that will be forward looking.

It was an incredibly long bow for the member for West Torrens to draw, as he so often does, to say that this motion says anything more than the words that are in this motion. I did notice and will note that the member for West Torrens also failed to reflect on his privatisation agenda for government, but that will not be lost on anybody.

This motion does nothing more than highlight the reforms that the former Liberal government implemented, designed to reduce the cost of living for South Australians and to reduce the cost of doing business for those small businesses in South Australia. They are the backbone of our economy. It is their growth that we will bank on to create the jobs for tomorrow and the jobs for our young people just leaving school.

In terms of our economy, our ambition for this state really does stem from a change in industry and from developing the new jobs for the future. Lot Fourteen is a perfect way of encapsulating that vision: that we want to see businesses moving here and we want to see South Australia as a place where businesses can start, can grow and can succeed.

I do not think that anyone on either side of this chamber would say that our response to COVID-19 was perfect. I think that statement is evidently true. But there was no playbook. We did the absolute best that we possibly could with the resources that were available to us and used every bit of intelligence that was available to us at the time the decisions were made. But certainly it is also true to say that comparatively our economy was as resilient as any jurisdiction, certainly in this country but most likely in the world.

On the back of what has been the biggest shock to our economy, the biggest shock to our community that we have seen in probably the past 100 years, we have come out the other side with the lowest unemployment in our state's history. We have come out the other side with the NAB Business Survey indicating nation-leading business confidence in South Australia and we have come out the other side with nation-leading and high levels of economic growth.

We definitely did something right—that goes without saying. It is a reflection on the settings that this government put forward, the response that this government put forward, but most importantly it is a reflection on the resilience of South Australians and South Australian businesses and for that I think everybody in this chamber will be grateful.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes 12
 Noes 23
 Majority 11

AYES

Basham, D.K.B.
 Gardner, J.A.W.
 Patterson, S.J.R.
 Pratt, P.

Cowdrey, M.J. (teller)
 Hurn, A.
 Pederick, A.S.
 Telfer, S.J.

Ellis, F.J.
 McBride, P.N.
 Pisoni, D.G.
 Whetstone, T.J.

NOES

Andrews, S.E.	Bettison, Z.L.	Boyer, B.I.
Brock, G.G.	Brown, M.E.	Champion, N.D.
Clancy, N.P.	Close, S.E.	Cook, N.F.
Fulbrook, J.	Hildyard, K.A.	Hood, L.
Hughes, E.J.	Hutchesson, C.L.	Koutsantonis, A.
Michaels, A.	Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)	Pearce, R.K.
Picton, C.J.	Stinson, J.M.	Szakacs, J.K.
Thompson, E.L.	Wortley, D.	

PAIRS

Marshall, S.S.	Mullighan, S.C.	Speirs, D.J.
Malinauskas, P.B.	Tarzia, V.A.	Savvas, O.M.

Motion thus negatived.

REGIONAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (12:14): I move:

That this house—

- (a) recognises the importance of South Australia's regions to the state's economy; and
- (b) recognises the opportunity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to shift workforces outside capital cities.

Over the last two years, Australia has experienced a monumental shift in the way we live and work because of the pandemic. For many of us it is the first time that people have worked from home when centralised offices closed down. It has obviously spawned the advancement of technologies that were probably already there, but the adoption had a much greater uptake through the pandemic period. Now we are looking at a post-pandemic era and there is a vast opportunity to change traditional work practices, to rethink the way that we operate.

One of the most frequently heard sentences during my eight years as the member for Mount Gambier has been that 'the government stops at the tollgate', and I am thankful to see that there is a change in attitude and a change of focus.

One of the great premiers of South Australia, Sir Thomas Playford, understood the concept of building the state through building the regions with investments like the Whyalla pipeline, Kimberly-Clark in Millicent, woods and forests in Mount Gambier, and major economic drivers like the Port Augusta power station. They all fuelled massive investment in regional areas, which led to jobs, population growth and the services that come along with that. It is time to try to take that philosophy and continue growing our regions through investment in regional South Australia, which again has the flow-on effect of population increase, because that is where the jobs are, and fuelling the state's economic prosperity through growing our regions.

I think it is a really wonderful time to look at those opportunities, and I am excited by the investment that this state government is making, not necessarily just in my area—for example, the hydrogen project when you fully understand what that is aiming to achieve. It will be a very important piece of government stimulus, government injection of funds, into the Whyalla and Upper Spencer Gulf communities, and that will see jobs being created and investment from outside. Countries like Germany that want to look at getting off Russian oil and gas are looking at hydrogen as a sustainable fuel for their country going forward. South Australia will play an incredibly important role around that progress going forward.

In terms of the Limestone Coast, obviously forestry is one of our major employers and something where, again, I have seen substantial investment going forward in this state budget towards not just the forestry of today but the forestry of the future. Investment in innovation, training

and skills is greatly welcomed in my electorate because that is where the jobs are going to be, which then leads to population growth and then leads to additional services being put on.

I also challenge that in terms of industries. We have an ability with modern technology to really promote our regions as a great place to work and a great place to raise kids and to enjoy a lifestyle here in South Australia. I think that the state government could do more in terms of promoting our regions as a place not just to visit but to relocate and to enjoy the benefits that regional life offers for many people.

The Minister for Health was talking in here in answer to a question I posed a couple of weeks ago that, at home, we are 70 full-time equivalent nurses short in our hospital system. That is 70 full-time jobs ready to go. I talk to teachers and principals, and there are good job opportunities in the Limestone Coast region. In fact, some principal positions are getting paid up to \$160,000 a year to attract that type of talent to our region. Also, police always have an issue and are continually recruiting. The jobs are there.

What I would like to see is a concerted effort, not just for my region but for all regions, and a working together of state government, local council and these agencies promoting the benefits of working and living in regional South Australia. Whilst we are making good headway, I think that investments like the hydrogen project and investments in forestry in the South-East are certainly steps in the right direction as a way of promoting and encouraging people not just from within the City of Adelaide and South Australia but from all around Australia—and potentially the world—to come to our regions and enjoy the benefits.

I think we have an amazing opportunity in a post-pandemic world to really grow our state through growing the regions.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:22): I rise in support of this motion by the member for Mount Gambier:

That this house:

- (a) recognises the importance of South Australia's regions to the state's economy; and
- (b) recognises the opportunity presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to shift workforces outside capital cities.

The regions are the powerhouse of this state's economy, generating many tens of thousands of jobs. A lot of it was due to the impost of the COVID-19 pandemic, but I think we have run out of housing in the regions, right across the board, from the west of the state right through to the east of the state. We will hear from other members soon in their contributions about how hard it is to get housing in regional areas.

We see communities right across the board working with builders, home owners and investors trying to get as many houses built as fast as possible, notwithstanding some of the interesting times people have with councils and getting approvals. A lot of the impacts are caused by supplies being hard to get, with a lot of inputs at least doubling in price—and some more—and supplies being scarce. For instance, someone locally was just trying to get hold of gyprock for a couple of projects.

The regions are booming, and I think a lot of it—apart from people wanting to come to the regions from bigger settled areas in the cities—was not just because of COVID-19 but because of the opportunities the former Marshall Liberal government gave to the regions as part of its close to \$18 billion worth of investment. It was investment in emergency departments, like my hospital in Murray Bridge with a new \$7 million emergency department built alongside a \$3 million upgrade to the operating theatres, or alongside the work we did in Strathalbyn with around \$20 million of projects towards aged care. The 36-bed memory unit for aged care at Strathalbyn is just world class, and we are still waiting as part of that commitment to see what the new government does with the Kalimna site.

There was also the \$30 million, in round numbers, that we put into education facilities in my electorate. This included a \$20 million upgrade at the high school in Murray Bridge, \$5 million that was allocated by us and is about to be invested at North School just opposite my office in Murray Bridge, \$3 million to upgrade classrooms at Langhorne Creek, \$2 million invested in the main

Strathalbyn campus of Eastern Fleurieu School, and somewhere around \$3½ million at Mannum Community College to upgrade STEM facilities and other buildings.

The investments were massive across the board. Look at what we did in some of the bigger projects like the duplication of the Joy Baluch Bridge, which was a massive project that made our connection through to the north and west so much better on a vital arterial freight route, and not just for freight but for locals commuting around Port Augusta. The Port Wakefield overpass was about a \$120 million project. I think there is still a bit of tidying up happening over there at the moment.

It is interesting when you drive through Port Wakefield if you have not done it for a while. I did a few weeks ago and there is a bit of navigation about which bit is one way, how you duck into the back of the BP and how you get out again. It is a vast improvement as not just a freight route but obviously to connect people through to the regions such as Yorke Peninsula, whether it is people who live there and farm there and work there or the many people who go over there to holiday or travel through.

We have made many upgrades, as I was speaking about here only yesterday. We committed \$215 million to do up a 472-kilometre section of the Strzelecki Track to make it far easier for people, whether they be pastoralists in the region or whether it be the oil and gas industry, or whether it be tourists like myself. I am very keen to get up there very shortly to see it before we do bituminise it completely, because it will change the nature of driving up there. This is a great project, opening up the state.

There were also the many road projects right across the board, whether they be for roads on Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, the Mid and Upper North, the South-East, or the east of the state. There were those eight roads that we committed to, and I have mentioned here long and loud about the Browns Well Highway and Ngarkat Highway. We spent \$42 million on getting them back to 110 km/h: a road train route. This is a vital route running down the eastern border of South Australia, linking up our Riverland and Mallee and South-East to get that vital production interstate and intrastate. This route is 200 kilometres of road length linking three electorates—well, at the time it was three electorates: Chaffey, Hammond and MacKillop.

The regions are a powerhouse of the community. Certainly, in the previous four years in government I saw at least \$215 million of state government money invested into my region in projects. Some of those projects are ongoing, like the Old Murray Bridge refurbishment I spoke about, and \$36 million is going into that project, which will be completed in about 18 months to two years. This is a vital project to keep up that connection in Murray Bridge.

There is \$5 million for the investigation into the duplication of the Swanport Bridge and the South-East links business case and there is \$10 million to look into the Greater Adelaide bypass and how we would get freight into Adelaide, notwithstanding that we have the northern freight route, which is operating and taking thousands of tonnes a week off the freeway. As I have said before, anything bigger than a B-double cannot come down the freeway anymore. Many freight companies are getting those efficiencies by hauling those bigger loads, sometimes notwithstanding a lot of extra kilometres at times. I fully support efficiencies so long as we have the roads to match it.

With some of the private investment that has come into the regions, we have seen Parilla potatoes under the Pye family invest about \$50 million on top of the many millions that they have invested at Parilla in the 20-plus years that they have been there. They invested in the horticultural industry, taking off a lot of freight that was going to Virginia and back to Parilla and then heading east mainly, or back into Adelaide and the rest of South Australia, with that produce.

Thomas Foods are at the start of a multimillion-dollar build at Murray Bridge, where the beef plant will be completed by the end of the year to get beef processing back underway in Murray Bridge after that terrible fire in early January 2018. I note alongside of that, in the member for MacKillop's electorate, that the feedlot is being doubled at Tintinara.

Just on that, there is another small community alongside communities like Pinnaroo and Lameroo that is benefiting from local industry investing in houses being built and rented by these business owners. It is very hard to find a house in Tintinara and Coonalpyn now because they need so many workers to work the feedlot. I note the utilisation of the Tintinara silos by Thomas Foods to

put grain in, and also sourcing hay from local growers. It is a great boom for local communities. When you come from a small community yourself, seeing that influx of people really changes the face of the region.

I fully concur with the member for Mount Gambier's motion. A lot of people, through COVID, have only just found out about the regions and, do you know what? They found out that it is a very good place to be, and it is a great place to live, work and have fun.

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (12:32): I also rise to express my strong support for this motion. As somebody who has lived in regional South Australia for most of my life, like all other regional members, I am deeply committed to the place that I live in and to the electorate that I serve. We all want to see the benefits of being in the region recognised, and we all want to see all that can be done to ensure that we do get growth in our regions.

We stand in a chamber that is, in a sense, a reflection of the historical and current strength of our regions—look at our floor. The grain industry is still the most powerful industry in this state when it comes to producing export revenue. We have the grape and wine industry that, up until today, is still an incredibly strong contributor to our state. When we look at this chamber and how ostentatious it is, it is the result of a copper boom in the 19th century. When that boom ended we got the upper house, which is nowhere near as ostentatious, so they missed out. The regions have been contributing to this state from the very beginning of the formation of South Australia.

We know that regional South Australia contains about 29 per cent of the population and it makes a \$31 billion, or thereabouts, contribution to our state, so its importance cannot be understated. Our government recognises the potential for economic and population growth across regional South Australia, and we are backing them strongly in the 2022-23 budget, delivering \$1.5 billion in new measures directly related to the regions over the forward estimates.

I come from the seat of Giles. A lot has been said about the future of hydrogen in our state, and it is going to be an incredibly strong future. I have been an advocate for hydrogen in South Australia going back to 2014-15, especially in Whyalla with its very significant comparative advantages of not just the presence of export facilities at Port Bonython but also the presence of the steelworks, which I would love to see green in the future—and green through hydrogen—replacing coking coal.

Indeed, the coke ovens in Whyalla were where my mother used to work. Occasionally I would pick her up, and she would be blackened by that place. To see hydrogen replace coking coal would be a massive step forward, both for the environment and also for the people who work at the steelworks—especially at the coke ovens—as long as we can transition them to the improved, refurbished plant.

If we are to realise the potential of regional South Australia, we need to invest in the people and in the communities of regional South Australia. Far too often services that are taken for granted in metropolitan Adelaide are simply not available or not up to the same standard in rural and regional areas, and there are lots of examples of this. Irrespective of the government that is in power, when you look at the history of South Australia, especially the more recent history, there has been a very strong metrocentric culture.

It is a culture that we in regional South Australia face. The default option is often Adelaide, and that is not a full recognition of what can be done and what the potential is of regional South Australia. I think that is changing, and changing rapidly, and I can name hydrogen as one element. It is incredibly important.

Something I have observed over the years is about having a strong economic base in your community and potentially, hopefully, a diversified economic base. If you have that, a lot of other good stuff flows: if you do not have that, a lot of problems come in its wake.

We are making very significant investments in health in regional South Australia, with \$305.7 million in new health care and \$58.6 million in new ambulance services. That is exclusively for regional South Australia. That is not to say that more does not need to be done, because obviously a lot more does need to be done when it comes to health in regional South Australia, especially when you look at the morbidity and mortality gap that exists between the metropolitan and regional areas.

That needs to be broken down still further into different parts of the metropolitan area and different parts of regional South Australia. There are a lot of people in regional communities who get by on low incomes, and that has a whole range of other consequences, especially when it comes to health.

There are going to be hospital upgrades in Gawler—I am sorry, but I do not call Gawler part of regional South Australia—Kingscote, Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Naracoorte, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Mount Barker, and you could question whether the Mount Barker is as well.

An honourable member: The Barossa.

Mr HUGHES: The Barossa obviously needs some assistance as well—but you are all close to Adelaide.

It is important we make those regional investments in regional roads. The bridge at Port Augusta was mentioned, but what is forgotten is that it was the Weatherill government that committed the funding at a state level to that particular bridge. They did it too late in the piece, in my opinion, but at least they made that commitment.

We need that investment in transport, education, training and skills, and primary industries needs more assistance. One of the things I really enjoyed about being the shadow minister for primary industries was getting out and meeting a lot of people in the aquaculture and fishing industries, in the pastoral industry and the grain industry. We should be doing more.

If I were to focus on what we should be doing, especially when it comes to agriculture and horticulture, government has an incredibly important role when it comes to funding research and development, especially with the challenges that are going to be faced over coming years with climate change. It is going to be a race between adaption and the rate of climate change.

Housing has been mentioned, and it is clearly one of the big issues in regional South Australia, and indeed the metropolitan area. We are getting on with the job. We are committing 150 of the 400 new homes being built by government to be in regional areas, bringing many more houses back online and able to be occupied once again. In my community there were 126 empty Housing Trust houses that could have been put to use, and that would be replicated in other regional communities. In my community in particular a quarter of the housing stock in Whyalla is Housing Trust stock, so it is important.

I would be the first to say that the housing policy we delivered in the budget, the funding we committed, will not go far enough. When it comes to housing we face major challenges. We need to be doing more, and we need essentially a 21st century version of the Housing Trust, one that can accommodate some of the most vulnerable in our community, but we should also turn our minds to having housing once again as it was during the Playford era, as it was during the Dunstan era, as part of industry policy, because there is market failure. So we do need to have far more innovative partnerships with both the non-government sector and the private sector when it comes to delivering housing, but there is also a role for government to do significant heavy lifting when we cannot bring together the partnerships needed in some areas to do the job that is needed to be done.

We all know that there are skill shortages across the board in regional South Australia. We still have people who are unemployed who need to be skilled up in some communities. We are making a commitment to invest in technical colleges in two of our regional communities. Another of our high schools have not just that potential but are working on school-based apprenticeships and other approaches. But there is a lot to be done. The regions are a great place to live and I am sure that all of us agree, especially those of us from regional South Australia.

Ms PRATT (Frome) (12:42): I rise to support this motion and I thank the member for Mount Gambier for giving the house the opportunity to elaborate. Representing the electorate of Frome, the population at Frome at the most recent 2021 Census was 38,000 people, a mere 2.13 per cent of the state's total population, but I note that from an economic viewpoint we do a lot of the heavy lifting.

The member's motion has given me the opportunity to tell a story through statistics. When I look at the economic drivers of regional South Australia, I note that industries that form the backbone of our regional economy include primary industries, energy and mining and, of course, tourism, of which Frome is again a significant contributor.

If I expand that out to agriculture, aquaculture—we have talked about horticulture, fisheries, food, wine and forestry—there are significant families and businesses that make their contributions to our state economy. Moreover, where families and businesses are involved, they become major employers for regional towns. So I reflect that our primary industry and agribusiness supported up to 74,000 full-time equivalents for the last financial year.

The regional visitor expenditure did decline from \$3.5 billion in 2019 to \$2.6 billion in 2022, and we note the significant impact of COVID-19 on the visitor economy, but I am happy to note that we are seeing a rebound in latest results back to \$3.6 billion. Parts of regional South Australia have seen periods of significant growth, as shown through monthly visitor expenditure.

I note that, through the local Yorke and Mid North RDA, Clare Valley has established its own targets and exceeded tourism targets well ahead of the 2025 year, which is significant. I think members have reflected that COVID has allowed South Australians to rediscover, or discover for the first time, a domestic tourist opportunity in their backyard.

This motion also gives me an opportunity to reflect on the Marshall Liberal government legacy and its commitment, as a party for the regions, through the significant investment it made, namely, \$3 billion worth across more than a thousand regional projects and certainly over \$100 million into the new electorate of Frome, which I have spoken about before in this place.

We were busy upgrading local country hospitals, doubling country cancer services and upgrading around 4,800 kilometres of regional roads. We were also building new and upgraded schools, improving local sports clubs and delivering new mobile phone towers to fix those wretched blackspots. After wide consultation with regional South Australians, we developed a first comprehensive regional development strategy to drive economic growth, to create jobs and to ensure that people have the services they need closer to home.

When it comes to regional health care, we invested in upgraded facilities and expanded services at regional hospitals, including Murray Bridge, Victor Harbor and Yorketown in Narungga. This work included a new emergency department at the Mount Barker hospital, a massive expansion of the Gawler hospital emergency department—although I note that the member for Giles does not recognise Gawler as regional—and progressing a new Barossa hospital, to the delight of the new member for Schubert.

We expanded renal dialysis services at the Mount Gambier and Ceduna hospitals. We doubled the number of medium-complexity country chemotherapy units, with expanded units in Victor Harbor, the Riverland and Port Lincoln. We introduced more flexible arrangements through the very essential Patient Assistance Transport Scheme for people who need to travel long distances for special medical treatment, and we invested \$20 million in the Rural Health Workforce Strategy to strengthen our rural health workforce.

When it comes to road infrastructure, we inherited a \$750 million backlog of road maintenance and took every day of the four years we had in government to make a difference. We were investing close to \$3 billion to build new roads in our regions and to improve the maintenance of the existing ones with upgrades, as I said, to around 4,800 kilometres of regional roads stretching around South Australia. We did this by sealing road shoulders, widening lanes, installing guard posts and resurfacing. As the former member for Flinders often reflected, wider roads are safer roads.

The litany of investment that we made in regional roads continues all the way around South Australia. I will pick up some highlights by starting with the bypass at Truro—the upgrade to the Sturt Highway. We upgraded and sealed the Strzelecki Track, and that allowed us to further open an important freight route. We built the overpass at the intersection of the Copper Coast Highway and the Augusta Highway at Port Wakefield, which was well overdue. In duplicating the Augusta Highway, we have seen that funding extended to Lochiel, with its beautiful bubblegum shores at Lake Bumbunga and the Lochiel monster—another great tourist destination.

We invested in the Penola Northern Bypass. We had a very overdue upgrade to the Horrocks Highway, from Wilmington to Gawler, and of course we saw investment in Kangaroo Island road upgrades. I make particular mention of the completion of the \$11 million Dublin saleyard upgrade project that supports the livestock industry in my electorate of Frome; a \$62.5 million upgrade of the Barrier Highway between Cockburn and Burra; and 300 kilometres of highway passing between the

northern townships of Olary, Yunta, Hallett and Mount Bryan. I make reference to these to validate the member's motion that investment in the regions sees returns to state coffers. Finally, in referencing regional roads, I want to pick up previous references to the final completion and duplication of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge in Port Augusta, something that was much needed for that township.

In regard to the economic profile of South Australia's regions I note that the contribution from the non-metropolitan region, or should I say regional SA, was around \$31.2 billion for the last financial year. The largest non-metropolitan regions in South Australia by gross regional product—so the really heavy lifters—were the Limestone Coast and the Murray Mallee, both contributing \$4.7 billion. By no mean feat, coming in second, was my own region, the Mid North, contributing \$4.5 billion. I repeat my earlier point that the hardworking families of Frome are certainly doing the heavy lifting.

The member for Mount Gambier will, I am sure, allow my indulgence for all things education. I know he shares that passion. I am proud of the investment the Marshall Liberal government made into education and therefore into building our future workforce. In the electorate of Frome, we saw millions and millions of dollars in total invested across the Balaklava High School, Clare preschool and high school, Eudunda Area School, Jamestown Community School, Tarlee Primary School and, significantly, the Kapunda High School, where we know, sadly, the original homestead of Sir Sidney Kidman, named Eringa, experienced a fire most recently.

The member for Mount Gambier made reference to the importance of the teaching workforce and the opportunity and the benefit that come from regions having solid infrastructure and therefore attracting a workforce. Certainly, teachers are naturally drawn to work in country SA. My own experience of working in Mount Gambier was a delightful decade spent in the South-East, but housing at the time was not an issue. It certainly is now.

In my own electorate of Frome, I know that Simon Rowe of Princess Royal Station, Warrick Duthy of the Watervale pub and other proprietors in hospitality and accommodation through the electorate find that in order to grow their business where they are ready to recruit they are having to combine it with almost a house and land package: they have to supply housing at the same time to secure the staffing, which requires urgent attention from this government.

I agree that good education supports the workforce shifting to the regions, but we need to address the housing shortfall to continue that retention and attraction. Regional SA certainly is a great place to work and live—the member for Hammond and I concur there—and it certainly contributes much to the economy from a much smaller population. I commend the motion to the house and note that, from a regional SA point of view, we are just getting started.

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (12:52): I, too, rise to support the motion of the member for Mount Gambier. I think it is always important that we acknowledge and recognise the significant contribution that regional South Australia makes to our economy. In fact, there are lots of people in my community of Schubert who often say to me that, without our farmers and without regional South Australia, we would be hungry, naked and sober. That is certainly a very sobering thought indeed.

I think that the regions epitomise the very best of our state. The amount of \$31.2 billion is the contribution that South Australian regions made in 2020-21. I would like to touch on two industries in particular: food and wine. They are two very prominent industries in my electorate of Schubert, and Schubert encapsulates, if I don't say so myself, the very best of the best when it comes to food and wine: the beautiful Barossa Valley and, of course, we have the northern part of the Adelaide Hills.

I would like to quickly reflect on the Barossa, for instance: a population of around 35,000 people, with wine grapes approximately \$140 million in value in the Barossa Valley and \$21 million in the Eden Valley. We have 14,000 hectares of viticulture and approximately \$941 million worth of value of output from the wine industry activities in 2019-20. We have agriculture and grazing of around \$20 million in production value and over 100 sheep, cattle and dairy farming businesses, my family included.

That is just a quick snapshot, and it does not take in the enormous contribution of the food bowl of the northern Adelaide Hills or the south-west of my electorate. This economic contribution is

really underpinned by the people who make up our regions. We are full of frugality and passion and resilience and a sense of get-up-and-go that is unparalleled anywhere else in the nation.

Their hard work, their passion and their sense of community are what pull people to the region, with a regional visitor expenditure result of around \$3.6 billion across regional South Australia, bouncing back to where we were from a pre-COVID perspective. I think we can all acknowledge—and indeed most members who have made contributions to this motion have acknowledged—the significant impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on our regional communities. It is so fantastic to be able to see that bounce back.

The former Marshall government had a really proud record of investing in regional communities, from infrastructure to health, to community infrastructure as well as to our sporting clubs. The member for Frome, who is my electorate neighbour, really touched on that in detail. Regional communities do not expect handouts from government. They have made a living off their own grit and determination and their stewardship of the land for decades and decades and decades. But they do want government to get out of the way and let them get on with what they do best, and that is producing food for South Australia.

But they do expect investments that reflect the serious heavy lifting they do for our economy. I am committed, like all those on this side of the house, to being a fighter for regional communities for as long as I am afforded the privilege of being in this place. I will of course unashamedly advocate for my community. It epitomises the very best of South Australia and has a country spirit like no other place. South Australia's future success and prosperity depend in large part on a strong and vibrant regional community, and I again voice my support for the member for Mount Gambier's motion.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (12:57): May I speak in favour of this great motion from the member for Mount Gambier and appreciate the sentiment that has been shared around this chamber. There are so many opportunities for our state that can be driven by our regions. We need to get the policy decisions right from state government to maximise those opportunities.

I have already shown in this place that I am a strong advocate for our regions in South Australia, regions that contribute so much. I have already put out the number a few times in this place: \$29 billion to the state's economy, and I think that number has now surpassed \$30 billion. These are incredible numbers when you compare them to the population that actually lives within our regions. In my region in particular, we have a broad range of production areas.

I want to highlight the agricultural sector to the state's economy: \$4 billion it puts in. In my electorate, it is 40 per cent of the state's wheat, 24 per cent of the state's barley and 22 per cent of the state's canola. There are opportunities for us as a state to invest back into our industries to maximise the opportunities. Our farmers, our primary producers, are always at the cutting edge of technology, and they are always willing to do what they can to maximise their production.

It is the same in the mining industry. The mining industry puts billions of dollars into our state's economy and provides thousands of jobs for South Australians. We need to make sure that we are investing those dollars back into our regions so that we support not only the industry we have now but the potential industry we could have. Aquaculture and fishing is exactly the same, and it is very prominent in my electorate of Flinders.

We see the horticultural sector going from strength to strength across our state, providing food on the table not just for us as South Australians but for Australia as a whole and the many export opportunities that there are. Primary production is all about producing export products, and the difference with export products is that it is actually bringing new money into our state's economy. It is not just churning the same money around and around, like some sectors; it is new money coming in.

I was interested to see a new report from the Commonwealth Bank and the Regional Australia Institute, which showed that regional migration is at a five-year high across Australia. The lifestyle and opportunities that are there in our regions are being recognised. It is wonderful to see so many young families choosing to make regional South Australia their home, and there is no doubt that this influx creates added strain on infrastructure and services. We cannot have those living in our regions being at a disadvantage—

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown): Loath as I am to interrupt the member, he might wish to seek leave to continue his remarks.

Mr TELFER: I seek leave to continue my remarks after the break.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 13:01 to 14:00.

Petitions

FREELING TOWN PUMP UPGRADE

Ms PRATT (Frome): Presented a petition signed by 68 residents of Freeling and greater South Australia requesting the house to urge the government to allocate funding for the Freeling town pump upgrade.

Ministerial Statement

KERLEY, MR D.N.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:01): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I rise to pay tribute to one of South Australia's most legendary sportsmen, Neil Kerley AM, following his tragic and unexpected death in a car accident last week on 29 June at the age of 88. AFL chief executive, Gillon McLachlan, has described Neil as the embodiment of football in South Australia, and I think that is the perfect summation of the man's influence on our great game.

The man they called 'Knuckles' was a larger than life character who did not suffer fools and who very much charted his own path both on and off the field. However, the thing that everyone whose life he touched agrees upon is that he always brought out the absolute best in the teams and the players he captained and coached.

His career numbers are outstanding. He played 275 games in the SANFL, between 1957 and his retirement in 1969, and captain-coached three teams to premiership wins. He first led West Adelaide to a comprehensive victory over Norwood in 1969, on what remains the hottest grand final day on record, at 35°, and led the Panthers from the bottom of the league to the top in a single year in an infamous victory in 1964.

He won the Best and Fairest as the captain-coach of the Glenelg Tigers in 1967 before leading them to their premiership victory in 1969, which he did again as their coach in 1973. In all, he coached five teams to four premierships, which is an extraordinary record in itself. On Saturday, SANFL games paused for a minute in silent tribute to Neil Kerley's lifelong contribution to South Australian football. Kerley's name is also woven through the story of South Australian football's growth and development on the national stage.

He played 32 games for South Australia, six times as captain, and coached the state team seven times and was the inaugural football manager for the Crows when they became South Australia's first team in 1991—and I could talk a little bit more about that. I would be remiss in not also celebrating his musical career and his release of his unique version of Lee Marvin's *I was Born Under a Wandering Star* in 1971, a track that delighted fans, took the South Australian radio waves by storm and demonstrated that as a singer he truly was an outstanding footballer.

I want to thank the Kerley family for allowing the people of South Australia to pay tribute to Neil's life and legacy by permitting a state funeral. I particularly would like to thank Barb Kerley for making that decision at such a difficult time and thank her for her cooperation, and the family's cooperation, with DPC as those arrangements are currently in train. At this stage, on behalf of the South Australian government, I would like to pass on our sympathies to Barb, their children and the entire Kerley family for their sudden loss.

Neil Kerley was a proud and passionate South Australian, and we honour him for everything he did to excel and promote the sport and our state in a way that we all hold dear. Vale, Neil 'Knuckles', and thank you so much.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:04): Mr Speaker, on indulgence, eight months ago South Australia mourned the passing of one of our football legends, Russell Ebert. Today, we recognise the passing of another of those legends, Neil Kerley. Both made contributions to our state well beyond their prowess on the field. They inspired us. They made South Australians proud of our state.

The word 'legend' may be overused today, but it most definitely applies to both Russell and Neil, even if they were legends for very different reasons: Ebert had magnificent skills, which won him four Magarey medals; Kerley did not win a Magarey, but he was not known as 'Knuckles' for nothing. As Ken Cunningham has said, 'Kerls wanted to be captain, coach and umpire all in the same game.'

He played 265 SANFL games, every one of them with fierce passion, grit and determination. He played the same way in 32 games for South Australia, never more so than in that epic win over the VFL at the MCG in 1963. He coached five clubs in 628 SANFL games, winning 365 of them. Kerley's playing career came to an end in 1969 just as Ebert was really getting into his stride. They dominated different playing eras but ensured that our state's major contribution to our national sport endured.

After his playing career ended, Kerley continued to demonstrate his great abilities as a coach. He had captain-coached West Adelaide to the SANFL premiership in 1961 and South Adelaide three years later in his first season with the Panthers. While also coaching Westies to the 1983 premiership, his greatest triumph was perhaps taking Glenelg top in 1973 to end a 39-year premiership drought at the Bay.

Kerley then continued his contribution to football long after his successes as a player and a coach. He was the Adelaide Crows team manager in their inaugural season, then Channel 7's boundary rider for their AFL footy coverage. Right to the last, Neil was inspiring others around him, as his mates at the Swan Reach Golf Club have recounted by his drive over recent years to rebuild the club and attract new members.

To Neil's wife, Barb; daughter, Gail; grandson, Campbell; and brother, Ted, we offer our condolences and appreciation for supporting Neil in his remarkable lifelong contribution to football and to our State of South Australia. Vale, Neil Kerley.

TSOULIS, MS E.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:07): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: This week, after 25 years in the role Ms Eugenia Tsoulis OAM will step down as the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Migrant Resource Centre. Today, I want to acknowledge the incredible dedication, hard work, advocacy and passion that Eugenia has given over the years to improve the settlement experience of migrants and refugees.

Eugenia believes that multiculturalism embodies human rights, social inclusion, entrepreneurial advancement and that our combined talents, skills and knowledge, whether gained in Australia or overseas, can be utilised to build our economic, civic, social and cultural progress.

Eugenia has over 40 years of volunteer and work experience. Her work is primarily focused on the integration of migrants and refugees into policy and service planning, as well as into direct service delivery. In previous roles within the South Australian education department, and as director of the Migrant Workers Centre, Eugenia furthered migrant youth and women's participation in training and employment and supported industry to manage and promote cultural diversity in the workplace.

Over the past 20 years, Eugenia has expansively developed the AMRC. The AMRC is a leading multicultural service provider that delivers humanitarian and migrant settlement, community

engagement and participation services. The AMRC under Eugenia's leadership has provided both volunteering and employment opportunities for many community leaders over the years.

The AMRC has been responsible for the delivery of humanitarian and migrant settlement and community engagement and participation services to over 150,000 migrants since 1979. A founding member of the Settlement Council of Australia and a current board member, Eugenia has contributed to a considerable number of state and commonwealth boards and advisory committees and is currently a member of the South Australian Multicultural Commission. She is a researcher, published academic and author of *But I Don't Dream in English: Migrants Access to Community Arts*.

Eugenia has been at the forefront of multicultural policy development in education, mental health, the arts and industrial relations. Most recently she has been part of a national leadership team, driving change in the settlement of migrants and refugees, including supporting the empowerment of women and young people while building community capacity to welcome new migrants to Australia and into the local communities where they reside, work and contribute.

Her awards and achievements are far too numerous to cover here. However, they include but are not limited to being awarded:

- the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1994 for services to multiculturalism in the arts;
- Zonta Woman of the Year in 2007;
- the Governor's Multicultural Award for Individual Achiever of the Year in 2012;
- Inaugural Harmony Alliance Award for Lifetime Achievement in empowering and supporting refugee women into 2017;
- Woman of Distinction in Multicultural Services in 2019 by the Asia Pacific Business Council for Women; and
- Pinnacle College Community Achievement Award for exceptional leadership and devoted service in 2021.

Whilst Eugenia will be sorely missed, I have no doubt that under her leadership she has left the AMRC with strong foundations and that it will continue to be a significant contributor to settlement services and to the strengthening of our multicultural and intercultural engagement in South Australia.

Eugenia will continue on after this year as ex-officio member of both the Middle Eastern Communities Council of South Australia and the African Communities Council of South Australia and convener of South Australian Refugee Week, and she will further regional development particularly in Whyalla. Because of her genuine passion and commitment to diversity, I am certain that Eugenia will continue to offer her guidance, support, encouragement and leadership. While I trust retirement will provide some well-earned family and relaxation time, I know that she will be a source of inspiration for the generations to come.

Parliamentary Committees

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (14:12): I bring up the report of the committee, entitled House of Assembly Petition No. 96 of 2021, School and Preschool Funding for Children and Students with Additional Needs.

Report received.

Mr FULBROOK: I bring up the 10th report of the committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation.

Report received.

Mr FULBROOK: I bring up at the 11th report of the committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation.

Report received and read.

*Question Time***ANACTA STRATEGIES PTY LTD**

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:19): My question is to the Premier. Since becoming Premier, has he had any meetings with the Queensland-based lobbying firm Anacta Strategies Pty Ltd?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:20): Can you just repeat the name of the company?

The SPEAKER: The leader to repeat the question.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Since becoming Premier, has he had any meetings with the Queensland-based lobbying firm Anacta Strategies Pty Ltd?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: To the best of my knowledge, no, unless Anacta has some other body that I am not familiar with. The short answer to the question is no.

ANACTA STRATEGIES PTY LTD

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:20): My question is again to the Premier. Has anyone in the Premier's office or department or any of his ministers met or spoken with Anacta Strategies since the election? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: On 26 April, the Queensland-based lobbying firm Anacta Strategies registered to operate in South Australia. Anacta's principal, Mr Evan Moorhead, is a former Labor member of the Queensland state parliament, former state secretary of the ALP and former adviser to Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk. This week, the Queensland Premier barred Mr Moorhead from approaching departments, ministers and staff for the rest of her government's current term.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:21): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question and the additional context that he provided in the second question. I can confirm that I haven't met with Evan Moorhead and, to the best of my recollection, I don't know if I have met him ever, let alone during my tenure as Premier of South Australia. I am not aware of him meeting with anybody else, but I am more than happy to take it on notice and provide a definitive confirmation as soon as possible.

ANACTA STRATEGIES PTY LTD

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:21): My question is again to the Premier. Did the new Chief Executive Officer of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Damien Walker, have any contact with Anacta Strategies while he held various departmental director-general roles in the Queensland government?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:22): The new Chief Executive Officer of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Mr Damien Walker—who, of course, is South Australian—has been working exceptionally hard and diligently during the course of his tenure in this very important office. Mr Walker brings to this role a great degree of experience when it comes to public service delivery in senior levels of the Public Service, particularly in the state of Queensland. Prior to joining the South Australian government in his current capacity, he was the director-general of the main economic department within the Queensland government, and I am very grateful for his service.

My focus as Premier of the state is to make sure that we utilise Mr Walker and all his skills and capability in a way that best serves the interests of the people of South Australia, and I suspect his firm focus is on doing exactly the same thing.

ANACTA STRATEGIES PTY LTD

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:23): My question is again to the Premier. Will the Premier ensure that Anacta Strategies does not become involved in lobbying any government agency in South Australia? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: This week, the Queensland government barred Anacta Strategies co-founders Mr Evan Moorhead and Mr David Nelson from lobbying government agencies in Queensland.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:23): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I have to say that the irony of those opposite being interested in the actions of lobbyists is not lost on me. I think we are all familiar with the most powerful lobbyists in this state and their intrinsic meddling in the operations of the South Australian branch of the Liberal Party—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We don't have to look very far for those opposite being actively engaged with various elements—

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —of lobbying outfits here in the state of South Australia. We know full well the power that exists within lobbying elements of the South Australian Liberal Party. With respect to the South Australian Labor Party, our focus is not worrying about—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —appeasing lobbyists—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —or appeasing particular interests.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hammond!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Our interest of course is making sure that we do it for the people of South Australia.

ANACTA STRATEGIES PTY LTD

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:24): My question is to the Premier. Has Anacta Strategies donated any funds to the South Australian Labor Party? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Anacta Strategies donated \$217,000 to the Australian Labor Party in Queensland since 2019, as reported in *The Australian* on 6 July 2022.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:25): All information regarding donations to the South Australian branch of the Labor Party are publicly declared, as I would expect to be the case. I am not in a position to be able to outline here each and every donation that is made to the South Australian branch of the Labor Party, but if Anacta Strategies—who, quite honestly, I hadn't heard of up until the description from the Leader of the Opposition. I am not aware of them

making any donations to the Labor Party, but if they had they would be required to publicly disclose it as is the appropriate way.

WEST ADELAIDE HELLAS SOCCER CLUB

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (14:25): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Did the minister or any member of his ministerial staff advocate for a local sports club grant of \$2 million for the West Adelaide Hellas Junior Soccer Club?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of Government Business.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:26): I've got to say that I find this questioning a little bit offensive. The Greek community of South Australia are very proud of the West Adelaide Hellas Soccer Club. The West Adelaide Hellas Soccer Club have a long and proud history. They are the only NSL club to have won a national title, and the Greek community are very proud of that. I remember as a young boy going to Hindmarsh Stadium to watch my heroes play for West Adelaide.

The Greek community are very proud of all of our community organisations, whether they be the football community, whether they be church organisations, whether they be local community organisations that—like the Italian community, the Serbian community, the Croatian community and the Chinese community—have links back to their mother countries. They named their community clubs after those organisations, like West Adelaide Hellas, which is named after the Republic of Greece.

I am very proud of it and, yes, I have advocated for them during the election campaign. Absolutely I have. Why? Because they have lots of young people in the western suburbs who want to play football, the greatest game in the world. It is a game that I love, but I couldn't play very well unfortunately, and I wish I had. I wish I had been better at it.

Mr Brown: A pretty average soccer player.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes. I'm a pretty average soccer player, yes. I have a lot of time for the shadow minister, who I think is a very good and decent person, but these questions stem from a lot of attacks about the Kilburn facility that the West Adelaide seniors club built as a result of grants made by the previous Labor government.

Like a lot of community organisations, they are run by volunteers; they are not run by paid professionals. They are run by people who just want their kids to go out and have a run. They want their kids to go out and do well, like the same volunteers who run AFL clubs and community sports clubs. They need assistance and we are happy to help them. What we won't do is use them politically, use their volunteers in a way to try to besmirch or attack our opponents.

We have done absolutely nothing wrong other than support a community club. I say to the opposition: when you attack one part of the Greek community, you attack all of it because the people who go to those clubs are the ones who go to the churches, community clubs, the ones who are volunteers at a range of groups, and when they see these attacks on the West Adelaide Hellas Soccer Club they know where it is coming from.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Point of order, sir.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Florey is called to order. The member for Chaffey is warned. I will hear the member for Morialta.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for West Torrens will come to order. I will hear the member for Morialta under 134.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: I make the point that the question was very straightforward: did the member or his staff advocate for a particular grant to a particular club? I submit the minister is now entering into debate.

The SPEAKER: The question, of course, is whether the minister is engaged with the substance of the question. I will listen carefully.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: When our community faces this type of political and, I think, quite frankly underhanded attack by the Liberal Party—

The Hon. D.G. Pisoni: You're getting confused with the 'don't trust Habib' campaign.

The SPEAKER: Member for Unley!

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Chaffey is on one warning.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. Malinauskas: You've done enough damage this week.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier is called to order.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: When the former Treasurer in the other place, during estimates, talked about our support for Greek organisations and Greek churches, when the member for Chaffey yelled out across the chamber to me once, 'Can you speak English'—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I will hear the member for Chaffey.

Mr WHETSTONE: I take offence at the member for West Torrens accusing me of something I did not commit. I want a withdrawal.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Badcoe is called to order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Chaffey has asked me to reflect, as I understand it, on standing order 127, although it is not entirely clear to me, member for Chaffey, what it is you are seeking to have withdrawn or what the apology would relate to. I accept it is a subjective question. I will hear you again under 127, but I do warn you that you are on one warning and that you are continuing to interject. Member for Chaffey, perhaps you will provide the chamber with some additional detail, and then I am keen to move forward.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, sir. I take offence at the member for West Torrens accusing me of something that was said in this chamber some time ago. It was incorrect, and I want him to withdraw.

The SPEAKER: Again, member for Chaffey, I am not necessarily sure you have elucidated quite clearly what it is you would like to have withdrawn. This is the difficulty. If you have said something in this chamber and the member for West Torrens has reflected on something you have said, then the matter is a mere statement of fact. What is it that you wish to have withdrawn?

Mr WHETSTONE: The member for West Torrens has accused me of telling him to speak English.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Chaffey, I'm not going to rule on this just for the moment. I'm going to ask the clerks to bring to me whether there was ever a statement from you that you told another member to speak English. If you haven't said it, I will revisit the matter. If you have, in fact, said it, it may be that you have drawn a matter to my attention that is now disrupting question time. I am going to turn to the next question.

WEST ADELAIDE HELLAS SOCCER CLUB

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (14:32): My question again is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Has the minister advocated for further state government financial support for the completion of the Kilburn Sportsplex?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:32): Before the election, the member might remember that the West Adelaide Hellas Soccer Club made applications to the previous government for assistance to complete their facilities at Kilburn, and the former government refused to assist. They refused to assist, and former Minister Wingard used to raise that in estimates and in parliament as some sort of political attack on me, using a volunteer community club, calling it an eyesore and questioning the competence of the volunteers running the organisation. I think he conducted himself in a thoroughly appalling manner.

Yes, the club is in need of assistance to complete those facilities. They approached the opposition because we were the only ones who had a sympathetic ear for them, because we are supporters of the Greek community on this side of the house.

I note there have been a number of Greek community organisations that have been given assistance over the last term of the Weatherill government, which was roundly criticised by the former Treasurer and the former sports minister Mr Wingard. Mr Lucas and Mr Wingard enjoyed regularly attacking the Greek community in this parliament and in the other place, and we all found it galling. Quite frankly, the member for Hartley is better than this.

SPORTS FUNDING

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (14:34): My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier believe the decision of deputy Nationals leader Senator Bridget McKenzie sets a standard of ministerial accountability that should be applying in the administration of his government's local sports club grants? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr TARZIA: Senator McKenzie quit federal cabinet in 2020 because she failed to disclose her membership of a gun club, which received a \$36,000 government grant.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:34): Queensland lobbyists and now the actions of the disgraced National Party deputy leader. If I have interpreted the question correctly, the question was: do I believe Bridget McKenzie should be setting the standards that we intend to follow? No.

ABORIGINAL RANGERS

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (14:35): My question is to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. Can the minister inform the house about co-management of protected areas and the commitment to employ 15 new Aboriginal rangers?

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:35): It's a delight to answer this question from the member for Giles, who has a very high proportion of Aboriginal constituents in his electorate and a very strong relationship with them.

Given that it's NAIDOC Week, it's probably a very fitting question to have as well about how this government is partnering with Aboriginal people. There are two ways in which we can take a practical approach in my portfolio to this: the co-management of our state's parks and the employment of 15 new Aboriginal rangers as part of our election commitment.

The state government has committed to a greater number of parks being co-managed. Co-management involves the management of a park with First Nations people—that is, to have Aboriginal values on Aboriginal lands. First Nations people being involved in the management of traditional lands helps to protect cultural sites, maintain cultural practices and allows for uses of both traditional knowledge and contemporary science to manage parks.

There are currently 12 co-management agreements in place over 35 of South Australia's parks and reserves, which cover some 13.5 million hectares—64 per cent of the reserve system. The process for co-management includes undertaking cultural surveys, updating park interpretation for cultural perspectives, management planning and other establishment activities, as well as executive support for the board and an Aboriginal ranger position.

The state government will undertake the expansion of co-management arrangements. An agreement has been prepared with Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation to establish the Kurna Parks Advisory Committee over three parks. One is the Adelaide International Bird Sanctuary National Park, Winaityinaityi Pangkara Torrens Island Conservation Park and Aldinga Conservation Park. Negotiations are also well advanced for co-management of Wapma Thura-Southern Flinders Ranges National Park with the Nukunu people. In fact, I visited there just last week after some cultural training had happened with the Nukunu people and the employees of the department, which was very successful.

Employing Aboriginal rangers is also an integral part of having Aboriginal values on Aboriginal lands, and I am proud that the state government has a commitment to employ 15 new Aboriginal rangers, with an announced funding commitment of \$4.8 million over four years. The Department for Environment and Water works with Aboriginal people across many aspects of its work. The National Parks and Wildlife Service's current ranger workforce of 139 positions includes 21 Aboriginal people.

The increased numbers of Aboriginal rangers will lead to a greater involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of protected areas, greater opportunities to care for country and establish career pathways. This will in turn enhance the capability of the National Parks and Wildlife Service to manage national parks. The current cohort of Aboriginal rangers is most typically associated with co-managed parks, such as Ikara-Flinders Ranges National Park and Dhilba Guuranda-Innes National Park. The new Aboriginal rangers will be recruited for deployment across a variety of parks.

The Australian government offers funding opportunities to employ First Nations people through the Indigenous Rangers Program. We are investigating opportunities to leverage funding for achieving even further outcomes for Aboriginal ranger numbers in South Australia.

Aboriginal people have lived on this land for time immemorial and hold cultural wisdom that many more recent arrivals are yet to appreciate. Partnering with First Nations people, with Aboriginal people, is a core value of this state government, and South Australians can be proud of the steps that we are taking as a state.

TRANSFER OF CARE DATA

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:38): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. When will the minister release the ambulance transfer of care data for the month of June?

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:39): Thank you very much to the shadow minister for her question. This is seemingly a repeat of all the other questions that she has asked previously. As per my previous responses, I remind members that this government is committed to releasing monthly stats within a reasonable period of time, as opposed to what happened—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —under the previous government—

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Schubert!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —a very different approach—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Badcoe!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —a very different policy approach, because what we saw under the previous government—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta! The minister has the call.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —was that it took months and months and months for data to be released.

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: Now it is daily, apparently.

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: There was only a release of that data every three months; that happened under the previous government. Often, it was at least three months delayed from being released. We have already been releasing this data regularly. We will continue to do so.

Mrs Hurn: Weekly, why don't you do weekly?

The SPEAKER: The member for Schubert is warned.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: I said regularly. We have been releasing this data regularly, as per our commitment. Before the election, we called on the previous Marshall government to release the data monthly. We committed to releasing the data monthly, and now we are releasing the data monthly. That's been happening—

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Schubert is on one warning.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —in a reasonable period of time after each month. That will happen similarly with the June statistics as well. But I think we are all clear that our hospitals—

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —are under tremendous pressure at the moment.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: As a new government, we are investing huge additional resources in our hospital system—\$2.4 billion extra in the most recent state budget—to open an additional 500 beds to deal with the mess that we have inherited from those opposite. We have already opened over 200 beds across the health system to deal with the crisis that we are facing, but we are dealing with a situation where we have COVID cases and flu cases, which we didn't have last year when the hospital system was clearly under significant pressure under the previous government then. We are now dealing with an additional burden on the system.

The latest statistics out today for our hospital system for COVID cases show that we are now up to the highest number of hospitalisations that we have had in the system since 1 February this year, so a five-month high rate of COVID hospitalisations in our system. On top of flu cases as well, this is a significant issue that our hospital system is dealing with. We know the issue that is leading to the transfer of care delays, and that is ultimately patients who are in the emergency department who needed to be admitted to a ward but there simply aren't the beds in wards available to be admitted to.

We have opened over 200 beds already, including last week opening an additional 28 beds in private hospitals, and we are actively exploring any and all possibilities where we might be able to

open more. But we have already opened all the beds available within our healthcare system that we have, that we inherited from those opposite. We are actively trying to find additional capacity that we can use, whether it's the private system, whether it's peri-urban hospitals, whether it's anything else we can open up inside our public hospitals. We know that that delay is what's causing the transfer of care, ramping delays, outside the hospital system.

Clearly, there is also the issue in terms of discharges from the system. We have a number of patients who have been in the hospital system for months and months and months. The latest data that we have seen is that over 250 patients have NDIS packages, 120 of whom are ready to be discharged, so that is a huge blockage in the system. That is the equivalent of Noarlunga Hospital full of NDIS patients who are ready to be discharged. This is something that we have been raising at the federal level. It is something that the Minister for Human Services is working on as well. If we can address that, then that is a huge additional capacity in the system.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:43): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Has the government commissioned an independent review into the case of a woman left lying on the floor of an emergency department for five hours awaiting medical treatment? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: Several weeks ago, an independent review was commissioned to investigate, when 92-year-old Mrs Wortley was left to wait shivering outside the Lyell McEwin Hospital ED, but it is not clear whether an independent review has been launched to investigate why a lady was left to wait for five hours on the floor of an emergency department.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:43): This is the subject of a review. The Premier committed to that when this came to light. Essentially, what happened is that—

Mrs Hurn: Independent?

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

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —one of the issues in place is the blockages in the health system, as I explained in the previous answer, and that was absolutely clearly unacceptable, the wait times people were facing in the emergency department on that day at the Flinders Medical Centre.

Clearly, this is a situation that is happening at other emergency departments where people are waiting long periods of time to be seen in the emergency department, either in ambulances or in the waiting room as well. That is why we need to provide additional capacity elsewhere in the health system to make sure that we can get patients treated sooner in the emergency department.

This is an issue that I have been speaking about with the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network and its chairman of the board and acting CEO. They are undertaking a clinical governance review in relation to what happened in that instance. Clearly, it is unacceptable because what we don't want to see is people in discomfort like that who are waiting far too long to be seen.

I understand that the patient was categorised as a category 3 patient, but clearly the wait time that she experienced was a lot longer than was absolutely what we want to see in our healthcare system. The latest update I had in relation to this case was that they had still been trying to contact the patient herself to discuss this with her.

I know that the shadow minister circulated images in relation to this. I am not sure whether she has had the opportunity to speak to the patient. If she had spoken to the patient and got her permission before she circulated those photos, then we would very much welcome her to discuss that with us. We want to discuss that with her as part of the review, because clearly the patient is involved in that review.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: You didn't speak to her?

Mrs Hurn: They put it on Facebook.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: But you did not speak to her?

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Clearly, the shadow minister had not spoken to the patient involved before she decided to circulate this image publicly. That is clearly, I think, a surprising development that has come out of question time today.

From SA Health's perspective, the appropriate thing to do is to make sure that we get in contact with that patient to discuss the review protocols that will be underway. Clearly, the shadow minister's view is that we should discuss it in question time and in the media: we would prefer to discuss it with the patient. If the shadow minister has been in contact, and it sounds like she hasn't, then it would be helpful if she could provide those details and we can make sure that we can talk to that patient as part of that review to make sure that she is involved in that process.

This will be the subject of a review. It clearly is unacceptable. This government has commitments in place and budget announcements in place to massively expand the size of the Flinders Medical Centre—136 extra beds into the Flinders Medical Centre—whereas the previous government's investment in the Flinders Medical Centre was to close inpatient beds to open emergency department beds.

We actually want additional beds to deal with the blockages in the system that ultimately lead to people not getting care on time, which is what we unfortunately saw in that instance, and sadly there are many other instances where people wait unfortunately long times as well.

MEMBER'S REMARKS

Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (14:47): My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the minister advise the house what happened 11 years ago today?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:47): Eleven years ago today I was a young, idealistic trade and investment minister—

An honourable member: When you could travel.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: —when you could travel—and I was asked a question by the then Leader of the Opposition, Mrs Redmond, about a series of budget measures regarding Tiger Airways.

As I was giving my answer, there was an interjection from the member for Chaffey, 'Speak English.' The *Hansard* has recorded it, and the *Hansard* has me saying:

She took it off him. That's okay. He had all day in estimates; but I'm with you, brother. \$2.25 million was provided—

I was obviously trying to make some sort of joke.

An honourable member: Good speech.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Good speech. Mr Whetstone interjected, the *Hansard* shows. Then it shows me saying 11 years ago today: 'What did you say? Speak English?' Mr Whetstone's response: 'Yes.' My response then—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: —is the same as it is now. I do speak English, and if you are making a reference to my Greek heritage, I am proud of my Greek heritage and I will not take offence from someone like you. Perhaps you should go back to the Riverland and speak to the people there of Greek heritage—in Barmera, in Renmark, in Loxton—and see what they say to you about this outrageous attack.

Mr Speaker, I am sick of this. It's got to stop. I know that in the to-and-fro of politics things can get very, very personal, and we can talk about ideology, about party, about policy. This goes too far and it's got to stop, and trying to pretend that it didn't happen makes it worse. I would also point out to the house that this person now is a shadow minister again, a shadow minister of the alternative government.

Mr Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Florey is called to order. I will hear a point of order under 134 from the member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Standing order 98: the member was asked about circumstances 11 years ago. He has talked about the matter that he was involved in and from his perspective and the house understands that. He is now entering debate, matters for which he is not responsible to the house.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Morialta, I hear your point of order. I may say this may be the broadest question that I have ever heard, and if it's not the broadest then it would be in the grand final. I am listening carefully to the answer, but I am not certain that it is going to be a matter with which 98 is going to engage.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Can I make one further submission?

The SPEAKER: Very well.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: There can be broad questions for which ministers are responsible for elements to the house and can have some scope in doing so, but when a minister—and this is a point that the member for West Torrens made during the last parliament dozens of times—ascribes matters to the opposition, they are automatically almost, by his submission, and I am happy to have more flexibility, usually in that case, as in this, entering into debate.

The SPEAKER: That may be. I'm not going to rule on the point of order, but I do observe this: standing order 126 of course provides a mechanism for a member to ask for a statement to be withdrawn. The member for Chaffey has raised a point of order with me in relation to that standing order, as I understand it. Standing order 127, of course, also prevents digression or personal reflection on members.

We now have an engagement between both major parties which deals with, certainly, the standing orders and an effort to ventilate matters that might otherwise be best left outside of the chamber. What I am going to do is invite the member for Chaffey to address me on this matter. It may be that I don't need to rule on this point of order and we can move forward.

Mr WHETSTONE: I withdraw that point of order.

The SPEAKER: Very well. I'm going to hear from the minister and then, ideally, the house is going to return to its business.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: We should return to our business. I just point out to the house that not 10 minutes ago the house was assured that these statements were never made, and they are on the parliamentary record. I ask members to reflect on that. We are the majority, so there will be no privileges motion because we can't have the majority investigating the minority, but it's a clear-cut case. It's obvious. I'm glad the member has withdrawn it and I just hope perhaps the Leader of the Opposition might want to have a quiet word with his shadow cabinet about these references in future and about the line of questioning about ethnic community clubs and the work that they do. This serves no-one.

The SPEAKER: The point of order has been withdrawn and the matter has been resolved.

ILLUMINATE ADELAIDE

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta) (14:52): My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Will the government continue to support the outstanding Illuminate festival next year and into the future? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I seek to explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The Illuminate festival currently underway, launched by the Premier last Friday, is in the second year, as I understand it, of a three-year funding agreement with the state government. My question relates to whether the government will deliver on the third year of the funding agreement for next year's festival and, indeed, whether the government is going to deliver ongoing support for the festival thereafter, or is at least giving consideration to doing so.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:53): I thank the deputy leader for this question. I think Illuminate is fantastic and so does the Premier, and we were very excited to announce on Friday the start of Base Camp. I had the opportunity to go on Saturday with my son and, yes, we will be continuing to support this fantastic event and thank you for the opportunity to let me talk about it.

Base Camp will be going for the whole of July, and I encourage you to go along. Light Cycles starts, back by popular demand—it was a runaway hit last year—and will return to the Adelaide Botanic Garden. It is the Australian first production from the Montreal Studio Moment Factory and it transforms the greenery at the Adelaide Botanic Garden into an after-dark immersive experience. It connects guests to the natural world. I understand that last year it was sold out and I welcome it coming back again.

For the same period of time, from 7 July, Light Creatures will also be available. I encourage everyone to book your tickets and go along. Of course, that is a celebration of conservation and explores the historic precinct, looking up close in an immersive experience at the Zoo. It is seeing our very own Zoo in a different way. It is a nocturnal adventure and it's back bigger and better than ever.

Of course, one of the key areas of Illuminate this year, given the van Gogh experience that many people went to, is the opportunity from Ouchhh Studio. They are Istanbul-based visionaries and have collaborated with NASA and with CERN and this immersive work they are going to present in Adelaide, opening from Saturday 16 July, is the first place in Australia where it will be seen. I think that is a really exciting thing because we are going to see something called Wisdom of AI Light and it is a connection of art, music and AI.

We all know that here in South Australia we lead some of the work in AI and we continue to see how we can welcome the wider South Australian community and interstate guests to see how we can all appreciate that.

Illuminate is not just in Adelaide; we have it in Renmark, Victor Harbor and also Mount Gambier. In late June, I was in Renmark to see In Depth, amongst other things, and it was fantastic. The Renmark Club told me they sold out of schnitzels on opening night. Everyone was packed out in the Riverland, and they really enjoyed having that. That was called In Depth in Renmark from 3 June to 2 July.

In Depth was a large-scale multimedia event by Craig Walsh, with local artists and community members with sound and lighting and it transformed the River Murray after dark. I have to say that, when I spent time in the Riverland, people kept talking about it and they said, 'I'm going to take my family' or 'The family just went.' It was fantastic to have it.

The Digital Garden will be in Mount Gambier from 5 to 21 August. This is the second time it has been in Mount Gambier. It was incredibly popular last year and it is great to support it again. The highlight of the Digital Garden will be an interactive installation by Jen Lewin Studio titled The Pool. Then it moves on to the Harbor Lights in Victor Harbor on 26 August to 11 September. Again, Craig Walsh will be providing Monuments, which is an experience there as well.

I think we have always focused on filling out the calendar and Illuminate does just that, and we support it this year and next year as well.

ILLUMINATE ADELAIDE

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta) (14:57): I would like to ask a supplementary. I thank the minister for that answer and her support for Illuminate this year and next year. Will the government, potentially through the South Australian Tourism Commission, now enter into

discussions about the next funding agreement following next year's Illuminate to ensure that we can keep this festival in South Australia into the future?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:58): I thank you for your enthusiasm for Illuminate and note that your government did a three-year agreement and, when the time comes, we will continue to talk to them about that.

We are a partner with Illuminate; it is not an SATC managed event. It is great talking to Lee Cumberlidge and Rachael Azzopardi, who are both South Australians. They have both been overseas and are experts in their areas. They have been in New York presenting lots of different types of art and festivals and have chosen to come back here.

They have launched the Illuminate foundation, a not-for-profit foundation, because they think that we are the festival state and that we do things exceptionally well here. When we consider Illuminate, I recognise that the previous government brought it to South Australia. I thought it was great. Unfortunately, last year it was interrupted by COVID, but we believe that this year we will see the full capacity of Illuminate. I think it will become part and parcel of our winter calendar. That is the intention.

We are having fantastic occupancy rates in our hotels at the moment, but we want to have that the whole year. We want to have a bright CBD and encourage high hotel occupancy—we have nearly 10,000 rooms now—but of course we also want to include our regional areas, and I have detailed that as well. I think that Illuminate is doing well, but we are a partner and it is owned by the Illuminate foundation. I keep talking to them about the skills that we have in South Australia—whether it be art, be it electronics, be it AI—and the capacity for us to see this grow further.

My desire, my aspiration, is for Illuminate to be a must-do for all Australians. For them to come here. Now that our domestic flights are back higher than ever before we know that accessibility is not an issue for people in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane to come to Adelaide to see Illuminate. Illuminate is what we have because it talks to the best of what we can do: the science, the tech and their involvement in the space industry. That's just a start. When our studio did that work for NASA and for CERN, they were at the cutting edge of the possibilities that we have.

What is the best way that we can entice South Australian children to look at doing STEAM, as I think it is now: science, tech, engineering, arts, etc.—

The Hon. C.J. Picton: Maths.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: —maths? We show them and we immerse them, and I am particularly excited about Ouchhh because it will be that immersive experience. You will be able to walk in and you will see the technology behind it. If that is not going to inspire someone—

Mr Pederick: Are you going to give them a contract?

The SPEAKER: Member for Hammond!

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: —how else are we going to do that? The other thing I would like to point out about Illuminate is that there are 150 activations and 40 of them are free. Of course, there are ticketed events between Light Creatures, Light Cycles and Ouchhh Studio, but there are 43 events. I am going to say to each and every one of us here, and those listening on live stream: 'Put your coat on, put your scarf on and come to the city in July. It is the place to be.' One of these very exciting things are these lit seesaws, and I think people embrace that.

We have just had *Frozen*, we know people love the cold and now is the time to see Illuminate—and, yes, it continues.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Many members are seeking the call. Member for Narungga.

MOBILE PHONE TOWERS

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (15:02): Hardly a surprising decision, Mr Speaker. I have a question for the Minister for Infrastructure. I wonder if the minister could inform the people of my electorate

whether this government has any plans to fund mobile phone towers and, if so, what people in communities like Tickera might do to secure one in their town?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:02): Thank you very much, sir, for calling the member. I thank the member for his question. I know he is a very staunch advocate for his local community, especially in mobile phone blackspot funding. It is something he regularly engages the government with. When I say 'engage'—corners, berates.

Under the commonwealth government's Mobile Black Spot Program, co-funding from the state government's mobile phone blackspot fund has contributed to addressing 45 mobile phone blackspot locations in regional South Australia. That was a program begun by the previous government, and full credit to them for doing that, and—

Mr Pederick: Fifty-four towers.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Did you build them personally?

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: With his hands.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: With your hands?

Mr Pederick: You built one in 16 years.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond is warned for a second time. The minister has the call.

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey! The minister has the call.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I think you have done enough damage today, mate, if I were you.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Promote him.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Clancy interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Elder! The minister has the call.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The commonwealth government investment was over \$6.49 million over that period, the telecommunications provider put in \$10.21 million and the state government investment was \$8.2 million.

I note that the state government's investment was larger than the commonwealth government's, whose responsibility the Telecommunications Act is—which says a lot about the deal-making capacity of the previous government. However, to date the 34 mobile blackspot solutions have been completed, with 11 sites that have been delivered. Of those still to be completed, two are in the Adelaide Hills and the Fleurieu, one is in the Barossa, one is in the Limestone Coast, three are in the Far North, three on Eyre Peninsula, one is in the Clare Valley and one is in the Mid North. The mobile network extension devices pilot program was valued at \$680,000, which was delivered by Telstra, and that is to be done in the Adelaide Hills to address mobile phone reception and localised coverage loss.

This is a good program, and the Treasurer is very keen for me to let the crossbench know that this is something he is looking at and something we are considering through the budget process. Obviously, we would like to see the contribution of the commonwealth government be larger, given that they are solely responsible for this package, and we don't want to see the commonwealth government retreat from its responsibilities and push it onto the South Australian taxpayer, as had been done previously.

Nevertheless, it is an important program and your advocacy—including that of the Speaker and other regional members—is very important to make sure that this program keeps apace to make sure that we can keep regional communities connected because it is so important for business and communication, so I thank the member for his question.

SOLAR FEED-IN TARIFF

Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. This question comes from Brian Spring, who unfortunately didn't get the chance at the country cabinet to ask it, but he was adamant that I ask it for him. With power prices increasing, why is the price that Brian gets from his feed-in tariff from his rooftop solar panels decreasing?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:05): That is an excellent question. Is it Brian?

Mr BELL: Brian.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I know how popular I am in the South-East, especially after the fracture stimulation debates of the 2014 to 2018 period, but he raises a very good question. What has been progressively happening over the last four years is that South Australia is producing an abundance of solar energy, a lot more than can be dispatched.

There are two ways of dealing with that situation. One way is to curtail supply, which was the previous government's plan, that is, to turn household solar panels off. The other option is to take advantage of that oversupply of renewable energy or negative demand and use it as a source of cheap energy, much like Premier Playford did when he built the ETSA power stations when we had an oversupply of base load generation at night. We insisted that hot-water systems be heated over the night period to create a demand. The reverse is happening now, where we are having what is called net negative demand during the day.

The reason the retailers are now paying next to nothing for that energy, if at all, is because its price goes negative through the energy market at those periods when those solar panels are producing electricity. What Brian needs to be doing, and should be thinking about, is offsets. We've got to start having a new conversation about solar energy and how it is used in the household. The traditional method, which was a solar feed-in tariff, was to put as many solar panels as you can on your roof, generate as much electricity as you possibly can and pour it into the grid and get paid for it to offset your electricity bills.

The new conversation has to be to use your solar energy on your roof to offset your use to not incur the bill to start with. That can be difficult, especially at night, which is why the feed-in tariff worked so well, which is why batteries are becoming so important. Battery storage is one way of looking at it. Of course, the other option to make that power valuable again is like the government's Hydrogen Jobs Plan, where we intend to establish a 250-megawatt electrolyser that will operate during the day at times of this oversupply of solar energy, which will add a value to that energy. When we are soaking up that energy, it will gain a value. When it gains a value, retailers then will be incentivised to offer a feed-in tariff to people like Brian, and that's the conversation.

I think the former government's plan to turn off solar panels was a quick knee-jerk reaction to a very serious problem without any long-term thinking. I am not saying it was the wrong decision; I am saying it was the easy decision. The hard, long-term decision is to come up with a plan that takes advantage of that solar energy, to use it to decarbonise not only our grid but our economy. That's why the Hydrogen Jobs Plan is so important—because we can harness our power in the middle of the day to make hydrogen and use that hydrogen at night.

Making hydrogen is no different from pumping water uphill. It is a form of storage, when you are using it for electricity production. Of course, it can also be used in industrial applications like furnaces and other applications in transport and heavy vehicles. There are lots of applications and there are lots of people who are interested in it. Brian's problem is a wicked one, and we are working very quickly to try to solve it.

OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION, LOCAL COUNCIL

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (15:09): My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister advise the house what action he will be undertaking concerning a recent Ombudsman investigation into an unnamed council, along with any other relevant matters?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:10): I thank the member for Playford for his question. I note media reports regarding a recent report which found that a council, which is unnamed by the Ombudsman, committed maladministration in relation to its chief executive officer's vehicle expenses. As we know in this house, as required by the Ombudsman Act a copy of this report was sent to me. However, I reiterate that the Ombudsman chose not to identify the subject of the investigation.

The Ombudsman made no recommendations in his report on this matter; however, he urged the council to ensure that such matters were conducted in a clearer manner in the future. On my part, I am preparing a letter to the council expressing my grave concerns about the Ombudsman's findings and asking to be fully informed by the council about what action it will take and what systematic change will be implemented to ensure this matter is resolved and does not occur again.

I expect this particular council, and all councils across all of South Australia, both metropolitan and regional, to properly manage CEO salaries and conditions of employment through clear, transparent, well-documented processes and good decision-making. For members' information, the ability of councils to do this will be supported by the new system now in place, through the previous government, which has tasked the Remuneration Tribunal of South Australia to make a determination setting out appropriate remuneration for all council CEOs.

I am advised that the first determination of the tribunal is expected later this year. This independent assessment should provide both councils and their communities with confidence—and I say this with clear confidence—that their CEOs are being paid appropriately. The role and performance of a CEO in a local council is critical to its success. I reiterate: it is critical to the success of that council and its community.

The Ombudsman's report highlights the importance of councils having clear oversight of and properly managing all aspects of CEO appointments, from the appointment process to setting and managing appropriate salary and contract conditions, as well as performance management and, where necessary, termination of that particular person if required. It is therefore critical, in my view, that councils have access to advice and support from the Local Government Association and other bodies to ensure they make good decisions in the best interests of their communities and the communities of all of us in this house.

I will be raising this issue with the LGA as part of my ongoing discussions about how, together, we can improve the performance of councils on behalf of our common constituent—the people of South Australia. The recent reforms to the Local Government Act require all councils to ensure that the salary and conditions of their chief executive officer are within the relevant minimum and maximum salary bands determined by the Remuneration Tribunal.

Under the new scheme, 'remuneration' means salary, allowances and other monetary benefits paid or payable to an employee of a council. The tribunal has already initiated its review of the minimum and maximum levels of local government CEO salary conditions in preparation for its first determination, which is expected to be made later this year. I would like to reinforce this: I expect the councils and the LGA to act in a clear and precise direction, and I ask all elected members, when they are doing this, to make the right decision and ensure they do it the correct way the first time.

The SPEAKER: I see there is another of your colleagues—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! I see there was another of your colleagues seeking the call; nevertheless, the member for Flinders has the call.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:14): A supplementary to the local government minister: has the minister actually identified any further local government reforms he is looking to instigate or investigate, rather than simply write a letter about the subject matter?

The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:14): A very good question from the shadow and an ex-President of the LGA; I certainly take that on board. I have made it quite clear in this house here that we are just settling in to these roles. I want to be able to very clearly look at the best opportunities for local government in the future and I want to make certain we can do the best opportunities we can. The November elections are coming up. I encourage people to nominate. I encourage everybody in this house here to encourage their constituents to talk to their council about promoting the local government elections coming up, both for mayors and the elected members of the council.

I will be working very closely with the LGA, the Office of Local Government and my colleague the shadow minister, to ensure that we have the best opportunity to make sure that we improve the operation, the consistency and the conduct, of not only the elected members of the councils but also the administration and the CEOs' remuneration. To the shadow minister, yes, I will be looking at that opportunity in the near future and, as I have said in this house before, I will be very open to having a collaboration with you as the shadow minister.

EAST MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (15:15): My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister explain why it is that his office failed to respond to me about a very serious issue. With the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr TARZIA: On 6 June, I wrote to Minister Boyer requesting that he address a number of ongoing health risks present at East Marden Primary as a result of asbestos and lead in a number of buildings throughout the school.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (15:16): I thank the member for Hartley for this question, and I have received the member's correspondence from the 6th and have taken the opportunity since that was sent to me to speak to the school. I have spoken now to the principal of the school, the assistant principal, the governing council chair, some other members of the governing council as well, and I have been out to the school and had a tour that was kindly provided to me by the people I just mentioned so that I could get a better understanding myself of the issues that the school faces.

If I could give perhaps a very short potted history of what has occurred here, back when the former Labor government was in power a grant of roughly \$7.5 million was provided to East Marden Primary School to do some capital works.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for West Torrens is called to order. The minister has the call.

The Hon. B.I. BOYER: As I was saying, about \$7.5 million was provided, I think it might have been towards the end of 2017 under the former Labor government, to do some much-needed capital works at the school.

I know the member for Hartley would be well aware, as is the former Minister for Education, that East Marden Primary School is a fantastic school. Its NAPLAN results are very impressive indeed. It has a very, what I would describe as active and passionate governing council, which is what of course we want every single school to have. But given the age of the buildings and when the school was actually first constructed, which I think might be in the vicinity of 54 years ago from memory, it is very out of date and in great need of further investment to upgrade the classrooms, provide more general learning areas, as well as deal with issues that have now been highlighted extensively in the media around asbestos and lead that have been found on the site.

So I have received now the correspondence from the member for Hartley, and of course I take that seriously, and I will respond to the member. But I thought the most prudent and sensible thing to do as the minister would be first to respond to the community and get out there and meet with them about how we deal not just with the immediate need about how the issue of the lead and asbestos that are there and have been found as part of the demolition works that are occurring to get the capital works project started and then, as soon as we can, finished. That is the most important and pressing matter for me as minister to deal with that.

Currently, because of dust containing lead that was found in the ceiling of one of the buildings, the students who were housed to do their classroom work in that building have been decanted to the gymnasium. I had a chance to go and say hello to those kids and offer them my apologies that they have to spend the last few weeks of term 2 in a gymnasium and not in a classroom. I explained to them that the agency, the department and I as the Minister for Education are doing absolutely everything we can to make sure they get out of the gymnasium and back into the remediated space in time for the start of term 3.

After having the tour on Monday, which I mentioned earlier, I asked the new chief executive of the department to go and take along the head of the infrastructure division of the department, Mr Bill Glasgow, as well. They have both been there today. With the exception of not replying to the member for Hartley's letter of 6 June, we have taken some pretty strong action to make sure these issues are dealt with seriously, to make sure the building in question is remediated, to make sure kids are back in the classroom for the start of term 3, and that these works that were funded back in 2017 actually get started and finished.

Grievance Debate

KERLEY, MR D.N.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:20): The Riverland is again saddened by the recent loss of another football great—first Russell Ebert and now Donald Neil Kerley. Neil was a great South Australian who left us with a lasting legacy. He will continue to inspire many.

Having met Neil many times, he showed how one person's determination could succeed in all elements of one's chosen sport. Neil, the second child of six, grew up on a fruit block in Loveday and started his footballing career with Barmera in the RFL at the age of 14 in the late forties. His father worked as a guard at the Loveday internment camp. Most recently, with his wife, Barbara, he returned to the club last year for its centenary celebration and had the big crowd in stitches with tales of his footballing days.

His 275-game SANFL playing career began with West Adelaide, and he played his first game of league football for West Adelaide at the age of 19 in 1953. Within three years, he was the club captain, having already won the first of four West Adelaide Best and Fairest awards. He established himself as a key member of the South Australian interstate team. He was captain from 1959 until 1962, and then was coach in 1961, when he went on to take home the 1961 premiership. From there, Neil went to South Adelaide, taking them from the bottom of the table to a premiership win in just over one year.

Amongst his other numerous achievements, Neil was also appointed as the South Australian State of Origin coach in 1979, 1980 and 1984. He was inducted into the South Australian Hall of Fame in 2002 and the South Australian Sport Hall of Fame in 2019. Some say that what Ted Whitten was to footy in Victoria, Neil Kerley was to football in South Australia. Growing up, I remember him coaching at Glenelg and leading the club into the 1973 premiership.

As a junior footballer, I had a lasting impression at training one evening. I listened to his advice, and it is something that has stuck with me forever. His advice was, 'You've got to be out in front and then you've got control of the football.' I remember him pointing to one of my schoolmates, saying, 'You're a star in the making, young fellow,' and he was right. That person was Stephen Kernaghan. On a personal note, I have caught up with Stephen over a number of social outings and we laugh about the incident over many, many glasses of wine.

Neil Kerley was an icon of South Australia and recognised across the country. I have always looked up to him as a footballer and I continue to admire him as a community leader. As a constituent,

I met with Neil many times, particularly at his beloved Swan Reach Golf Club. His passion for the community was as strong as ever.

More recently—as a bit of a story—they would talk about 'Kerls's corner', and that Kerls's corner was established at the first hole of the Swan Reach Golf Club, where he fell over cutting down a tree. He broke his hip and was still giving orders on the stretcher. He played golf there on almost a daily basis. As he said: it is always nice to finish a round with a glass of red.

I must say that Neil continued to display great leadership and great iconic establishment of being one of the great people of Walker Flat. He was considered by many of the locals at Walker Flat on the river as the mayor. Many of those local people have said that Neil's influence and his gruff voice will be missed. My condolences to both Barb and his family during this difficult time. Vale, Neil Kerley.

HEARTKIDS

Mrs PEARCE (King) (15:24): Not all heroes wear capes, but on 18 June my neighbour, the Minister for Education, and I donned one for the ultimate heroes in our community, children with heart disease. We were there to help judge the children's superhero competition at The Grove helping to raise funds on Hero for HeartKids Day. I embraced the retro vibes as Batgirl from 1966, and the Minister for Education gave the Premier a run for his money by bulking up and rocking it as Mr Incredible.

Organised by The Grove in partnership with Drakes and HeartKids, our community was able to come together to raise much-needed funds for an incredible cause, and by Odin's Beard we had a hell of a time doing it. In addition to the parade, we had a posse of superheroes, a couple of villains amongst the mix, and if you had an eagle eye you could have even spotted a few members from Star Command in attendance as well.

Reminiscent of the League's Hall of Justice, the centre was a hive of activity with face painting, the Batmobile—and I must say that I struck it lucky because I was in the same multiverse as that car that day—a Captain America themed truck and great prizes for children participating on the day.

In addition to over \$1,000 being raised on that day, our local Drakes was able to raise over \$11,000 for HeartKids. I understand that, as a whole, Drakes was able to raise about \$188,000 in total across their stores.

It is safe to say that the day was an overwhelming success not only because of the funds raised but because of the joy it brought to so many and the awareness it created for such an important cause. The day would not have been a success were it not for the massive amount of work many people put into the day, and I would like to take some time to thank those amazing people who helped make the recent Hero for HeartKids Day a success.

Firstly, I would like to thank Phil Hallard, the store manager at Drakes Foodland, who was able to utilise his contacts to bring together the superheroes and cosplayers; Sarah and The Grove team for turning the centre into a Marvel/DC delight; and Arthur Illiopoulos whose daughter Zoe is a HeartKid. Thank you for the amazing work you put into the day. I also thank Tania Potts, the State Manager for HeartKids, for providing The Grove shopping village with all the information, resources and fundraising tools.

I also thank the volunteers who gave up their time to help on the day, including Lucy Cornes from She Shopped for being the kids costume host; Jodie from Sensing Angels Photographs for providing the photography; and the many superheroes, cosplayers and Batmobile SA for providing the Batmobile in the centre on the day.

You have all helped support HeartKids, an important organisation that provides support to young people affected by congenital heart disease, while also supporting their families. It is an incredible effort especially when one considers they do all this off their back with just two full-time staff. The work is invaluable, and I am so proud that on this side we are also supporting the great work of HeartKids so that they can meet the growing demand of their service.

We recognise their important contribution to the lives of those affected by CHD and their families, and we are investing \$1 million into HeartKids over four years. With this money HeartKids will establish a specialised playgroup program for kids with CHD. This is a first ever for early intervention in kids with CHD unable to access such a service from the NDIS. It will deliver a special support and address developmental delays so that they are ready for school.

They will also develop and implement a three-stage mental health program for families affected by CHD. Such a program will deliver intensive counselling to people experiencing PTSD or bereavement from navigating the complex health system or losing a child to CHD.

Lastly, with our investment into HeartKids they will be working with the Women's and Children's Hospital and remote Aboriginal health clinics to deliver support into rural and remote areas of South Australia for families affected by CHD.

As you can see, Mr Speaker, HeartKids is making sure that every dollar counts. In fact, you may say that they would go to Krypton and back to support the children and their families, and it is that which makes them the real heroes of today's tale.

Time expired.

KERLEY, MR D.N.

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:28): I rise to speak in parliament today about the sad passing of a South Australian football legend, Neil Kerley AM.

Neil was born in Barmera in the Riverland in 1934 to Laurie and Lillian Kerley. Sadly, his father died when Neil was only young, leaving him and his siblings to look after themselves with their mother, Lillian. He really grew up quickly, and by the age of 16 he had learnt to look after himself, moved out of home and became a leader at a young age.

This really found its way through on to the football field. As a young football player in 1953, Neil, while working close to Woomera, captained the local Koolymilka side as captain-coach where he went on to win not only the Mail Medal in the competition but also led his team to premiership. Keeping on with the captain-coach role, he then went to Whyalla, a very strong league, and played for North Whyalla, where he coached them to premierships both in 1954 and 1955.

These exploits certainly got the attention of the local SANFL competition, and soon Neil started his distinguished football career in the SANFL for a local club, West Adelaide. This would lead him on his journey to become a member of not only the South Australian Football Hall of Fame but also the Australian Football Hall of Fame. At this time, he was playing at a time when football was really a very tribal, suburban game. There was no big TV adulation; in fact, there were certainly no TVs to be able to give reports to the tribunal and there was only one umpire, so this was a time when many scores were settled on the field.

Players at the time could not make a living from football. They played for the love of the club, and certainly Neil exemplified that. We talk about where the game of football is now, where it is nearly a 52-week a year sport. The game could not have got to where it is without legends of the game such as Neil, so when players today talk about standing on the shoulders of giants, Neil was one of those. In the time we have here in parliament to speak of this, he played 275 games for West Adelaide, South Adelaide and, importantly, Glenelg, which is an important club in the electorate of Morphett.

I will talk a bit about his time at Glenelg because it really was transformational for the team. When he came to Glenelg in 1967, in the previous season they had finished bottom and won the wooden spoon. They had not been in the premiership for many years; in fact, the Glenelg Football Club said just recently that in the Tigers' 101-year history no single person has had a bigger impact than Kerley.

He is affectionately known as Kerls, and he transformed the Tigers from being regarded as a more or less social club into one of the strongest, most respected football clubs in Australia. That is certainly true of the time I have known the Glenelg Football Club. Neil also spoke fondly of Glenelg. He coached there for 10 years, and at the club's centenary dinner just last year, celebrating 100 years of the Glenelg Football Club, Neil spoke glowingly of the club.

The highlight of Neil's tenure at the club was 1973, when Neil had gone from being a captain-coach to just a coach. He had to learn to inspire his players not by his physical deeds but by inspiration—and that he did. He inspired the team, where they lost only one game for the season and then won in the famous grand final at Adelaide Oval in 1973 against North Adelaide. That is long remembered, with fantastic players Graham Cornes and Peter Carey amongst them and still stalwarts of the club today.

He was known as a tough and hard man, but I will quote from the Tigers' skipper Ken Eustace, who took over from him. He mentions:

He was a great encourager. He could also give you a blast but he wouldn't knock you. He was a unique inspiration and he was strong, fearless... his aura and his energy, you could feel it.

I think South Australians certainly felt that through all his time playing, and that is why we will miss him so much. Vale, Neil Kerley.

MOBILE BLACK SPOT PROGRAM

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (15:33): I arise to follow up from a question I asked today in question time regarding mobile phone towers with a brief contribution to this chamber about the importance of digital connectivity around our electorate and around our community. There is absolutely no doubt, as everyone in this chamber would be well aware, that it is becoming increasingly important that our communities and our businesses are capable of connecting to one another over the airwaves, with the majority of houses now sans landline and the majority of business now done on the internet.

That is not just bricks-and-mortar businesses; it is our farming businesses and businesses like food trucks that get around and serve those wonderful community events and the markets we have in communities up and down the peninsula. The majority of our business in our electorate is now being done online, and it is becoming increasingly important that we have access to phone towers and digital connectivity to ensure that that business can take place.

Another factor that is well worth considering when discussing digital connectivity is the access that we need in the case of emergency, in case of bushfire, in case of grassfire or any other emergency that might well take place. I can imagine that there would be nothing more scary than a bushfire bearing down on your home or property and not having a single phone bar to call for emergency services or assistance. There is a whole plethora of reasons that we need to continue to invest in digital connectivity, including those two I have just mentioned.

Unfortunately, on Yorke Peninsula, in my electorate, we have quite a few different blackspots around the electorate that could do with an upgrade or an increase in their access to this vital service. We have advocated for a great many including but not limited to the Melton community on Arthurton Road, Winulta, Dowlingville and Nalyappa Road. We have done our best to get a new phone tower put just south of Broughton at Youngs Road to service those homes and communities, including Bute, Nannes, Kulpara and Willamulka.

Such has been the explosion of tourism that has started visiting what used to be known as Innes National Park (I am sorry I cannot say the full name because I am not particularly good at the pronunciation) that it is very important we find a way to improve phone service in that part of the electorate. It would also service the Marion Bay community that I have had the great pleasure of working quite closely with to try to improve their service. That community would love to see that tower moved, shifted or raised to make sure that it can provide a greater level of service to a far bigger surface area. With 130,000 visitors per year to Innes National Park, it certainly would be an investment well made.

There is also the Urania community, Point Souttar and others. The wonderful old Urania Uniting Church just sold recently, so a new venture will be moving in there, and I am sure they could well do with a phone service in their kitchen or living room. I want to make particular mention of the Tickera community, the subject of my question. I have had the great pleasure of working with Janet Sexton and Chris on a number of occasions to try to figure out a way that we can get a phone tower for Tickera.

I was pleased to organise a meeting with Telstra, the council and the federal member for Grey, Rowan Ramsey, relatively recently. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend because the

government was in caretaker mode, but I am led to believe that it went quite well, with Telstra accepting that it is a blackspot and worthy of being funded and improved. Now the battle shifts to try to secure that funding to make sure we can get that tower built and the Tickera community can finally have some better phone service. I look forward to taking up that fight on behalf of that community to ensure that they have the services they require.

Unfortunately, over the last few years we have not had a great deal of success in Narungga. Over the last three rounds of the blackspot program, I do not believe, as far as I can tell, that we have had a single phone tower committed to our electorate. That problem was perhaps articulated when I posed that question in question time and we had a list of 11 towers that were still being built or in the process of being built, none of which were in the seat of Narungga.

In this chamber, I give a commitment to the people of my electorate that I will continue to fight to try to get some towers built in some of those towns I have mentioned and for some of those communities that are missing out, and hopefully we have better luck in the rounds that are coming up. It was pleasing to hear the minister commit to making it part of the budget process and consider funding it going forward. Hopefully, it gets favourable consideration as part of the budget in the coming months and years and we can get some phone towers built in Narungga.

It is a really important issue and one that I am keen to go into bat for constituents on, and I look forward, hopefully, to better results in the future.

KERLEY, MR D.N.

Mr TARZIA (Hartley) (15:38): As we know, Neil Kerley made a colossal contribution to South Australia. He was born on 20 February 1934 in Barmera. He started playing in the wonderful Riverland and grew up a Redlegs fan, but he was, you could say, more appreciated by West Adelaide. For the Redlegs, he is certainly the one that got away.

As a player, he went on to play over 260 SANFL games and kicked 123 goals. It has been said that he never actually left the field due to injury. I was reflecting on an early interview I saw with Neil Kerley only a short time back, when it was said that on one occasion he actually broke his jaw. Fancy breaking your jaw, keeping it together with things like chewing gum and still running and partaking in the game for a half of football. Such was the courage and consistency of the man. It goes to his work ethic and to the hard work and consistency he applied throughout his professional sporting career.

In what he called the ultimate contest, he served South Australia in 32 State of Origin games. He famously brought South Australia to victory against Victoria in 1963. It was the first time they had won since 1926. As a coach, he coached a whole range of SANFL clubs, including Glenelg, Central Districts, West Adelaide, South Adelaide and of course West Torrens, winning four premierships.

It is fair to say that Neil Kerley was an inspiration for South Australians young and old. I remember meeting Neil Kerley on the set of *The Crows Show* in the early 1990s. This was a time when the Crows were very good. Of course, I am old enough to remember the Crows winning two premierships, in 1997 and 1998. When you talk to some of these young people, they have not experienced a Crows premiership, but hopefully there is another one coming. We know that people like Neil Kerley worked so hard for the Adelaide Football Club, and we should acknowledge that.

Growing up, people wanted to be like him. I share a little bit in common with Neil—not a lot but a little, as he attended Rostrevor College for a short while, which is a proud football school. At the time, they gave out footy fixtures during the year. Obviously, on one side of the fixture was a list of games for the year and on the other side you could see the famous old scholars who had represented their state in the SANFL and also the AFL. They included players like Peter Marker, Luke Darcy, Ben Hart—absolute legends of the game—and, as a kid, I remember seeing Neil Kerley there. He was certainly someone young football players certainly aspired to be like in terms of his consistency, his courage and his impact on the game.

Neil was a magnetic character, and people were drawn to him. He was larger than life and, as many members in this place have reflected on, he made the Australian AFL Hall of Fame in 1997, the South Australian Football Hall of Fame in 2002, but he also gave a lot back. He was an absolute legend, an inspirational leader—if you like, a Braveheart of football across the state. He had the

opportunity to go to Victoria, and a number of clubs were looking at him. However, because of what was more important to him, he decided to stay in South Australia. He had the opportunities, but he did not want to leave the beautiful Riverland, his friends and family and his connections there.

Mr Whetstone: Why would you?

Mr TARZIA: Exactly—why would you? He has certainly enriched South Australia, and we are devastated at his loss. He was an absolutely wonderful man. May he rest in peace and may all our thoughts and prayers be with Barb and the rest of Neil's family. Vale.

LIGHT ELECTORATE

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:43): Today, I would like to bring to the attention of the house a couple of matters relating to my electorate of Light. First of all, this is the season of handover dinners for service clubs. I am sure many members in this chamber would be attending a number of service clubs' handover dinners, and it is important to highlight the work that service clubs do. Even in an increasingly difficult climate, when it comes to volunteering some service clubs are doing really well and some are not doing so well.

In my electorate, we have a strong volunteer ethic and we have very strong service clubs. I have been fortunate enough over the last few weeks to attend the Rotary Club of Gawler Light in Gawler, the Rotary Club of Gawler (we have two Rotary clubs in Gawler), and I am soon attending the Apex handover dinner. Sadly, I missed my own Lions Club handover dinner because of community events; I had to chair a community meeting. Sometimes, the work these organisations and service clubs do in our community is not known.

When you go to the handover dinners and the presidents present their reports of activities, it is incredible the depth and breadth of programs and projects that our service clubs get involved in. For example, they get involved in a whole range of projects like looking after parks and gardens. My own Lions Club looks after Gawler Railway Station. They do quite a bit of work in maintaining the station. They also use the railway station car park for a weekly market, which is a major fundraiser for them, and they put those funds into various local projects. They actually support other charities in the community and also make contributions to the Lions Foundation. They have been very proactive in dealing with a whole range of international projects through their donations.

Some of the service clubs are involved in supporting and funding breakfast programs at our local schools. They get involved with student exchange programs and also encourage cultural exchange programs with like clubs and young people from other countries. I would just like to pay tribute to the work of our service clubs.

This weekend, the Barossa Light and Gawler Football Association are holding their Indigenous round of football. This is to mark the contribution that Indigenous players make to the game of football, to Aussie Rules on this occasion, to highlight that the game is for everybody and to bring out the really strong message that there is no place for racism in sport. In fact, there is no place for racism in society, particularly in sport. I commend the football association for holding this round to highlight the challenges still faced by First Nations people in our country and to highlight the contribution they are making.

A lot of these local clubs in my area—for example, the Willaston Football Club, of which I am member, the Gawler Central Football Club and the South Gawler Football Club—do a great job in fundraising and also promoting women's football. All the clubs have a women's football team. They are important in promoting local sport. Under the new leadership of Aldo Pasin for Willaston, Damian Brook at Gawler Central and Daniel Kiryk at South Gawler, these younger men actually bring with them new ideas and new ways of managing the clubs, so the clubs are much more sensitive to where football is in society today, and particularly to their behaviour. I commend the work undertaken by that group of volunteers in our community.

With the time I have remaining, I would like to highlight the volunteer work undertaken by a particular group in my community because today they celebrate their 20th birthday, and that is the Gawler road safety committee. This committee were established 20 years ago, and their role was to help educate and promote road safety in our community. They do that by having stalls at various community events where they promote the road safety message.

One of the very successful programs they have run is a speed trailer, which highlights people's speed in the streets and encourages people to drive at the correct speed. They also have a bin sticker program, where they actually have stickers with speed limits in particular streets. These volunteers not only do this but they actually spend a lot of time fundraising to do these activities. They are another group of volunteers I would like to commend, and I support the work of the Gawler road safety committee.

Bills

RETURN TO WORK (SCHEME SUSTAINABILITY) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the bill with the amendments indicated by the following schedule, to which amendments the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the House of Assembly:

No. 1. Clause 3, page 3, lines 5 and 6 [clause 3(2)]—Delete subclause (2)

No. 2. Clause 5, page 3, line 13 [clause 5(1), inserted subsection (2)(a)]—Delete 'work injury has' and substitute:

work injury or injuries have

No. 3. Clause 5, page 3, line 17 [clause 5(1), inserted subsection (2)(b)]—Delete 'work injury has' and substitute:

work injury or injuries have

No. 4. Clause 5, page 3, line 22 [clause 5(2), inserted subsection (3)]—Delete 'Pending stabilisation of a worker's work injury or work injuries' and substitute:

Pending an assessment of permanent impairment

No. 5. Clause 5, page 3, line 36 to page 4, line 30 [clause 5(2), inserted subsections (4) to (4e)]—Delete inserted subsections (4) to (4e) and substitute:

(4) An interim decision under subsection (3)—

(a) must be made in accordance with any requirements or principles prescribed by the regulations; and

(b) will have effect until—

(i) an assessment of whole person impairment has been made and determined under Division 5; or

(ii) it appears that, due to a material improvement in the worker's likely degree of whole person impairment, the worker's degree of whole person impairment is no longer likely to be—

(A) in the case of physical injury—35% or more; or

(B) in the case of psychiatric injury—30% or more.

(4a) Before bringing an interim decision to an end under subsection (4)(b)(ii), the Corporation must—

(a) give the worker at least 3 months written notice of its intention to bring the interim decision to an end under that subsection; and

(b) give the worker a reasonable opportunity during that 3 month period to furnish information to satisfy the Corporation that it is appropriate for the interim decision to continue.

No. 6. Clause 6, page 5, after line 26—Insert:

(2a) Section 22—after subsection (8) insert:

Note—

The Parliament confirms that this subsection is to be interpreted and applied in accordance with the principles enunciated in the reasons of the Full Court of the Supreme Court in *Return to Work Corporation of South Australia v Summerfield* [2021] SASCFC 17.

(2b) Section 22—after subsection (9) insert:

- (9a) For the purposes of this section, an assessment (or parts of an assessment) may be undertaken by more than 1 accredited medical practitioners and their assessments combined so as to create 1 assessment.

No. 7. Clause 6, page 5, lines 27 and 28 [clause 6(3)]—Delete subclause (3) and substitute:

(3) Section 22(10) and (11)—delete subsections (10) and (11) and substitute:

(10) Subject to subsections (12) to (15) (inclusive), if—

(a) a worker has had a whole person impairment assessment under this section; and

(b) another impairment from the same injury or cause develops or manifests itself after that assessment,

then that other impairment—

(c) will be assessed separately; and

(d) —

(i) will not be combined in any respect (whether under this section or sections 56 or 58) with the impairment or impairments that have already been assessed; but

(ii) may be combined with any other impairment from the same injury or cause that has also developed or manifested itself after the earlier assessment.

Example—

A worker suffers impairments arising from injuries A and B which both arise from the same cause. The worker has those impairments assessed under section 22. After the assessment of the impairments arising from injuries A and B, the worker develops further impairments from injuries C and D which arise from the same cause as injuries A and B. The worker is entitled to be assessed for the impairment arising from injuries C and D and to combine the impairments from those injuries. However, the worker cannot combine the impairments arising from injuries C and D with the impairments arising from injuries A and B under this Act.

No. 8. Clause 7, page 5 lines 36 to 39—Delete the clause

No. 9. New clause, page 6, after line 3—Insert:

8A—Amendment of section 48—Reduction or discontinuance of weekly payments

(1) Section 48(2)—after paragraph (h) insert:

(ha) the worker—

(i) has been receiving weekly payments on the basis of an interim decision under section 21(3); and

(ii) the interim decision is brought to an end under section 21(4)(b)(ii); or

(2) Section 48—after subsection (10) insert:

(10a) If the Corporation is acting under subsection (2)(ha)—

(a) the notice under subsection (6) must be given as soon as practicable after the decision is made (but not necessarily before it takes effect); and

(b) subsection (10) does not apply.

No. 10. New clause, page 6, after line 14—Insert:

9A—Amendment of section 54—Redemptions—liabilities associated with medical services

Section 54(2)—delete subsection (2)

No. 11. Clause 10, page 6, after line 20—Insert:

(2a) Section 56(5)—delete subsection (5) and substitute:

- (5) If a worker suffers 2 or more impairments arising from the same injury or cause, those impairments will be assessed together and combined to determine the degree of impairment of the worker (using any principle set out in the Impairment Assessment Guidelines).

No. 12. Clause 10, page 6, line 21 to page 7, line 11 [clause 10(3)]—Delete subclause (3)

No. 13. Clause 10, page 7, after line 11—Insert:

(3a) Section 56(8) and (9)—delete subsections (8) and (9) and substitute:

- (8) Only 1 claim may be made under this Division in respect of any impairments that have been combined as provided by section 22 and this section (and any impairment or impairments that are not combined under section 22 will not be combined under this section).

No. 14. Clause 11, page 7, after line 23 [clause 11, inserted section 56A]—After subsection (1) insert:

Note—

A lump sum payment will be calculated in accordance with section 56, subject to the operation of this section.

No. 15. Clause 11, page 7, line 29 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(3)]—Delete ‘the election takes effect’ and substitute:

the lump sum payment is made

No. 16. Clause 11, page 7, lines 30 and 31 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(3)(a)]—Delete ‘within the meaning of section 24(1)’

No. 17. Clause 11, page 7, line 31 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(3)(a)]—After ‘for the work injury’ insert:

or injuries for which the election is made

No. 18. Clause 11, page 7, line 32 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(3)(b)]—Delete ‘for the work injury’ and substitute:

for—

- (i) the work injury or injuries for which the election is made; or
 (ii) another impairment arising from the same cause as the work injury or injuries for which the election is made.

No. 19. Clause 11, page 7, lines 33 to 37 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(4)]—Delete subsection (4)

No. 20. Clause 11, page 8, lines 10 to 17 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(7)]—Delete subsection (7) and substitute:

- (7) If a worker makes an election under this section, the worker is entitled to continue to receive weekly payments under section 41 as a seriously injured worker until the day immediately preceding the day on which the lump sum payment under section 56 in respect of the election is paid.

No. 21. Clause 11, page 8, lines 18 to 26 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(8)]—Delete subsection (8) and substitute:

- (8) There will be a reduction of the lump sum payable under section 56 to a seriously injured worker who makes an election under this section by the amount of any weekly payments made to the worker after the end of the period of 104 weeks from the date on which the incapacity for work first occurs, other than weekly payments made in accordance with subsection (7) after—
 (a) in the case of an election made by a 50% or more WPI worker—the day on which the relevant application is referred to the Tribunal under this section; or
 (b) in any other case—the day on which the election is received by the Corporation.

No. 22. Clause 11, page 8, line 39 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(11)]—After ‘for the purposes of subsection (5)(b)(i)’ insert:

if satisfied that the election is in the best interests of the worker

No. 23. Clause 11, page 9, line 19 [clause 11, inserted section 56A(17)]—After ‘to an’ insert:

application for an

No. 24. New clause, page 9, after line 24—Insert:

11A—Amendment of section 58—Lump sum payments—non-economic loss

(1) Section 58(6)—delete subsection (6) and substitute:

(6) If a worker suffers 2 or more impairments arising from the same injury or cause—

(a) those impairments will be assessed together and combined to determine the degree of impairment of the worker (using any principle set out in the Impairment Assessment Guidelines); and

(b) the worker is not entitled to receive compensation by way of lump sum under subsection (4) in respect of those impairments in excess of the prescribed sum.

(2) Section 58(9) and (10)—delete subsections (9) and (10) substitute:

(9) Only 1 claim may be made under this Division in respect of any impairments that have been combined as provided by section 22 and this section (and any impairment or impairments that are not combined under section 22 will not be combined under this section).

No. 25. Clause 14, page 10, lines 35 and 36 [clause 14, inserted paragraph (ba)]—Delete ‘not to extend the period of operation of an interim decision under section 21(4b)’ and substitute:

to bring an interim decision under section 21(3) to an end under section 21(4)(b)(ii)

No. 26. New clause, page 10, after line 36—Insert:

14A—Amendment of section 115—Powers of Tribunal on application

Section 115(1)—before paragraph (a) insert:

(aa) in the case of an application for an assessment of whole person impairment under Part 2 Division 5—give directions the Tribunal considers necessary to expedite the assessment; or

No. 27. Schedule 1, clause 1, page 11, after line 13 [Schedule 1, clause 1(1)]—Insert:

Category 1 seriously injured worker means a worker who, at any time during the period appointed by proclamation for the purposes of this definition (the *Category 1 designated period*), is (or becomes) an interim seriously injured worker;

Category 2 seriously injured worker means a worker who, at any time during the period appointed by proclamation for the purposes of this definition, being a period commencing immediately after the end of the *Category 1 designated period*, becomes an interim seriously injured worker;

compensating authority means the Corporation or a self-insured employer;

No. 28. Schedule 1, clause 1, page 11, lines 16 to 19 [Schedule 1, clause 1(1)]—Delete the definition of *designated worker* and substitute:

designated worker means a worker who, in relation to a physical injury, has been assessed to be a seriously injured worker under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act;

interim seriously injured worker means a worker who is taken to be a seriously injured worker under section 21(3) of the principal Act pending an assessment of permanent impairment under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act;

No. 29. Schedule 1, clause 1, page 11, after line 20 [Schedule 1, clause 1(1)]—Insert:

relevant day means a day appointed by proclamation as the relevant day for the purposes of the provision in which the term is used.

No. 30. Schedule 1, clause 2, page 12, line 3 [Schedule 1, clause 2(3)]—Delete ‘trauma’ and substitute:

cause

No. 31. Schedule 1, clause 2, page 12, lines 8 to 12 [Schedule 1, clause 2(4)]—Delete subclause (4) and substitute:

(4) For the purposes of this clause, the final examination relating to a worker by an accredited medical practitioner is the last attendance when the accredited medical practitioner needs to see the worker in order to enable the accredited medical practitioner to complete and

issue the permanent impairment assessment report under section 22 of the principal Act (even if that report is subsequently substituted, supplemented or expanded).

Example 1—

If an accredited medical practitioner sees a worker, and then following that appointment determines that they do not need to see the worker again, then the final examination will be the date of that last attendance. This is even if the accredited medical practitioner determines they do not need to see the worker again but does require an x-ray or other test to be obtained.

Example 2—

If an accredited medical practitioner sees a worker, and then following that appointment determines they need further tests and will need to see the worker again following those tests, then the final examination will be the date of that further attendance (as long as the accredited medical practitioner does not need to see them again in order to complete and issue the permanent impairment assessment report under section 22 of the principal Act).

No. 32. Schedule 1, clause 3, page 12, line 13—Delete the heading to clause 3 and substitute:

3—General provision and thresholds—seriously injured workers

No. 33. Schedule 1, clause 3, page 12, lines 15 and 16 [Schedule 1, clause 3(a)]—Delete paragraph (a) and substitute:

- (a) a worker who has been assessed to be a seriously injured worker under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act immediately before the designated day will continue to be regarded as a seriously injured worker; and

No. 34. Schedule 1, clause 3, page 12, after line 19 [Schedule 1, clause 3]—Insert:

- (2) In the case of a Category 1 seriously injured worker—
 - (a) in relation to an assessment of the degree of whole person impairment made before the designated day—after the assessment is made the worker will be regarded as a seriously injured worker for the purposes of the principal Act if the worker is assessed to have a degree of whole person impairment that is 30% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act; and
 - (b) in relation to an assessment of the degree of whole person impairment made on or after the designated day—after the assessment is made the worker will be regarded as a seriously injured worker for the purposes of the principal Act if the worker is assessed to have a degree of whole person impairment that is—
 - (i) in the case of psychiatric injury—30% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act; and
 - (ii) in the case of physical injury—35% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act.
- (3) In the case of a Category 2 seriously injured worker, in relation to an assessment of the degree of whole person impairment made on or after the designated day, after the assessment is made the worker will be regarded as a seriously injured worker for the purposes of the principal Act if the worker is assessed to have a degree of whole person impairment that is—
 - (a) in the case of psychiatric injury—30% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act; and
 - (b) in the case of physical injury—35% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act.

No. 35. Schedule 1, clauses 4 and 5, page 12, line 20 to page 13, line 25 [Schedule 1, clauses 4 and 5]—Delete clauses 4 and 5 and substitute:

4—Elections—seriously injured workers

- (1) This clause applies in relation to the operation of section 56A of the principal Act, as enacted by this Act.
- (2) If a worker is a designated worker before the designated day, the worker may make an election under section 56A on or after the relevant day and subclause (4) will apply in relation to the worker.
- (3) If—

- (a) a worker is a Category 1 seriously injured worker; and
 - (b) the worker is assessed to have a degree of whole person impairment that is 30% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act; and
 - (c) that assessment is made before the designated day,
- the worker may make an election under section 56A and subclause (4) will apply in relation to the worker.
- (4) If this subclause applies in relation to a worker, section 56 (as amended by this Act) and section 56A (as enacted) of the principal Act will apply subject to the following modifications and qualifications:
- (a) the age factor (AF) applying in relation to the worker will be taken to be the worker's age at the date of the election rather than the relevant date as it applies in relation to the worker under section 5 of the principal Act;
 - (b) the total payment under section 56 that the worker can receive cannot exceed the prescribed sum applicable for 29% whole person impairment;
 - (c) section 56A(8) will apply so that the only amounts to be deducted are weekly payments made to the worker under section 41 of the principal Act where—
 - (i) the payments are made on or after the designated day under this subclause and before the date of the election; and
 - (ii) the payments are made after the period of 104 weeks from the date on which the incapacity for work first occurs, other than weekly payments made in accordance with section 56A(7) after—
 - (A) in the case of an election made by a 50% or more WPI worker—the day on which the relevant application is referred to the Tribunal under section 56A; or
 - (B) in any other case—the day on which the election is received by the Corporation under section 56A.
- (5) If a worker—
- (a) is a Category 1 seriously injured worker who is assessed to be a designated worker on or after the designated day under subclause (3); or
 - (b) is a Category 2 seriously injured worker,
- the worker may only make an election under section 56A if the worker is assessed to have a degree of whole person impairment that is 35% or more under Part 2 Division 5 of the principal Act and, in the case of a Category 1 seriously injured worker, subclause (6) will apply in relation to the worker.
- (6) If this subclause applies in relation to a worker, section 56 (as amended by this Act) and section 56A (as enacted) of the principal Act will apply subject to the following modifications and qualifications:
- (a) the age factor (AF) applying in relation to the worker will be taken to be the worker's age at the date of the election rather than the relevant date as it applies in relation to the worker under section 5 of the principal Act;
 - (b) section 56A(8) will apply so that the only amounts to be deducted are weekly payments made to the worker under section 41 of the principal Act where—
 - (i) the payments are made on or after the designated day under this subclause and before the date of the election; and
 - (ii) the payments are made after the period of 104 weeks from the date on which the incapacity for work first occurs, other than weekly payments made in accordance with section 56A(7) after—
 - (A) in the case of an election made by a 50% or more WPI worker—the day on which the relevant application is referred to the Tribunal under section 56A; or
 - (B) in any other case—the day on which the election is received by the Corporation under section 56A.

- (7) Despite any other provision, a worker who is a seriously injured worker as a result of an injury that is attributable to a trauma that occurred before 1 July 2015 is not entitled to make an election under section 56A of the principal Act.

5—Interim decisions under section 21(3) of Act

- (1) This clause applies in relation to the application of the amendments made by section 5(2) of this Act.
- (2) In this clause, a reference to the *relevant provision* is a reference to subsection (4)(b)(ii) of section 21 of the principal Act as enacted by section 5(2) of this Act.
- (3) The amendments made by section 5(2) of this Act apply as follows:
- (a) in relation to a Category 1 seriously injured worker—
- (i) the principal Act as amended by section 5(2) of this Act will apply from the designated day under this subparagraph; and
- (ii) until the designated day under this subparagraph, the amendments will apply as if a reference to 35% in the relevant provision were a reference to 30%; and
- (iii) on and after the designated day under this subparagraph, in relation to a worker with a physical injury, the compensating authority may also act under the relevant provision if it appears that the worker's likely degree of whole person impairment is not likely to be 35% or more;
- (b) in relation to a Category 2 seriously injured worker—the principal Act as amended by section 5(2) of this Act will apply from the designated day under this paragraph.

No. 36. Schedule 1, clause 6, page 14, lines 1 to 10 [Schedule 1, clause 6(4) and (5)]—Delete subclauses (4) and (5) and substitute:

- (4) Despite any other provision of the principal Act or this Act, in the case of a worker whose injury or injuries have stabilised, and who on or after the commencement of this subclause gives a written notice to the compensating authority selecting a particular accredited medical practitioner to undertake an assessment under section 22 of the principal Act of the degree of impairment resulting from the injury or injuries, the Return to Work Scheme Impairment Assessment Guidelines published March 2015 apply in relation to the injury or injuries rather than the version of the Impairment Assessment Guidelines applying immediately before the commencement of this subclause, unless the Return to Work Scheme Impairment Assessment Guidelines published March 2015 already applied, in which case, that version will continue to apply.

No. 37. Schedule 1, clause 7, page 14, after line 16 [Schedule 1, clause 7]—Insert:

- (2) Subclause (1) does not apply in relation to the Impairment Assessment Guidelines that apply under clause 6(4).

No. 38. Schedule 1, clause 8, page 14, lines 17 to 19 [Schedule 1, clause 8]—Delete clause 8 and substitute:

8—Supplementary income support

The amendment made to the principal Act by section 8 of this Act applies in relation to surgery approved by a compensating authority—

- (a) before the designated day in relation to surgery that is conducted on or after the designated day; or
- (b) on or after the designated day.

Consideration in committee.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments be agreed to.

Briefly, this bill is returned from the Legislative Council with a significant number of amendments from both the government and the crossbench. On the part of the government, these amendments have been the product of extensive consultation with interested stakeholders, including business groups, trade unions and legal practitioners. The government also received detailed written submissions from groups including the Law Society of South Australia, the Australian Lawyers Alliance and Lawyers for Workers.

ReturnToWorkSA has advised that none of the amendments incorporated into the bill, including those accepted from the crossbench, will materially increase the costs or liabilities of the scheme, and will not put upward pressure on the average premium rate. The amendments adopted in the Legislative Council make the drafting of the bill clearer, and make the bill operate in a way that is fairer to injured workers and reduces the scope for future legal disputes over the interpretation of the bill. Key features of these amendments include:

- expressly codifying the Summerfield decision;
- fairer rules for the interim seriously injured workers who cannot yet undertake their permanent impairment assessments;
- changes to ensure seriously injured workers who accept a lump sum payment under section 56A are not disadvantaged compared with those other workers who receive lump sum compensation;
- ensuring that the language for the combination of impairments is consistent between key provisions dealing with permanent impairment assessment;
- revoking the second edition impairment assessment guidelines published by the former Liberal government and replacing them with the former first edition guidelines for future assessments; and, finally,
- clearer transition provisions.

At this stage, I wish to place on the record the government's thanks to all those stakeholders for their constructive contributions during the development of these amendments.

Mr COWDREY: In my contribution to this committee stage, I want to reiterate the view shared by the opposition and, I believe, the crossbench from the other place as well, that the process to get to this point has been absolutely shambolic. There is no other way to describe it.

If we walk through the process of how we got here today, we had the original bill that we were told by the ReturnToWork board, by the government, needed to be passed, otherwise the scheme would fall apart. That bill was pulled just after we were told this had to happen. The government then went away and, three days later, introduced another bill to the parliament. Neither of these bills had any real consultation with industry, with injured workers, with unions or with the broader business community prior to their introduction.

We then had the government use their numbers in the lower house—which is their prerogative to do—to pass this bill last sitting week. It moved to the upper house, and there were 30-plus amendments, some of which were operational amendments. We ended up with the bill coming back here with additional crossbench amendments to take us to a point of 38 amendments to the bill being on file.

The minister drew everyone's attention, I think, to the fact that this government have put a premium on retrospective consultation, to consult after the matter, after they introduce bills through this parliament, after they stake their colours to the mast.

I want to make this very clear in terms of this process. When we sat down and had our briefing with ReturnToWork—well after the bill was introduced, may I add—we asked specifically how the government had arrived at this second bill. They walked us through the fact that the government had abandoned the previous bill and that they were then tasked with developing some ideas for cost-saving mechanisms for the scheme. ReturnToWork then made it clear that those ideas were pushed aside and the minister's office had contacted them, providing them with a range of options that the minister's office wanted costed as potential options to make changes to the scheme.

I want to make this very, very clear. This scheme still has an unfunded liability in the order of \$400 million to \$600 million. The government has admitted that through questioning in the committee stage. The outcomes—these ideas, this bill and the ongoing impact of this bill, and the operation of the scheme moving forward—are on this government. The ongoing impact to workers, to business and to the scheme as a whole is on this government.

The opposition is proud of how we have conducted ourselves through this process, of how we have gone about our business. We consulted. We sought independent advice from the government. This should have been done by the government prior to bringing a bill to this place, if there was any rigour at all to the process that they undertook.

We on this side of the house still have very serious concerns about the ongoing viability of the scheme. The actuary does share some of those concerns; these are identified through their identification of a number of references to risks to the scheme. Through the sensitivities, it is clear that there is the potential for this to increase the break-even premium significantly more than what the government has indicated.

But we understand that the board and the government have made it incredibly clear that rates will rise, that the board will have a meeting, will decide that a rise in rates is necessary—but for this parliament acting. We support the bill on this basis. We support the bill on the basis that Business SA and the business community have offered their support for the bill, but this is not how you draft legislation. This is not how you conduct government. If the Labor Party are going to continue this, to not provide any consultation on bills that they introduce to this place, they will very quickly learn that the South Australian public has very little appetite to see governments legislate in this manner. With that, the opposition indicates its support for the bill.

Motion carried.

CROSS BORDER COMMISSIONER BILL

Second Reading

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:59): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Cross Border Commissioner Bill 2022 into the House of Assembly. It is important the government keeps its promise and keeps its word, and we have worked tirelessly to make sure that our word can be kept. It is important that we give due credit where credit is due. Cross-border communities have been through a lot—a lot. We have all been through a lot through the pandemic. This is an opportunity for me once again to place on the record my thanks to the previous government for helping steer South Australia through that pandemic.

But not everything was perfect, not everything was done as well as it could have been. That is why I want to pay tribute today, much to his embarrassment and probably peril, and show my gratitude to the member for Mount Gambier. It is not lost on this parliament or the people of the border communities the advocacy and work of our border MPs, especially our regional ones, who have to deal with vast distances of isolated communities who often rely on cross-border movement for everyday services that most South Australians would take for granted in their community.

It is common knowledge that in Mount Gambier people seek medical services in Victoria on many occasions. It is obvious that in Western Victoria many Victorian citizens seek medical services and other services in South Australia. The border is an artificial line drawn on a map between communities, and through no-one's particular fault that border became a hard border during the COVID pandemic. The way we dealt with those communities did not offer, I think, common-sense solutions to many of the problems they were facing.

The member for Mount Gambier was a strong and strident voice. I just want to point out to the house the political peril he put himself in. During the pandemic, the public had no appetite for anyone criticising a government or offering alternatives. There was no political appetite from the public. The public wanted the government to succeed. They wanted to fight this pandemic and succeed at it, and they wanted all parliamentarians—Labor, Liberal, government, opposition, Independent, whatever—to support the governments of the day and the institutions that we hold dear to keep us safe. With that in mind, think of the courage it takes to speak out during a pandemic and speak your mind.

There were plenty of opportunities to criticise the government and to offer constructive criticism, but the member for Mount Gambier went above and beyond. I also want to point out, without

it being a criticism of then government members, that then government MPs were in a position where they could not speak out, they could not call out, and that burden fell almost entirely on the member for Mount Gambier to speak out alone, a lone voice, and that is not easy. No extra resources, not the resources of government, not the resources of the department—one man and his staff in his community standing up in the face of overwhelming pressure to advocate for border communities. I want to pay tribute to the member for Mount Gambier. He is probably losing votes as we speak with me supporting him.

As I said, the introduction of this bill in this house is a result of this government's commitment to regions and the evidence that we are listening to regions and responding to the needs and concerns of regional communities. By the end of this, I will have been in this parliament now nearly 30 years, and it is a constant refrain that many people in our regional communities think that the government's gaze does not go past Gepps Cross or the tollgate. As much as we try to smash that perception it is ingrained and that is why actions like this are so very important.

This is an issue that predates COVID, but certainly during COVID many regional MPs who represented border communities were crying out for support from what those communities thought were city-centric ministers. This might be an unfair criticism of all the Marshall government ministers and an unfair criticism of previous Weatherill government ministers but, as I said earlier, there is that perception.

Their views, I think, can be best categorised as governments were just ignoring or failing to listen to what cross-border communities had to say. When you fail to listen, when you are not listening to a concern, you are not going to act, and when you brush away concerns you build up resentment, and I think that has been witnessed in the most recent elections.

Many residents and businesses in regional South Australia travel across our borders daily. They cross the border for business, health, socialising, work and tourism just through their day-to-day travels. There are complicated issues for residents who live in cross-border communities that do not really reflect that we are part of a federation and a commonwealth, issues that most people living in the comfort of Adelaide would never have to navigate or contemplate or live through.

Tradies who work in the South-East operate on both sides of the border, and they are constantly forced to deal with bureaucracy on both sides of that border. This duplication of government regulation costs jobs, costs income, costs work, costs productivity and ultimately costs the state and the nation.

Another example is firefighters, who experience difficulty when they are travelling along borders and when officers cross the border having to switch radios or switch channels on which they operate. It does not sound like it is overly burdensome, but again fire and natural disasters do not recognise lines on a map, so making sure that we give those regional communities, those regional volunteers, the tools that they need to be able to fight a fire wherever it is, regardless of an artificial line on a map, is very important.

Farmers in regional South Australia are part of border communities. Many of those residents live in one state. They might even have properties that go across the border. Some of them send their children to school in a different state from where they reside, and there are arrangements that come with this complexity that make it difficult for those families to have a seamless and easy way through the education system.

It is hard enough in Adelaide to get organised with kids in school; it is even harder in regional communities. I can only imagine what families are going through in the cross-border communities where they are living in one state and sending their kids to school in another. I can imagine the bureaucracy.

With the onset of COVID-19, the pandemic highlighted the challenges of cross-border communities. This was highlighted through the public advocacy of the member for Mount Gambier and the private advocacy, I imagine, of some then government backbenchers, and I will pay tribute to the member for MacKillop and the member for Hammond—self-praise is no praise, remember, but I am joking—the member for Giles and, importantly, the then member for Frome and now current member for Stuart.

I also want to pay tribute to the upper house members who raised this as an issue. I know Nicola Centofanti and Clare Scriven were keen advocates, and I understand that at one stage in the last parliament, in the upper house, Clare Scriven was the only member of that house to live in regional South Australia, excluding the Hon. Mr Hunter, who lives at Normanville. Advocacy was very important to face the needs that these communities were facing and then act on them.

A commissioner will not solve all these problems. This is not the silver bullet we think it is, but it will go a long way to addressing many of their concerns. I have some experience in the task force model that we deployed, where you put one person in charge of a regulatory function and they are able to cut through the bureaucracy and red tape to get solutions. It worked exceptionally well with the Olympic Dam task force, it worked exceptionally well with the Whyalla task force to try to save steelmaking there and it worked exceptionally well with the Nyrstar redevelopment. This commissioner for cross-border communities should work no differently.

Basically, it is a government task force led by one person and a commission, supported by the department, to cut through the bureaucracy. It is a new mechanism where people can have access to someone whose job it is to deal with these cross-border issues solely. It is important that they can facilitate collaboration and engagement with other agencies. As a minister in a previous government and in this government, government is a slow-moving, large beast that is very difficult to turn. That is why our speaking up here in the parliament sends a very strong message to the bureaucracy that we as a parliament expect there to be action on these matters.

We could set up a non-legislative framework for this, but the legislative framework with statutes standing behind it gives the commission powers to force people to the table to work out solutions. It also gives residents and business communities the opportunity to come to one spot, to one point of entry for all tiers of government. That is always the difficult part: you turn up to one desk and they say 'No, no, that form is not filled out in triplicate. You've got to go to the other desk and get a stamp there and come back to us before you can talk about it.' This gives us one access point to all tiers of government, which I think is a very good aspect.

The commissioner will work with all stakeholders to identify issues, broker solutions, provide advice on matters impacting border communities, making it easier to do business across our borders while addressing barriers to education, health and other services. The thing about establishing these officers is that this is the risk that governments face: criticism from the officers we establish. That is a good thing. The small business commissioner, their job is to investigate how government deals with small business and be an impartial broker, and when government gets it wrong the Small Business Commissioner speaks up.

We saw that with the former commissioner, John Chapman, speaking up against the Weatherill government and then speaking up against the Marshall government. It is that type of independent advocacy that gives communities confidence that their issues are being addressed and that the Public Service has to respond. The commission will also work with other jurisdictions, such as Victoria and New South Wales.

With a commissioner dedicated to these matters in South Australia, the parliament and the government would expect collaboration with these jurisdictions, not only on an individual basis but in national arenas. There would be a common voice across border communities, elevating these issues to ministerial conferences, ministers at the most senior level.

Whether it be national heavy vehicle issues, whether it be livestock issues, whether it be grain issues or harvest issues, whether it be education, health care, policing matters or court matters, there is a greater level of collaboration we can have together with our cross-border cousins that can help us all make living in a border community more attractive.

A maximum three-year term has been provided, which is in line with all executive appointments for public sector employees, with a clear specification for a termination modelled on similar commissioners already in place, such as the Small Business Commissioner. I want to make a few of my own observations. Keeping your word, keeping your promise, is important.

Today, in a previous debate, which it would be disorderly to mention, there was discussion about how some cross-border communities have been treated through either government policy or government inaction. There is a sense within some of our border communities that the governments

of South Australia have forgotten them, whether it is the privatisation of the forward rotations of the forest or the less than \$2 million allocated in the last Marshall budget to the South-East.

We collectively have to recognise that our border communities are some of the most prosperous and important communities that we have. Whether it is up near the Riverland, right down through Bordertown or right through to the South-East, these communities are some of the most productive in South Australia, if not Australia. They have serious concerns with issues that should be our business and they should be debated here. That is why the Premier made a point of visiting a border community as one of the first communities he visited after his election. This is a good step forward. It is not the final step but a good step in keeping our word.

I want to finish by saying that I do not think we would be here today debating this had it not been for the member for Mount Gambier. I do not think this would be in statute. This is not so much a Labor Party promise as it is the advocacy of the member for Mount Gambier. The people of Mount Gambier are lucky to have a voice like his, who is prepared to speak up against both political parties whenever it is in their interests to do so. He does so quite well and effectively.

I have to say that I hope this bill has a speedy passage. I know that there are some amendments from the upper house and some amendments have been filed. I understand two will be withdrawn and I understand there should be broad support for the ones that remain. I look forward to the committee stage and the contributions of members in the house.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (16:18): I will be the lead speaker for this Cross Border Commissioner Bill. I will make a small contribution. After listening to the member for West Torrens, he has some understanding but not a true understanding because you actually have to live within a border community to understand the hardship and complications of living in that community. The logistics and disadvantage of living through the pandemic are prime examples.

New South Wales initiated a Cross Border Commissioner back in 2012 and it took Victoria a little while longer to come on board in 2018. What we have seen over a long period of time is that there appeared to be relative harmony between the five borders, not just Victoria and New South Wales. That has been a concern of mine, that we have seen very much a focus on what has been the more populated areas and the complications.

I do acknowledge the member for Mount Gambier for his advocacy, but I also want to acknowledge all the MPs who have a border constituency: the member for MacKillop, the member for Hammond and me. I understand that the member for Giles has a constituency that is a border community, and it goes on. I want to make it very clear that it is a complex level of areas that we have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, and the pandemic really did highlight the pressures that were put on people's day-to-day lives that we had to deal with.

It was not just about people getting across the border to deal with their medical appointments—whether they had to visit hospitals, doctors or specialty medical frontline services—it was an interruption to people's mindset: they were being denied something they had always had passage of, and that was a free border.

As a free democracy, that is something we have enjoyed for so long but, when the pandemic came along, our freedoms were somewhat taken away and it meant we had to change our style of life. We had to forgo some of those freedoms we had enjoyed for such a long period of time, and it created angst. When people experience angst, they go to their local member if they cannot get their message out. That is exactly what happened to many of us sitting in this chamber as representatives of border communities.

Along the way, the idea of having a border commissioner in the first instance was met with some resistance. But through the course of the pandemic and through the course of individual cases, people having that hardship and people having that freedom taken away from them, the argument was put very strongly not only to the members of parliament but to the democracy that we have enjoyed forever when it comes to decision-making and the process of having that movement of freedom.

What we saw over a long period of time, and while we had a Marshall Liberal government in power, were many complexities. It was not about a government not listening and it was not about a

government not prepared to make those changes, but we had to work with SA Health, we had to work with SAPOL and we had to work with many agencies to keep our states as safe as we could, and in some way, shape or form it was a race to the bottom.

States were trying to outdo one another, outledge one another. We saw that a number of times with premiers and bureaucracy saying, 'We will make our state safer than our neighbour's because this is what we are going to implore that people do.' That was met with some level of support, but it was also met with a significant amount of pushback because of those interruptions. It was not just about people being able to attend health appointments, it was not just about those school students or university students who have always crossed the border via private vehicle or on a school bus: it was significant interruption on business, in particular, that had long operated between the borders, that imaginary line if you like, but it is a change of jurisdiction.

In my community, people were not just crossing borders one way or the other. People were living on one side of the border and their place of work, their loved ones, their day-to-day life, movement and services had been interrupted. That put great strain on the viability of some businesses. It put great strain on the viability of people being able to cross the border to buy food, to buy day-to-day items that they needed to survive in a normal world. We were not in a normal world through that pandemic.

What it showed me, what it showed all of the cross-border community MPs, was that we had to react, and we had to actually move and work with the government agencies. In some instances we had a little bit more freedom in other areas. I know that I had an advantage in the Riverland with particularly the Lindsay Point community as opposed to some of the communities in the South-East and some of those communities into Western Australia. We note that some of those states continue to play hardball, and they continue to keep their borders closed. What we saw, particularly in South Australia and the eastern seaboard, was a willingness to move and be as agile as possible.

As the member for West Torrens has said, government are big beasts, and they are very hard to manoeuvre; they are very hard to change direction. It is also very hard to change a bureaucrat's mind when they have a set of guidelines that they feel comfortable with but have to explore the challenges of crossing that comfort line. What we saw through the extended time of the pandemic was, I guess, the state being run by bureaucracy. The state was governed by red tape, and people's lives were interrupted by that red tape, and the bureaucracy.

I must say that the exemptions in the early days were very rigid, very hard to obtain and very hard to accept, but over time the guidelines became a little malleable and we were able to massage them to help people with exceptional circumstances and those who had not been able attend health services. There was also a really emotional side to it, where people were not able to visit loved ones. They were not able to visit sick parents. They were not able to take their kids to school. In some country communities, they do not have the digital connection to be able to undertake their schoolwork, to be able to undertake day-to-day life, because that is just the nature of living in some of those marginal areas, in particular here in South Australia.

Another one of the real issues was biosecurity, and we are not just talking about the issues of fruit fly, which has been an ongoing issue for many years. We are talking about plant biosecurity. It is about getting plant material across the borders so that people can actually plant their crops, grow their food, to make sure that people have produce in their fridges and in their cupboards on a day-to-day basis.

One of the big sticking points was the movement of livestock. At one point in time there was some suggestion that COVID would be transmitted by animals, and I think that was very quickly dispelled, but it did interrupt and it did create that uncertainty. At the end of the day, as constituents, as representative MPs, what we were really dealing with was the uncertainty, the unknown, from what we had been used to. It really comes down to what is step change.

I think an independent commissioner is something that the opposition will support, but I think we have to understand exactly what sort of person we are going to put into that role. Will it be a prominent community person? I think it has to be someone who lives in a border community. We cannot have a minister's pick, if you like, within an office or within the government as such. It has to

be someone who has a clear understanding of how a commissioner will be of benefit, and how a commissioner will be an independent broker.

I think the independence has to be very carefully considered, and it has to give the assurance to those communities that a commissioner is there for their benefit. It is there to streamline some of those barriers that we currently endure from one side of the border to the other. As has been stated by a number of people, we continue to talk about this imaginary line, and it is an imaginary line, but there is legislation from one side of the line to the other.

There are regulations, and there are rules and guidelines that have to be adhered to from one side of that imaginary line to the other. That is why this independent broker or the commissioner will have to have a clear conduit to government, a clear conduit from the community to government and a clear understanding of how that would be of benefit. They also have to understand that if they get caught up in that regulatory burden, or the regulatory layers of red tape, they will very quickly be criticised. People will become very cynical of what the commissioner is there to do.

In closing, the commissioner has to be carefully selected and very carefully given a set of guidelines so that people have a clear understanding of transparency. By and large, transparency is the key so that people understand that the commissioner will benefit them in the big picture and will be that conduit to making red tape and regulations things they are able to push to one side with care and within the guidelines that need to be in place.

I want to make the comment that there was some concern from Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara people. They have indicated their support for the legislation, but they are concerned that the minister in the other place was very focused on the South-East. I am sure the member for Mount Gambier is very focused on the South-East, as is the member for MacKillop. I am sure the member for Giles would be very focused on all five borders, just as I am and just as the members for MacKillop, Hammond and Mount Gambier are, to make sure this commissioner is a success story.

This will be a legacy if it is successful; if it is not, it will be a bureaucratic nightmare for some people. What we need to understand is that, if it is there for the benefit of our border communities, if the transparency is there, if people are accountable for the decisions that are made, I am sure we will see a great embrace of what this independent broker will mean. The Cross Border Commissioner Bill does have the support of the opposition, and I look forward to its speedy passage.

Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (16:32): I rise to make a contribution to the Cross Border Commissioner Bill 2022. This has been a very long time in the making. The other day I looked at when I first raised this, and it was a party room paper in 2016. I then pursued it through a notice of motion in 2018. If we reflect back, it would have been a very timely and opportune moment to establish a cross-border commissioner because at that stage we had no idea that COVID was just around the corner, and March 2020 rolled through pretty quickly. It is important to put context into it.

This cross-border commissioner is not set up as a response to the COVID pandemic. It is actually set up, as it says in the bill, to facilitate 'improved outcomes for people and businesses in cross border communities'. That is very important, and the opening sentence of the bill indicates what its objective is. We then roll forward past 2018, and in June 2021 I called for another look at the cross-border commissioner, with the thought at that time that the cross-border communities needed a representative on the Transition Committee and that this role would be able to facilitate that.

I certainly acknowledge my colleague just over the electoral border of MacKillop. The member for MacKillop was arm in arm with me during the pandemic because both our offices got worked to the bone, to be honest. There were issues every day, deeply concerning issues for individuals, such as not being able to travel across the border. I am not going to speak for the member for MacKillop, but I certainly felt that the concerns were not being heard or acted upon in Adelaide and the reargitating of the establishment of a cross-border commissioner sat pretty well.

I was really quite dismayed at the government's response to that, after enormous pressure being put on. In fact, certain MPs took a little time out and had to reassess where they were at. That was the level of concern our communities were facing. In response, after pretty much trying to push the government to a conclusion, they came back with a regional representative from PIRSA being the representative on the Transition Committee.

It just showed to me that they had missed the point—and I am not disrespecting the person who went on from PIRSA; he is an absolute gentleman and a great public servant—that we needed somebody who lived, worked and breathed in a cross-border community to understand the issues and perhaps some of the solutions that the Transition Committee could have supported in our area.

That is where we have come from, and it is really pleasing to work with this government. The now Premier has honoured every commitment that he made before the election. He has been very honest about things that he cannot do, but everything that has been committed has been budgeted for and will be delivered, and I thank not only the Premier but the government for that. If the member for West Torrens keeps going the way he is going, he is sure to make sure that I am not the member for Mount Gambier at the next election because with those kind words I am losing votes every time.

You sit there as an MP and you can be frustrated, you can be angry and you can throw rocks. It is very easy to do. There is always an issue. You can prosecute almost anything that you want and make the government look pretty bad, or you get proactive. In my case, we put together a Future Mount Gambier document to take our community and the next generation into the future. That document clearly stated the need for a cross-border commissioner and many of the objectives that we put in there have now been funded and will be enacted under this current government.

I am convinced that the cross-border commissioner will play a critical role in improving the lives and working conditions of our cross-border communities. I see this as a productivity driver, I see this as a jobs creator and driver, because the amount of red tape and duplication are a handbrake on local communities that are trying to operate across a border community. Those limitations are real and the cost to business is real and the end result of that is fewer people employed in that process.

Of course, I see it as better outcomes for our community members. The member for West Torrens went through a list of areas that I am sure we will see great improvement on. That includes water—water allocation, water usage, smart usage of a finite resource across our borders. It also includes fire, and not just fighting a fire but also the coordination, preparation and preventative measures before fire season comes around or is upon us. One of those is Eaglehawk smart technology.

Instead of putting a person in fire towers every day, which they do every fire season—and there are about six of them—technology can detect a puff of smoke up to nine or 10 kilometres away, during the night-time as well. This is the type of technology that this government is investing in for our community to be safe moving forward. We can work with the Victorians because the forests obviously straddle both sides of the border and they are in both states.

Tourism is the most untapped opportunity in the South-East that I can put my finger on. Most of our assets are free. You can walk around the Blue Lake, you can go to the Valley Lake, you can go to the sinkholes and you can go to a whole range of free, natural attractions. However, we have not taken the next step and done a value-add for those who want to spend money, who may want to go on a gondola up to the top of the lake or may want to go down a zipline. This is private capital that can be unleashed, of course promoting Mount Gambier and the South-East to Victorians and cross-border communities.

In terms of health, a large number of people use Warrnambool for specialist services because it is two hours away versus five hours to Adelaide. Trades we have touched on. Dual accreditation is needed, which is limiting some of the ability to work on both sides of the borders. In terms of education, we have a number of students who live on the Victorian side of the border and go to school in South Australia, but the bus will not pick them up because they are quite literally 15 metres over the imaginary line. Disease, pest management and control, transport, agriculture, fishing—there are a whole range of areas where I see a cross-border commissioner being very active.

I was really pleased to hear the lead speaker from the Liberal Party talk about red tape. The last thing I want to see is this legislation getting bogged down in red tape—excessive reports, excessive annual plans. I can go into a number of office buildings in Mount Gambier and pull off their annual plans that took two, three, four months to put together, and then they spend another two or three months reporting on the annual plan. We want this person on the ground from day one doing and not writing and justifying.

That is a really important point because the amendments I have put forward aim to do exactly that: they aim to cut out excessive bureaucracy, excessive red tape. It is important to understand how we got to this point. The amendments made in the other place I believe were made with very good intentions, but, from what I can see, many of the amendments introduced in the other place actually come from the Kangaroo Island commissioner bill 2014; in fact, some of them are word for word.

People need to realise that the two commissioners are extremely different in the intent and objectives they are trying to achieve. I will read a couple from the headline of the Kangaroo Island Commissioner Bill 2014. This was a commissioner whose primary act was to develop management plans in relation to the coordination and delivery of infrastructure and services on Kangaroo Island. I will just say that again: the development of management plans. That was the main aim of the Kangaroo Island commissioner bill of 2014.

If you go further, that commissioner had to deal with one council primarily, primarily one local MP and primarily one state government. If you contrast that with the cross-border commissioner, they will be dealing with over eight councils, the borders of which directly adjoin a state border, over five state MPs, two federal MPs and up to five different state governments. The roles are therefore incredibly different.

The development of management plans in relation to the coordination and delivery of infrastructure is not the primary focus of the cross-border commissioner, and I have just gone through the areas that I see the cross-border commissioner focussing on. This is the most important point: you cannot transpose one commissioner's bill onto another. It is not fit for purpose, and it will see the position bogged down with plans before they even start the role, and this is exactly what I am trying to address with my amendments going forward.

In fact, I have been advised that if the bill goes through unamended we will likely see a practical outcome that involves something similar. The position will be advertised and then be filled around late September. There will be up to three months' consultation with all the councils I have just talked about, which will see it through to the next year, and then they will need to begin the reporting process into the annual report, which is tabled in parliament before the end of the financial year.

These amendments, I think, were really well intended, but again unintended consequences have the outcome sometimes of bogging down a cross-border commissioner before they even get on the road and start making some great improvements into these areas.

Another concern I have is that this person will be appointed by the government. The Minister for Primary Industries in the other place has made an open commitment that this position will be advertised. If you think about it, I am really confident that we will find somebody who should reside in Mount Gambier. They will be dealing with Liberal, an Independent and one Labor MP, so it makes sense that they are apolitical in everything they do because they will be working with a broad spectrum—in fact, the broad spectrum—of MPs in this house.

That is not a concern that I hold. What I would like to see is that this position be advertised and then the person appointed as soon as possible so that we can really start getting on the ground. As the bill states:

An Act to establish a Cross Border Commissioner charged with facilitating improved outcomes for people and businesses in cross border communities...

That is the objective of this bill, and I would like to see us enact it as quickly as possible without the red tape and without excessive plans being put in place. I will talk more about this during the amendments, but some of the role is not clearly identified yet, so we have to have flexibility for the commissioner.

They could have written a beautiful annual plan at the start of 2020. About three months in they would have quickly realised that COVID is a pressing issue, and that three months' worth of work would have been completely wasted because they are focusing on an issue that has come up.

I do sincerely acknowledge the intent behind the amendments in the Legislative Council. I am seeking to remove most of them. One that I am certainly not removing is the requirement for this

bill to be reviewed after three years by an independent reviewer and then every five years after that. That should give some comfort that there is an appropriate mechanism.

The review will be completely independent of government and able to highlight areas for improvement but, of course, the annual report that will be tabled every 12 months gives every MP the opportunity to have input and oversight over what the commissioner has done. As a local MP, I guarantee you will have great input into working with the commissioner in delivering better outcomes for your community and for regional South Australia.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:50): I, too, rise to support this bill for a cross-border commissioner. It has been well delivered in this house by previous speakers and this is something that I believe we should complete in haste.

I was very pleased when I got hold of Luke Wilson, the Victorian Cross Border Commissioner during the intensity of the COVID crisis when we had shutdowns and lockdowns. All kinds of things were happening across the border involving people with health concerns, people working in health, whether they lived in Murrayville or just over the border from Pinnaroo, whether it was schoolteachers and children who could not come to work when the lockdowns came in, whether it was the seven biosecurity employees who live in Murrayville, or the man at the Pinnaroo border station, which is actually, as I learnt during the pandemic, a kilometre inside South Australia but is technically where the border is. There were a whole range of scenarios, including farmers just trying to do their job, and many of them obviously had land on either side of the border.

I first want to commend the work that our former Marshall Liberal government did. They were difficult times. We have not had a pandemic for 100 years, since the Spanish flu. I certainly take my hat off to everyone in Health, from Nicola Spurrier, down and everyone in the police force, from Grant Stevens down. Several times I met with people on the border, and the police had been sent to Pinnaroo for rotations from different duties—usually from Adelaide but also from other areas in the state—and I commend them for working in difficult times. People were getting emailed updates on what was happening literally every half an hour, as things could change.

Sometimes, things got misconstrued, but it was a very, very dynamic environment. I certainly had business owners who were not allowed to come across the border and operate their businesses during the lockdowns. It was interesting during one lockdown when we were fighting the Yumali-Netherton fire—a long way from the border, relatively—we had hundreds of people coming together for the common cause of saving property and land.

There are a whole range of stories of what happened on the border and some of the most heart-wrenching involved the parents of schoolchildren who grew up on the South Australian side but were at different schools and colleges, whether it was in Hamilton in Victoria or elsewhere just over the border. The member for MacKillop would be well aware of some of these people and those down towards Naracoorte.

A good friend of mine had a daughter going to a school in Victoria who wanted the support of her mother. The best thing they could do to get anywhere close was to sit on a back road out the back of Naracoorte a couple of metres apart and talk to each other and have the dog run between them. That is all they could do.

I have mentioned here before that the police officers were actually in tears as they said, 'If you touch each other, I'm going to have to arrest you.' That is how tough it got. Assisting people to get exemptions took some time, but we got there in the end. It was very tough, and for the right reasons. People were not sure what could happen with the pandemic.

I mentioned farmers. I went up to meet some property owners and farmers at Pinnaroo one day and we were talking about what would happen if we got locked down and what would happen if we got to harvest. I said, 'Where's your boundary for your property into Victoria?' They said, 'You can see it up there on the tree line.' It was a couple of kilometres away. I asked, 'Have you got a wheat crop through the fence?' He said yes. I said, 'Well, you can't leave a wheat crop standing.' I know agriculture had exemptions but there was confusion at times about what was exempt and what was not going to be exempt. I just said, 'You've got to take that crop off. You call me if you have any trouble.' It did not get to that.

There are difficulties when you have seven biosecurity staff living across the border. Murrayville, for a range of reasons including football and netball, is essentially a part of South Australia; it just happens to be 30 kilometres across the border. I have attended the Murrayville Cricket Ground (MCG). My boys are now 18 and 21 and they have played football there since they were six. They reckon in the morning you just chase the kangaroos off the oval and away you go. It is not a bad ground.

Murrayville are so closely tied with South Australia that when they applied for grants to build their new facilities they had to work with the SANFL on the grant applications. They are obviously funded out of Victorian and federal government grants, but the support procedures came from the South Australian National Football League. They are part of the Mallee Football League, where my boys play at Peake. They were interesting times. They are some of the complexities.

We were talking about Neil Kerley and Russell Ebert today. People everywhere are passionate about their sport, no matter which sport it is—country football and netball. The Murrayville community felt like they were being excluded because of different lockdowns that meant they could not come through and play. It was just the way it worked. They thought they were being ostracised by the South Australian clubs. Some people over in Victoria thought the South Australian side were just trying to manipulate things. That could not be further from the truth.

I take my hat off to Lou Boughen, President of the Mallee Football League at the time. I had meetings with the SANFL and Netball SA. It got serious. There was talk of legal action at one stage as they were coming into finals. There was an interesting time when a notice went out on a Saturday that the Victorians were supposed to be shut in their homes at 1 o'clock that afternoon. I knew that everyone playing sport or involved in sport would be at Pinnaroo for one of the finals, and they were. I rang my local police superintendent. I must say the cooperation I got from Scott Denny, his team and all the other police that I ever had anything to do with during the hard times of the pandemic was just fantastic.

Scott Denny said, 'What can I do?' Then we learned about all the logistics with a whole range of procedures that South Australia Police obviously only operate on our side of the border and obviously Victoria Police operate on the other side. There were two finals played that weekend, on Saturday and Sunday, and I believe Murrayville people stayed on the South Australian side and played a final the next day. There was all sorts of talk that they were going to stay through until either the preliminary final or the grand final the next week, but they went home and they were locked out. It was a tragedy for all involved that they could not play in the final. That just shows some of the passion of these people.

I met with the Pinnaroo primary school principal, who had a problem with getting students and teachers through. We were having a very polite meeting with the door open, and one of his teachers stood in the doorway during the meeting. She was being very controlled. I had talked to her on the phone a couple of times previously. I said to her, 'Just let it go, just unload and say what you like. I've heard it all before. Just go.' That was the best thing: she unloaded on me and I did not care. She needed to vent because of the problems those people had just living their lives. As has been said, the border was just an imaginary line in the sand for these people that did not really exist for the way they ran their lives. That is how heated it got.

I must commend the security that went in place to make sure that people were not in the wrong place. A farmer in his self-propelled boom sprayer told me he had pulled up on a back road right near the border. He had to make a phone call, so he thought he would do the right thing and get on his mobile phone. He pulled up, but within a few minutes the police were there. They said, 'What are you doing?' He said, 'Well, I've pulled up to make a phone call.' They said, 'Well, you are going to have to move that because you are right in front of one of our cameras in the trees.'

Members interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Seriously, that's what happened. You just have to give credit. People knew that if they went around, as they did in the normal practice of work—they were not trying to dodge the main crossing on the Mallee Highway—they might go to their property on a back road and come out the other side, and the police could tell when they crossed because they had cameras there. Di Thornton, who lives on the Victorian side, runs a private health clinic in Pinnaroo. She could not come

and run her own clinic. As we know, health care is a struggle even in Adelaide, let alone in a border community.

One thing that was a real problem was the supply of fuel. Murrayville does not have any fuel pumps anymore, so they got their fuel in Pinnaroo, and you can imagine the chaos with that. I think there was some ad hoc arrangement made at some stage for a little while, for a few weeks, when some fuel stocks were set up locally in Murrayville. It was a difficult time and people were frustrated at every level, and I get that. Whether it was through farming, working a business, working in health care or involved in education or whether they were trying to get their kids across the border to go to school, it was a very tough time.

Apart from the very sad story of a mother and daughter having to sit a metre or two apart at a border and talk without being able to touch each other, I just want to share one very good news story. On a Monday, I had contact from a constituent who said their son was getting married on the Friday. I thought, 'Yes, fair enough.' I thought, 'We have the cross-border bubble, so they can come across from Murrayville and perhaps go to Pinnaroo and Lameroo.' But, no, the wedding was in Hahndorf outside the cross-border bubble, which had been instituted in that time. We looked at it and did a bit of work on it and I thought, 'No, it's no good.' To that person's credit they kept ringing my office.

From the initial call, we kept ramping it up to the Hon. Stephen Wade in the other place and his team. I give them due credit because we hammered them on this one because this family were not going to be able to witness their own son's wedding. The wedding was on that Friday night, and I got a phone call to the office at about 9.30 in the morning.

The Hon. J.K. Szakacs interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Why?

The Hon. J.K. Szakacs: He doesn't like weddings. He doesn't like family gatherings.

Mr PEDERICK: He will get over it. Now I have lost my train of thought.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Odenwalder): Start again.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I could—are you going to extend my time?

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: The wedding was on a Friday.

Mr PEDERICK: I know—thank you—we are helping each other out today. At about 9.30, I got a call to say the exemption was on the top of the pile. I thought, 'Well, we're getting somewhere.' It was about an hour and a half later when I got the call: 'Your people across the border are going to a wedding.' That was a fantastic phone call to make. I rang the mother of the son, and she said, 'But my husband is out on the header.' I said, 'Well, it's too hot and windy anyway.' I said, 'You're going to a wedding.' That was fantastic, a fantastic result, an individual result, but I am sure a lot of MPs from either side of the house managed to get those exemptions, but they were tough work.

It was especially around the time when these footy finals were being played up at Pinnaroo and Lameroo over the weekend the Victorians were supposed to be shut in, and it was all crossed up who was supposed to be where. Luke Wilson is the Victorian Cross Border Commissioner—and I will note that both the Victorian commissioner and the New South Wales commissioner were appointments without legislation; I just place that on the record—working for another colour of government. He said to me one day, 'Adrian, have my mobile number.' I said, 'Are you sure?' He said that he was and to ring him any time. I said, 'Well, be careful what you wish for because that might happen.'

I must say that it was only during daylight hours, and I think it was only once or twice on a weekend, but I will always treasure the fact that I could pick up the phone and just go bang and say, 'What's happening your side?' He would already know a lot about what was happening on our side, but he said, 'What is your view of the world about what's happening?' It was fantastic just to have that dialogue with someone whose job it was to be the Cross Border Commissioner.

I know there has been some talk about whether it creates another section of red tape, and that is the last thing we want. We want the right outcome here. Some people have said, 'Oh, well you

can just ring up the appropriate ministers over the border,' or this and that. I do not know if anyone else has, and perhaps they do, but to have a list of ministers' contacts—whether it is in Victoria or New South Wales, or Western Australia if you are on the other side of state—is just too much. You just ring one person, like I rang Luke Wilson multiple times, and he would give me the drum. That was something to truly treasure during the dark times of COVID.

We do need to get this right, as the member for Mount Gambier has indicated. It is good to see that it appears that across the parliament a review will be acknowledged and put into legislation. I fully support the cross-border commissioner, as long as we have the right process in place. It is not about setting up useless plans that just do not mean much but about people like Luke Wilson, who you can ring up and just get the job done. I commend the bill.

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (17:07): I rise in support of the Cross Border Commissioner Bill 2022. In my opinion, this bill is evidence of this government's commitment to support South Australian regions to grow and become places where people are happy to live, work and visit. It is a very important position that the bill creates, and it is also an indication of this government's commitment to the promises it made at election time. It is delivering on those promises, and it is also an important indication that we are listening to people in the regions and their representatives.

The member for Mount Gambier has been a strong advocate for this position, and clearly he has influenced the way the government is going in this direction. I understand his amendments will also be supported by the government. It is good that we can work in that way. It is not only the member for Mount Gambier. Other regional members have also been very vocal in their support for some sort of structure to deal with the issues of people who live along the border. I know that the member for MacKillop in the last parliament often showed a strong streak of independence on a number of issues and also spoke his mind quite clearly when it was not in that government's policy.

It is good that we have reached this point, and it is good that we can actually get this position created because I think it is very important. As has been outlined quite well by the member for Hammond, state boundaries are just lines on a map of paper. They are not lines on the ground, in the sense of how people live. For people who live close to those borders, those boundaries should not impact the way they live their lives—whether it is going to school, working, doing business, a whole range of things. It is our role as a parliament to make sure we remove those barriers that make it harder for people in the regions to live along the border.

This position will help develop those policies and inform governments of the day on what needs to be done to remove or reduce the red tape that often comes at the border. The amount of red tape and barriers people face along the borders were quite obvious during the COVID period, when just trying to get simple things done, simple business things done, became almost impossible. They went some way to create what they called 'bubbles', but I think even people of good intent found it hard to work through some of that.

The commissioner's job, day-to-day and in a proactive way, will be to make sure that when we enact laws on a whole range of policies we understand the impact they will have on certain groups in our community along those borders. A reality we are going to have to face is that different states will have different governments, different policies and different laws, but hopefully our commissioner, who will work with the other two commissioners, can work through some of those issues and make sure we understand how any new laws may impact on people.

It is particularly difficult for families who live along the border and who literally cross the border every day for whatever reason. When those borders become a barrier to them living their lives, that is something we need to deal with, particularly when it is around education, health or accessing other government services. I remember very clearly that it was one of the areas the member for MacKillop raised quite strongly during the last government in the COVID period.

At times, he was quite animated about his concerns for his community around Naracoorte and the difficulties faced by people, from shopkeepers to tradies to schoolkids to farmers, who would normally cross the border on a daily basis and the impact—not only the impact but the disproportionate impact, and that is what is important—our policies and rules have on them.

We have laws that apply to everyone in the state; that is fine, but sometimes the way these laws act in reality has a disproportionately negative impact on people along the borders because of the geography involved. My understanding is that the commissioner will focus on engaging with all our cross-border communities to understand their issues, and we expect the following matters to be dealt with:

- improving access to further and vocational education;
- assisting to develop strategic and cross-border regional approaches to addressing workforce shortages. This has always been an issue, but particularly these days, when a lot of rural communities are finding that shortages in the workforce are holding back the growth of their communities, and we need those communities to grow;
- encouraging collaboration between investment in sport and recreational facilities across borders, where sporting teams play across the border; and
- very importantly, licensing.

I am not familiar with how licensing works in a whole range of professions between Victoria and South Australia or between New South Wales and South Australia, or whether the states change. In this day and age, you would think we could normalise those licences so that, if you are a plumber, an electrician or a professional on one side of the border, the same rules and regulations apply as on the other side of the border and vice versa. We have been able to achieve that in the law field through a national scheme, and there is no reason we cannot also do that for other professions.

I think it was the member for Hammond who indicated the assistance he got from the commissioner from, I assume, Victoria during the COVID period. There was one person he could ring and get matters resolved.

That is one of the beauties of this office: it is a place people can go if they have an issue with the border and they are not trying to track down the right person in the right agency. If you are an MP, it is bad enough trying to find the right person to assist your constituents but ordinary people find it even more challenging to do that.

Also, I think some of the benefits that come from this are that when these commissioners work together they will not only improve our state's interests but they will also improve our national interests. Our national interests will improve from the collaboration of these commissioners because they can break through things and work out things that are holding back a whole range of communities on either side of the border, particularly those things that impact on productivity, efficiency or increased costs. That is a major thing: those things that increase costs unnecessarily to do business or just to live day to day. This will also then influence government policy for the better.

I think the reality will be that this commissioner will not have any shortage of work. He/she/them/they and their staff will have an enormous amount of work to do because there are clearly already issues to be addressed and new issues will come. I think the member for West Torrens raised a couple of issues. I think he gave the example of firefighters and the issues they have, which are those small things we talked about regarding road safety. One of the examples I provided was about various people in the trades and making sure that they can actually do that as well.

I understand that while the position will be based in the South-East, it will be a commissioner for all our borders. The reality is that it had to be based somewhere, and I think it is important that they be based in a region, whatever region that may be, because there is a danger if they are based in Adelaide that they could become city-centric.

So, having them based in the regions, they will have contact with regional people on a regular day. They will see how regional people live day to day, which is very important, and experiencing that firsthand is very practical. They will be engaged with those communities and there will be common issues. Whether you are in the South-East or the Riverland, there will be a lot of common issues for people in the boundaries and how to deal with those issues, so it is very important.

It is with those few comments I support this bill. I also indicate that I look forward to the amendments to be put by the member for Mount Gambier. I understand his amendments improve this bill, and there is nothing like having a bit of collaboration to make things better in this place.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Odenwalder): The member for MacKillop.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: Hear, hear! Give us hell!

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (17:17): No, I will not be doing that from the other side. Hopefully I can put my case clearly that there is an immense opportunity with this cross-border commissioner, and may I thank the member for Mount Gambier for his strong advocacy for solutions up and down our borders. He and I both think and hope that this cross-border commissioner stands for everything that will benefit, not only South Australia but everyone who lives on this cross-border community right around our borders.

I rise today to speak on this Cross Border Commissioner Bill. The context of my community has been important in my consideration of this bill. My strong interest in this matter would be no surprise to those in this chamber and my community. Communities on our borders are just that: communities. They should not be impaired in their operations by virtue of a state boundary, a line on a map.

The MacKillop electorate shares a long border with south-western Victoria. The areas adjacent to the border can be best described as rural landscapes. Primary industries are the dominant land use on the border, which is characterised by broadacre cropping in the north of the MacKillop electorate in the area around Pinnaroo, through to more intensive livestock and horticultural enterprises in the south of the region around Nangwarry. Important softwood forestry plantations span both sides of the border in the south.

Some key South Australian border service centres that are relevant to the southern communities include Pinnaroo, Bordertown, Naracoorte, Penola, through to the regional city of Mount Gambier in the south of the Limestone Coast. Our regional communities are like any other, relying on the services offered by townships which supply schooling, shopping, medical services, hospital care, farm services, machinery and vehicle sales, and a raft of other services including trades.

These services underpin the everyday transactions we all take for granted: students catching a bus to school, workers travelling by car to work, accessing health care, seeing a general practitioner, accessing hospital care or visiting specialists and ambulance access. It might be through engaging a tradesperson based in a border town or the work of a truck driver in freighting goods on well-known and well-travelled freight routes.

However, our communities on the border, by virtue of their location, also have to contend with differing rules, priorities and standards established by adjacent states, which can often be seen in stark contrast and cause a range of challenges. The relatively dense population distribution on the South Australian-Victorian border in the south of our state feels these contrasts with an intensity like no other border population.

While my focus is on the southern communities, all the communities that live adjacent to our state borders feel the impacts, including those cross-border communities in the Riverland that cross back and forth into Victoria, those who live and work in the north of our state that cross into New South Wales or into the Northern Territory or Western Australia. They will also be facing different rules and priorities. In the case of MacKillop, we see sometimes subtle disconnects which place barriers in the way people going about their daily lives or conducting their businesses. Some of these differences can be much more pronounced.

During 2020-21, we saw unprecedented restrictions on our state borders that created many challenges for our border communities that took the brunt of restrictions to prevent COVID from entering our state. While those COVID border restrictions are now well behind us, the need for a cross-border commissioner is no way driven alone by our COVID experience. There remain a range of other intersections of South Australian and Victorian laws and requirements that proceed COVID. These are matters upon which the position of a commissioner may provide assistance.

Coordination of school bus transport is such an issue in the area of Frances, a small but mighty town that is literally a stone's throw from the Victorian-South Australian border. An opportunity exists to better integrate the transport of Victorian and South Australian children to their closest school of Frances. A commissioner could provide support to get the right amount of resolution on this matter to better integrate the policies of South Australia and Victoria to provide better services for students and the school community.

We need to recognise that border areas have differences from other areas of our state, and we need to work for equitable and sustainable outcomes for our communities. The commissioner may also be able to examine the intersection of trade licence requirements for plumbers and electricians who are currently required to be licensed in South Australia and Victoria. In meeting these licensing requirements, these tradies are required to do more paperwork and pay more fees annually by virtue of their location on the border. The reduction in red tape and fees for these in-demand services is more important than ever in the current building environment. We want these businesses spending time being productive and effective members of our economy, not paying additional fees and doing more paperwork.

An important matter into which the commissioner may be able to lean support is to generate impetus to progress the review of the Green Triangle Freight Action Plan. The freight action plan was prepared in 2008 and is well overdue for review. The plan identifies the strategic areas for action in the areas that include road and rail network enhancements, regulatory reform, job opportunities, skills and training and socio-economic and community development.

I support this bill and the creation of a cross-border commissioner position. I am mindful that the success of this position will rest on the relationships they establish with their stakeholders and all tiers of government. It cannot be another layer of bureaucracy. I want to see this position work and be accountable for effective outcomes for our border communities. The bill is designed to provide a mechanism for residents, businesses and community organisations and all tiers of government to collaborate on matters impacting border communities.

The establishment of a commissioner will rely on doing the work to properly engage with all tiers of government and the business community, having a keen eye on simplifying the regulatory processes and working with our interstate counterparts to examine education, justice, health, and community services for these communities.

The commissioner must of course be accountable for the work they undertake. They will need to add value and be effective in brokering collaboration to deliver outcomes. They will need to be responsive to the emerging issues raised by the community. The commissioner will be required to work to a plan in its preparation, and I believe this plan must be fit for purpose and be prepared in such a way as to provide guidance and clarity about the objectives of the commissioner for border communities.

I just want to touch on and further address the Green Triangle Freight Action Plan. It is well known in my region that this freight action plan is a committee. It is dominated by Victorian representation. It is meant to be about the Green Triangle as a whole, which encompasses the Limestone Coast, the South-East of South Australia and Western Victoria. The Green Triangle certainly encompasses the forestry asset in this neck of the woods.

What is ironic about this Green Triangle Freight Action Plan that I hear about in MacKillop and in the seat of Mount Gambier and from the member for Mount Gambier as well is that there has not been the impetus from this plan and from this committee towards South Australia. It has been highlighted and the suggestion is that all the money has been put into roads that take the forestry asset to Portland and not back to Mount Gambier and into South Australia.

There are two huge differences when you have roads and infrastructure for a forestry resource that heads all the way to Portland and ignores going into Mount Gambier, the South-East or the Limestone Coast, because if it goes to Portland it is going for export. It is not going to be processed and the product is going overseas.

If it goes towards Mount Gambier, more likely it is softwood. It will be pine, not blue gum, and it would be sawn up into log and, obviously, further processed thereby developing economic wealth

and jobs for not only Victoria but also for Mount Gambier, the South-East and the Limestone Coast as a whole. This has been missing.

I know that the Wattle Range Council has been at war with the Green Triangle Freight Action Plan and the committee for the lack of connection back into South Australia. If we had a cross-border commissioner on our side battling for these roads and networks, we could be bringing more of this forestry resource back into Mount Gambier, back into the Limestone Coast and back into Tantanoola at Timberlink and having this timber processed rather than the roads all being modernised and upgraded towards Portland, which is what the industry tells us.

Another issue is out of my electorate. I have heard about this, and I saw the Marshall government spend a lot of money—in the hundreds of millions of dollars—on the Strzelecki Track. You might say, 'What has this got to do with the cross-border commissioner?' Well, the Strzelecki Track joins not only South Australia but also Adelaide with our greatest gas resource, Moomba. A lot of the work and the services have to use the Strzelecki Track to service whatever is required there in that Moomba gas basin.

I know and I have heard that Queenslanders now have a bitumen road all the way from Moomba to Brisbane, and now the contracts for Moomba are going back towards Queensland and Brisbane. To give you a classic example, and it is only a recent development, a Toyota dealership here in Adelaide used to service hundreds of Toyotas at Moomba. It has lost this contract, which now is being serviced by a Brisbane business, and it would be solely because we do not have a bitumen road up towards Moomba.

If we had a cross-border commissioner battling for South Australia, recognising this infrastructure deficiency, we could have had that Strzelecki Track bitumised, and we could have the headquarters of Santos in Adelaide and the contracts for Moomba rather than lost to Brisbane, as I think is already occurring or has occurred.

These are just small examples, but they have huge ramifications. Another thing that is really interesting to note about our cross-border community—it was advertised but it was not taken up, and I do not know whether it will be—is whether there will be any cancer care, chemo and radiotherapy in Mount Gambier. It is being offered but no-one is going near it. Again, you might say, 'What has that got to do with a cross-border commissioner?' No-one wants to go near cancer care, radiotherapy or chemo in Mount Gambier because everyone is diverted to Warrnambool in Victoria, which has a population of 33,000 and which has a beautiful medical system and facilities.

That is not much good to you when they lock the borders during a COVID pandemic, but we are not doing this bill about appointing a commissioner because of the COVID pandemic. The fact is that Mount Gambier will not get that traction into chemo and radiotherapy because of the chemo and radiotherapy services that are being provided at Warrnambool. There has to be great connection. People need to know. Our medical staff, our medical facilities, our hospitals and medical clinics need to recognise that if there are not going to be these services in Mount Gambier then Warrnambool is the next point of call.

I know that just out of Bordertown there is a little town called Nhill, which is probably about 50 to 100 kilometres from Bordertown into Victoria and towards Horsham. It has a large medical centre. A lot of South Australians end up going to Nhill for their medical services because it has a medical hub that attracts good GPs or a number of GPs with medical practitioners and other specialist services. Again, if there is this great crossover and we should be doing this and that is the way it fits, then let's make it work for all Victorians and South Australians.

I did touch on the little town called Frances. Frances has a little primary school with 34 students. It would have had more and could have had more if we had a South Australian bus that supplied Frances, but the bus was taken away from Frances because there were not enough students because there is a threshold, a number that must be on the bus to provide that bus. However, the Victorian bus is not full; it comes from Victoria, but it can only pick up Victorian students. Even if there is a South Australian student on the side of the road on the way, they have to leave them behind.

It is a nonsense, it is nuts and it is all because there is no collaboration, no communication and we are not working together. In the end, it is not the bureaucracy that suffers and it is not the education system in Victoria that suffers: it is the community residents, the community families we are meant to be providing for. These are just some of the small bits of detail that we have seen and heard and that we know go on.

The member for West Torrens talked about farming businesses that straddle the border. To give you an analogy, a firsthand experience, our McBride business has a property that straddles the border and we had to have three shearing teams shear the sheep on this property, because it is a large one, and one of them had to be a South Australian team on the South Australian side because the border was closed because they could not go across into Victoria to shear those sheep or vice versa. This is the sort of stuff that can go on, but that was through a pandemic problem.

It just goes to show, though, that this line in the sand, which has no relevance to business, no relevance to health or catching a bus really, unless you want to make it, should be able to be worked through so that we have advantages being alongside another jurisdiction—such as Victoria or New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia—rather than it being a disadvantage.

Other towns I will just touch on that I know are very important along our border include Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, Bordertown, Pinnaroo, and then we go up to Renmark; I think they are probably the largest towns that are right along the border. They are major service centres for South Australians. We know the Victorian counterparts, our neighbours, come into South Australia to utilise these towns for health, education, services, industry, dealerships, service and maintenance of major capital purchases, and it works well. Once we closed those borders during the pandemic, did we know about it.

On the other side of the equation, we have large towns like Hamilton, with 10,000 people; Horsham, Victoria, with 20,000 people; and I have already mentioned Warrnambool, with 33,000. It is interesting to touch on Hamilton and maybe even Horsham. Robe council even has some council meetings in Horsham and Hamilton because I think it is nearly 20 or 30 per cent of Robe houses have a Victorian influence or are owned by Victorians. There is this real connection between Victoria and South Australia, particularly down in our neck of the woods.

Another issue I will just touch on (I do not know where this has ended out, and it may have changed) is a silly anomaly that used to exist in the heavy transport industry of livestock. The South Australian and Victorian rules were such that they had some leniency about overweight and underweight on the livestock carriers. They had some discrepancy because you can never tell how heavy a beast is, a cow, a sheep or a lamb, so it is really tough for a stock truck driver to know exactly the tonnage on their truck.

Both South Australia and Victoria had rules that gave some sort of dispensation to the fact that there was leniency there, but there was no leniency when they went into New South Wales. If they were caught overweight going into a New South Wales feedlot with these cattle on board, there was a hefty fine. What they did was they ran the gauntlet. They put it into their business plan, they knew that every five or 10 truckloads they might get pulled over and there might be a chance they were over and get the fine.

With every load of cattle or sheep—but mainly cattle this time because we are talking about cattle feedlots going up in the Riverina into New South Wales—if they were over, there would be a fine of \$5,000 or \$10,000 per load. It was built into the cost of transporting the cattle from South Australia into the Riverina, so if they were caught once, twice or 10 times a year it was just built in as a mechanism. That is how nuts it is because no-one was talking and trying to address this.

Yes, we did try to get the New South Wales government on board very early on. We probably should have another go at addressing this, particularly now that the borders are open and COVID has gone, and there might be a little bit more common sense about jurisdictions working collaboratively together. These are the sorts of opportunities we would have if we had a South Australian commissioner and all of us were pulling in the same direction, as we are Australians and we are Australia as a nation. Yes, we do have different state jurisdictions but we do not have to be

that different that we have to make this a cost and make this whole task a poisoned chalice for businesses and people going about their lives.

I commend the bill. I hope that the bill is kept in its simplest form. I hope it is practical and I hope it is workable. I certainly do not want to see the bill being over bureaucratic. I do not want to see that the commissioner is tied up in knots and unable to do his job because he is having to report every month or two months. There is a reporting system and there is a review. I think the review is in about three years' time to make sure this is working.

Perhaps I have a fear that if we have a border commissioner—and I want to address the Frances school bus to pick up South Australian students. It is another level of consultation that, as the member for MacKillop, I will have to work through. If that works and if that gets us the answer, well, it is really a great process. If it does not work, it just means that I have to write a second letter, I have to send a second email, I have to address an issue that perhaps I did not have to if there is no commissioner at all if this is successful in rolling it out.

As I said, I hope that this process is put into place for the right reasons, that we find the right person, who is well connected, who is a busy individual—male or female, it will not matter—that they are proactive all the way from Mount Gambier right around to Ceduna and consider all the borders that we have to deal with. The more they look, the more they delve into all the issues that our borders have to work with, the more they will find they have to do. There is no doubt that I am looking forward to any of these reviews in the future to highlight that this has been a good process, it has worked, there are efficiencies and we are moving forward to solve them. The bill has merit to assist our border communities, it needs support, and I support this border commissioner process.

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (17:36): I also rise in support of this bill and, like others have done, I want to highlight the persistent advocacy of the member for Mount Gambier. I also know that the member for MacKillop is a strong supporter. I think it is to the credit of the Malinauskas government that we have taken this on board. We made a commitment leading up to the election that we would instigate this particular approach and it is great to see that this is now happening.

I acknowledge that today, at least in principle, at least when it comes to the support for a commissioner, it has crossbench support and bipartisan support. I would flag a concern and the member for Mount Gambier has also flagged that concern. People have been talking about trying to keep it simple, based on common sense, but I do not think it is a good starting point when you have a whole series of amendments that mirror what happened on Kangaroo Island to apply it to this particular situation because this situation is different.

We are talking about a cross-border commissioner. We are not talking about a commissioner for Kangaroo Island within South Australia. I hope common sense will prevail when it comes to the discussion about the various amendments, the various clauses, so that the legislation that we end up with is fit for purpose and legislation that will assist us to get a commissioner who can cut through the red tape and who can be a catalyst for change in our cross-border areas.

As people know, I live in Whyalla. I am a long way from any borders. When you look at the borders, as the crow flies the borders in the South-East are closer to Whyalla than my borders in my electorate. That is the scale of the electorate. There are communities in my electorate that do border another state and a territory—essentially, the APY lands with Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

I remember one time being at Amata in the APY lands, and I was taken out to a place called Cave Hill. If anyone gets an opportunity to go to Cave Hill, I encourage you to do so because of the magnificent rock art. You have to be invited to go and be taken out there. When you stand on top of the hill, you can see over into the Northern Territory. In the distance, on a good day, you can see Uluru.

For the people of the APY lands, the Anangu people who have lived there for thousands of years, our borders are meaningless. Those borders do not exist. They will move where they want to move, and quite rightly so. The major population centre for the Anangu people is Alice Springs, so they obtain a lot of their services in Alice Springs. Indeed, the Regional Anangu Services—that particular organisation that delivers services in the APY lands—is based in Alice Springs.

There are a whole range of informal arrangements in place and some formal arrangements in place when it comes to the to-ing and fro-ing between Western Australia and the Northern Territory in the northern part of our state. They work reasonably well, but it would not hurt to have a commissioner for when problems do arise or when things can be improved and for the commissioner to be involved provided—and this is an important proviso—that there is real active on-the-ground grassroots consultation with both the APY Executive and the communities in the APY lands because the executive is not always representing all the views of the communities. It is important, as it is everywhere, to actively consult.

An issue that did focus people's minds when it came to COVID was cross-border interactions. In my electorate, in the APY lands the APY Executive went into shutdown, and quite rightly. They were one of the first places in the country to do that. Given what was at risk in the APY lands at the time, it was a very sensible thing to do, and they essentially did that. They had the capacity to do it, and it was a unilateral decision and it was the right decision to make.

In the South-East and areas with higher population concentrations and communities on either side of the borders and businesses on either side of the borders, that generated a lot of complexity. If a commissioner were present, they might have been able to assist in sorting out some of those issues. Irrespective of COVID, there have still been those ongoing issues when it comes to cross-border interaction in the South-East, the Riverland and going further north to Broken Hill, New South Wales, and South Australia. I am sure the member for Flinders will talk about issues in his electorate with respect to the interchange with Western Australia. I will make sure I provide some time for him to do that.

This initiative is important. We have these borders, and they are the legacy of how Australia developed with separate colonies and territories coming together. A lot of people always say to me that we should get rid of states, but it was Paul Keating—and he probably was not the greatest fan of states; he certainly was not the greatest fan of the Senate, which was supposed to be a creature of the states—who indicated that the states are an organic part of the Australian make-up. He was just flagging that it would be virtually impossible through referendum to move away from the states to some other form of governance in this vast land.

Because of those separate states, it has left a whole smorgasbord of different rules and different regulations, which particularly impact upon people in the cross-border areas. A commissioner can help to address some of that.

I would also say that some of this should be continued to be addressed at COAG because there has been that attempt amongst the states with the federal government to introduce a greater compatibility, transferability, congruence—whatever word you want to use—and that is especially important for when it comes to qualifications, trade qualifications and licences to practise here and there. It should be transferrable across the country, provided we do not reduce it to some form of lowest common denominator, so that we have a good approach to the standards that we want to impose.

I think there is a lot of opportunity for a commissioner to introduce and amplify common sense, a lot of scope for a commissioner to cut through all of the things that have been said today that niggle at people, that frustrate people, when it comes to that interchange. It should be far smoother, it should be far easier, and ultimately to the benefit of the cross-border communities. I know the member for Flinders wants to have a few words as well, so I will make sure I give you that opportunity. With that I will resume my seat.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (17:46): Thank you to the member for Giles. I rise to speak in support of this bill. The Cross Border Commissioner Bill is an interesting one, and one that I am encouraged has come across our bench now, obviously in light of the arrangements with COVID-19, but some of the speakers here are starting to highlight the opportunities for such a body, such an individual, for the world we are going to be living in post-COVID. I think to have a single reference point for people across borders who are caught up in legislation or bureaucracy across borders is going to be really important. We need to get the arrangements right.

Speaking from a unique perspective, inasmuch as the Western Australian border is the one my electorate goes up against, communities in Flinders already feel a long way away from the

decisions that are made in Adelaide. I look at Ceduna, the centre furthest west in my electorate, which is some 800 kilometres away from Adelaide, and it is pretty easy to feel isolated from decision-makers and isolated from people who actually have an influence on your life.

Another 450 kilometres on from that is the Western Australian border. During COVID, and the arrangements that were in place across borders, we saw an incredible challenge faced by those in those communities, and those who were going through. We saw the challenges with the movement of freight and the Eyre Highway, which traverses across as part of National Highway 1. We saw an incredible challenge in trying to logistically manage this freight movement.

There were people who were uncertain whether they were going to be able to get products across, and we soon realised that—although it has been spoken about already in this place—it is just a line on a map. But when these borders are enforced, and there are different arrangements in place across these borders, we realise how much of an impact it actually does have on the movement of freight, the movement of livestock and the movement of travellers. There were people who were caught up in the arrangements that were very quick moving and restrictions that were brought in with very little notice. There were communities within my electorate, especially on the Far West Coast, who had incredible numbers of travellers who were isolated and caught up in these arrangements. It meant that they were stuck there for an incredibly long period of time.

The opportunity for a cross-border commission to be involved in this sort of arrangement—the transport and freight movement—is really important, especially with the interactions with the Western Australian border. Western Australia is not actually part of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) area; it is separate to it. That is why the arrangements that a cross-border commissioner could be involved in would try to streamline some of those things.

Throughout COVID we saw there were incredible challenges for people who had to have interactions across borders. Although my population is a fair way away from the border with Western Australia, we saw it exactly the same as we saw at the Eastern States borders. We saw families who were separated with inconsistent rules and uncertainty about the process, uncertainty about who they could turn to to get an answer. I am sure like many other people within this place, I was bombarded with pleas for help from people who did not know where to turn.

I want to quickly speak about one family in particular, whose son had a terrible accident in Western Australia and became a paraplegic; it was a terrible accident. The parents were forced to move from the West Coast community of Streaky Bay over to Western Australia in the short term to care for him. These are people in their 80s, caring for their son who had had this terrible accident.

They had to make the very difficult decision to uproot their lives and move to Western Australia. They came back from Western Australia, packed up their belongings, leased out their house and, under the rules that were in place, started travelling back to Western Australia (they had already been there for a couple of months). Then the rules changed in a snap. They were across the border at Norseman—if you have travelled across the Nullarbor you will know that is a fair way into Western Australia—but were turned around and sent back to South Australia.

It was an incredibly difficult time, and the question was: who could they turn to? They were trying to work through the bureaucracy, trying to work through the Department for Health and work with police. This was not an isolated thing; there were families and individuals all through our state who were having to deal with that situation.

They got the tick-off to start travelling again and got to the Western Australian border this time, but the paperwork was not right. The paperwork had been changed in Western Australia, and they did not have the permissions. They had to travel 550 kilometres back to Streaky Bay. This is just one example of the uncertainty created when there is no clear and direct line of communication for people needing help, especially with these interactions across borders.

Thankfully, this elderly couple finally got permission to travel back into Western Australia and they successfully managed to do that. The grief, the time, the extra strain on families were really highlighted through this process. We do not need a commissioner who is set up just for COVID, because I trust that the arrangements now across borders are a lot more streamlined than they were.

However, this highlighted to me that we need facilities and a proper arrangement in place, especially if this commissioner role is properly put together, so that they have communication lines with ministers and departments across the border, across states. The role must be one that is non-partisan; they have to work across borders, and South Australia is surrounded by a number of different states with a number of different colours of government, departments and ministers.

There are so many economic opportunities for our regions that would be maximised if we got effective in working together across borders, across communities across borders. If we have an effective, single contact point that has the ear of decision-makers and of senior ministers and departments that can help drive outcomes and positive actions, it will be really positive for us as a state. As has been highlighted previously, it can also frame positive outcomes for the whole country.

There is a great responsibility for us in this place to get this legislation right, to make sure the arrangements in place are going to be effective and not just something that are piecemeal, rushed or ineffective. We need to make sure that outcomes are the things we are driving to. Regional people are practical people and we like to see outcomes, we like to see things get done and we like to see solutions.

I am encouraged that we are debating this bill, debating amendments to try to make sure we fine-tune it to get it right. The most important thing is that we get the arrangements right to make sure it is effective for people within our regional cross-border communities. The opportunity is here for us, and I look forward to this debate continuing. Once again, I speak in favour of the concept behind this Cross Border Commissioner Bill and thank the house for the opportunity to speak on it.

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (17:54): I am very pleased to also support the Cross Border Commissioner Bill 2022. This bill fulfills one of the government's commitments to support South Australia's regions to grow and be vibrant places to live, work and visit.

For me, whilst I am here as the member for Adelaide representing my community, I have a strong connection to the South-East, being the home town where I grew up. My mum lived in the cross-border community of Frances. They had a sheep and wheat farm, Cloverdale, just across the South Australia-Victoria border, so I grew up with all the stories from my mum about the challenges of living in a cross-border community from having to pay for the school bus, as an example, to be able to go in to Naracoorte High.

It is really important for me to be able to speak on this bill, to be able to reflect the difficulties that people in cross-border communities have experienced. I believe this bill does demonstrate the government's clear commitment to our regional communities and to finding practical ways to create better economic and wellbeing outcomes. This was also one of the many election commitments that the Malinauskas Labor government announced for the South-East prior to the election and it is a policy that has been called for, as we have heard by the member for Mount Gambier, dating back to 2018.

Of course, with the onset of COVID, the need for a cross-border commissioner has only increased over the previous two years. We saw during the height of COVID endless cross-border issues that regional residents faced, with little to no support from government to resolve their issues. During the time of the pandemic, I was contacted by people I had gone to school with in Naracoorte, people who lived across the border, and some people were quite distressed at the time having to constantly cross the border and undertake tests in order to go to work. They felt that no-one was listening and that process, when they were only going from their home to their work during that time was quite traumatic simply because they lived across an invisible line.

The goal of establishing a cross-border commissioner is to make the lives of regional residents easier by simplifying often complicated red-tape issues that occur through different regulations on both sides of the border. It is an issue that predates COVID-19, having just spoken about my mum's own experiences going to school in the sixties and seventies. But certainly during COVID many regional MPs who represent border communities were crying out for support from the former Marshall Liberal government, which was failing to listen to those concerns of regional members.

It was not until last year that the Marshall Liberal government even agreed to add a regional representative to the COVID emergency management committee to advocate for regional

communities. Families and individuals in cross-border communities regularly cross the border, as we have heard, to access further education, health or other government services. This can create issues in navigating the right organisation or government departments to speak to or share information with.

As an example, my mum and stepdad were living near the border in Apsley at the Border Inn. It is always difficult when we have to organise a time in the evenings to work out at which time we are actually going to get on the phone and have a chat, and one of the challenges that she experienced during that time was just who to speak to and seek advice given that she was living across the border but doing most of her shopping in Naracoorte.

Other issues include compliance with multiple systems, different licences and permits, as we have heard in regard to tradies, and separate accreditation and training requirements for workers, which often end up increasing the cost of doing business.

I understand the Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development has already stated that the cross-border commissioner must live in regional South Australia and that the office will be based in the state's South-East which is the second biggest city in our state. There would also be pop-up offices around other cross-border communities in our state, which I believe is incredibly important. It has been great to hear from members in this place who live in regional areas, or who like me have lived in regional areas, and understand the issues of the communities and people who live there.

The cross-border commissioner established by the bill will provide a new mechanism to address these issues we mentioned earlier: facilitating collaboration and engagement with residents, businesses and community organisations as well as all tiers of government. The commissioner will work with all stakeholders to identify issues, broker solutions and provide advice on matters impacting border communities, making it easier to do business across our borders while addressing barriers to education, health and other services.

Sitting suspended from 18:00 to 19:30.

The commissioner will also work with other jurisdictions, in particular the Victorian and New South Wales cross-border commissioners. With the commissioner dedicated to these matters in South Australia, it is expected collaboration with these jurisdictions will improve not only on an individual basis but also, potentially, in national arenas where the common voice of cross-border communities will be strengthened. The functions of the commissioner are included in the bill to reflect the intent of the position. An annual plan, in consultation with the minister, will be required and an annual report will be tabled in parliament to ensure that the outcomes being achieved are clear to all stakeholders.

While the commissioner will focus on engaging with all our cross-border communities to understand their issues, we expect the matters likely to be raised will include: improving access to further and vocational educational opportunities; assisting to develop strategic and cross-border region approaches to addressing workforce shortages; facilitating a collaborative approach to increase the opportunity for investment in sports and recreational facilities for cross-border communities; strategic planning and investment for, and access to, health service provision that takes into account cross-border users; different licensing or training requirements for business activities that need to be accommodated by cross-border businesses and their staff; and promoting tourism and visitor experiences in a cross-border region.

The cross-border commissioners in Victoria and New South Wales have demonstrated how a high-level role that is dedicated to listening and working on behalf of cross-border communities can make a difference. This is what we want for South Australia. With the commissioner dedicated to these matters in South Australia, it is expected collaboration with these jurisdictions will improve not only on an individual basis but also in national arenas. These enhanced relationships could lead to program and project partnering opportunities between state, territory and commonwealth governments for the benefit of cross-border businesses and regional communities.

I want to take this opportunity to thank a number of people who have worked hard to advocate on behalf of regional communities, who are living in them and who have lived in them like me. In particular, the member for Mount Gambier and also my brother Ben Hood, who is a local councillor

in Mount Gambier and has advocated strongly for a cross-border commissioner, in particular in the area of the forestry industry which is a major employer in the Green Triangle. He has also advocated to allow for better communication between LGAs of both states through a commissioner in relation to tourism and trade.

I also wanted to thank the minister in the other place, the Hon. Clare Scriven; the member for MacKillop, who represents my home town of Naracoorte; the member for Hammond; and the Hon. Nicola Centofanti in the other place. I think it is so incredibly important, even though I am the member for Adelaide and I represent a metropolitan constituency, that you always should remember where you come from. It is those communities that made you who you are, and I believe that this bill is an important step in the direction of advocating for our cross-border communities.

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (19:33): I rise today to speak to the Cross Border Commissioner Bill 2022 and I am really pleased to be able to do that, because it is very hard to go through the COVID pandemic and see the stories that came out of these communities. Regarding the bill itself, we made the commitment in the lead-up to the election and we took a lot of time over the last four years speaking with members of the community. Our shadow for the regional areas went out and spoke to a lot of people and found out what was important to them. We heard a lot of stories, especially during COVID, where the farmers had properties on both sides of the border and they could not access their other property. They had animals they needed to feed, they had crops they needed to tend, and they were unable to do both.

There are a whole lot of other opportunities that they missed out on and there is a lot of complexity, but when we talked to all the communities and brought it all together we did promise that we would make this commitment to them that we would bring in the commissioner. Now we are in government, I am really pleased that we are going to be able to do that. We are a government that keeps our commitments, as we have shown with all our election commitments as we start to roll them out, and I am delighted that this matter is being progressed through the parliament today.

The introduction of this bill shows that we have a commitment to the people in the regions, we will listen to them and we will be working for them. Quite often, they feel like they are being neglected, but that is not what our government is about and that is not what we are doing here. Cross-border communities have in many cases been infected by COVID, the longest in our state given the fact they are impacted by what is happening in the state they are next door to. It is quite confusing and it made things very difficult for those communities, even when the border was open and they were able to share a buffer zone as to which regulations applied.

They struggled a lot to have a direct line to government and the people who were making the decisions because they had two governments that they needed to deal with. Families were separated by borders. Some attend schools on one side and live on the other, or they were not allowed to see their friends or family. It made it very difficult for them. Having a commissioner who understands and works in the region will allow them to address a lot of these concerns.

In terms of the ability to access medical procedures and specialists that may be on one side of the border or the other, the different regulations that apply to both sides make it very difficult. Many residents and businesses in regional South Australia travel over the borders sometimes daily, back and forth. In 2018, we know that the member for Mount Gambier tabled a motion, but the Marshall government were not interested in it at that time, so it is very interesting to hear them get excited about this now. Of course, we know the Marshall government was a city-centric government and ignored the calls. I am glad that we are now in government and able to make these commitments.

There are many complicated issues that residents living in these areas have to deal with. We have read about a lot. I have read quite a few articles about tradies who are having to do two different types of red tape just to get the work that they do if they work on both sides of the border. Tradies are already strung out. They are working hard, and during COVID life was very difficult for them. I think that if we are able to address some of those issues, it will be very helpful for them.

In terms of the impact on volunteers in those areas, it is quite an interesting thing when there is a fire on either side of a border and the brigades have to come from both sides. We have spoken already today about different radios, different channels, and having to change from one to the other.

Quite often, we see brigades coming from all over the country to help when there is a big fire, especially like the ones we saw down at Pinery and a couple of the others that have been down there.

The forests run on both sides of the border. You can be on one truck one day and another truck the next. They can be set up differently. They can even have different hose couplings. You just do not know what you are getting until you get on that truck. To be able to address some of those issues and bring it together so that they are the same will allow volunteers to be there for what they are there for, which is protecting communities.

It is important for us that we continue to support these communities as well. They are a community. They do not care if there is a border in between them; they are family. They are there to work on either side, go to school on either side and access services on either side. A cross-border commissioner who understands this and lives in the area is going to be able to come back to government and advocate on behalf of those communities. It will be great.

Also, having the opportunity for the commissioner to be directed by the minister will enable them to consider emerging issues that come up after this bill has gone through. Standard probity, confidentiality and delegation powers have also been included in the bill, which ensure that the commissioner operates within appropriate public sector parameters modelled on the Small Business Commissioner legislation as well.

It allows the commissioner to focus on those local things such as improving access to further vocational and educational opportunities, the opportunity to share resources and the opportunity for the students in those areas and the slightly older students to access different things. They are only going to grow those communities and encourage people to stay in those communities if people can access the training and the skills that they need. That will also help with workforce shortages because if they are trained there then they may meet people there and stay there and bring those skills into those communities.

It will also allow the opportunity for collaborative approaches in terms of sport and investment in facilities. We could have a sports team on one side and those facilities can be shared by both sides. It brings a community together. There are different licensing or training requirements for businesses and activities that need to be accommodated and the commissioner will be able to go through those things and attempt to make things a little bit more streamlined for the people who live in those communities.

It also allows us to promote tourism and visitor experiences. I have been down to Mount Gambier and you hop in a canoe and the next minute you are in Victoria without even realising it. There is no line there; there is no big red line when you cross over. To bring those communities together as an ongoing thing, even after the pandemic, can only be a good thing.

I have spent a lot of time in Mount Gambier and the Riverland in my work with bank staff and I know bank staff who live in Victoria and have to come across to South Australia to work, especially in Mount Gambier but also in the Riverland, where they have kids on one side and had to deal with some restrictions and then, when they came to work, they had different restrictions. Employers do not always understand. They are just there to get the job done.

There are a whole lot of things this commissioner can look at to make life a lot easier for the people who live in these communities. Our government is committed to ensuring that these regional residents are not ignored or taken for granted. I think that the proposal for this cross-border commissioner has been taken to an election. Obviously, we are now in government so it is clear that this is a mandate for us to be able to do this. I sincerely hope that all the members here today support this important piece of legislation.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (19:42): I thank the house for the very professional manner in which this debate has occurred. I would like to thank also the crossbench for their encouragement and support for the government to continue this. Hopefully, we can pass this pretty quickly and get the support to the cross-border communities that they deserve and require so urgently. With those few words, I commend the bill to the house.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3.

Mr BELL: I move:

Amendment No 1 [Bell-1]—

Page 2, line 13 to page 3, line 32 [clause 3, definitions of *government agency*, *responsible Minister* and *State authority*]—Delete the definitions

Mr WHETSTONE: With regard to the interpretation of the act and the commissioner, there has been an amendment put forward by the member for Mount Gambier to delete the definition of 'government agency'. Minister, can you give me an understanding of why we will not want to have those definitions of the responsibility of the 'government agency', 'responsible Minister' and 'State authority', and we understand who the responsible minister will be?

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Odenwalder): I understand that question was on the amendment. The member for Mount Gambier can respond.

Mr BELL: I thank the member for Chaffey for his question. As the amendment stands, once the amendments go through, there is no requirement for those definitions to be referred to in the bill because they actually will not appear in the bill, so to keep those in there is unnecessary. Again, this is a process of streamlining and simplifying the legislation. The definitions do not need to be there because they will not appear further in the bill once the other amendments go forward.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, member for Mount Gambier. We understand the responsible minister will be the minister for regions, but can the member explain how the delegation process will go from the minister to—or how the commissioner will be appointed?

Mr BELL: It is my understanding—and again I am happy to defer to the government on this—that the position will be advertised, nominations sought as normal and a process carried out to appoint the inaugural Cross Border Commissioner under the Cross Border Commissioner Bill 2022.

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Odenwalder): I think the minister may also have a response.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I am advised the definitions are no longer required if the amendment is successful. The consequence is that the 'government agency' definition will be removed due to the amendment filed regarding the removal of clause 9—Annual plan. The 'responsible Minister' definition will be removed due to the amendment filed regarding removal of clause 9—Annual plan. The 'State authority' definition will be removed due do the amendment filed regarding clause 9—Annual plan.

I understand that the cross-border commissioner 'should' live in a cross-border community, rather than 'must'. It is the aspiration of the act that they live there. I hope this goes some way to answering the member's question. If there is something else I can get him a briefing on, I will be happy to do so.

Mr WHETSTONE: Thank you, minister. I guess I am a little concerned that you are talking about an aspiration. That is no clear indication in that application, that we have a cross-border commissioner who, as an aspiration, lives in the regions. It could potentially be a ministerial appointment out of an office—someone who lives in Adelaide and not understanding what the regional issues are as the commissioner.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I understand that the democratic process in the upper house has given us a bill that says that a cross-border commissioner should live in the regions rather than must, and we respect that democratic process.

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Odenwalder): I will be generous and allow you one more question on this clause, either to the amendment or to the clause itself.

Mr WHETSTONE: My question is to the amendment and to the member for Mount Gambier. The member has made it very clear that he will delete the definitions of the 'agency', the 'Minister' or the 'authority'. To the member: can you give me an undertaking of your desire to have a specific person living in the region, or what the call for that position would be if it is someone living within a cross-border community?

Mr BELL: It is my understanding that the minister has given that undertaking and that it will be advertised. It is also my understanding that you cannot legislate, which is what this is, where somebody lives. The emphasis on 'should live' is a strong indication that they should be living in the cross-border region, and I believe Mount Gambier has been identified. Legislating where somebody must live would be highly peculiar, and there would be legal argument on whether or not you could legislate where somebody actually must live.

The clear intent in this, of course, is that this person should and for all intents and purposes will be living in Mount Gambier. The conversation I had around this was: let's say somebody is appointed, they are living in Mount Gambier, and then a family tragedy occurs and they are required back in Adelaide for a period of time. The notion legislatively, and in terms requiring them under legislation, is something that would be highly peculiar and not known to be done in any other piece of legislation in South Australia.

Of course, it is the clear intent and I believe that the minister who has carriage of this bill in the other house has indicated that desire. 'Should' is in the legislation, and a process will be undertaken which is open and transparent.

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Odenwalder): Minister, do you have anything to add to that? You do not have to.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I concur with what the member has said. It would be impractical legislatively to make it a requirement where people should live within a state. I am not even sure it would be constitutionally lawful. The intent here is very clear and, obviously parliament can send a signal, as we do—we do so through our second reading speeches, we do so through our language in our legislation—and this is a clear indication to people within the department and the minister's office who are in the process of employing a cross-border commissioner that the intent and will of the parliament is that this should be a person who is from a regional community.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 4.

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Odenwalder): I understand there is an amendment which essentially deletes clause 4 in the name of the member for Mount Gambier.

Mr BELL: I am not progressing with amendment No. 2 on clause 4.

The ACTING CHAIR (Mr Odenwalder): In that case, are there any questions on clause 4 as printed? No.

Clause passed.

Clause 5.

Mr BELL: I move:

Amendment No 3 [Bell-1]—

Page 3, lines 36 to 39—This clause will be opposed

This amendment removes clause 5 as an act to bind the Crown. The information I have been given is it is impractical to have this in. This is a direct copy and paste from the Commissioner for Kangaroo Island Bill 2014. It perhaps did not cause issues in that bill, but with the power of hindsight may going forward, and that is around binding other agencies and parliaments such as the commonwealth, the local government, even down to planning.

If this clause stays in there, it is unenforceable to bind the commonwealth with state legislation. That is what this would in actual fact be aiming to do. Again, for simplicity, to streamline

the bill it seemed prudent to amend that and take that out because in practice it is not workable at that level.

Clause negatived.

Clauses 6 and 7 passed.

Clause 8.

Mr BELL: I move:

Amendment No 4 [Bell-1]—

Page 5, line 13 [clause 8(g)]—Delete 'in accordance with section 9' and substitute:

in consultation with the Minister

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 9.

Mr BELL: I move:

Amendment No 5 [Bell-1]—

Page 5, line 18 to page 6, line 27—This clause will be opposed

Mr WHETSTONE: I have a question. If we are prepared to embark on a commissioner, the annual plan, I have concerns around the commissioner in relation to the delivery of services. This is one of the main issues that we have had to deal with through implementing a cross-border commissioner, that we have been held back with the delivery of services, particularly with cross-border communities—services that are provided one side of the border or the other.

The annual plan is about understanding how we define what services will be impeded through the implementation of the commissioner and how they can deal with the services that have been impeded through different regulation or legislation either side of the border. Can you please give me a better understanding of why you are opposing the annual plan?

Mr BELL: This is a really important point: there will be an annual plan. It says so in clause 8(g), which we just amended to read 'to prepare an annual plan in consultation with the minister'. So there will definitely be an annual plan. This has been a little bit confused between the houses, but it is there in black and white.

What we are opposing is the prescriptive nature of that annual plan because, quite frankly, we do not know what we do not know yet, and if you go with a very prescriptive method of how you are going to set out that annual plan what you are really doing is locking the commissioner into a whole set of procedures that may or may not be relevant going forward.

To give comfort to people around this, look at clause 8—and I will read this out:

The functions of the Commissioner are as follows...

- (b) to work and engage with all tiers of government, businesses and the community to ensure the needs of cross border communities are considered in the development and implementation of policy, procedures and legislation;

So there is consultation scripted in this legislation. The annual plan has to be done; that is under clause 8(g). We have the annual plan and we have the prescription that you have to consult with all the stakeholders. The part that I am opposing is under clause 9, where it sets out in a very prescriptive way how that is to occur. The reality is that everybody spoke here today about cutting red tape, making sure that we do not bind this commissioner to endless plans, endless reporting and no doing. The fact of the matter is there will be an annual plan. The commissioner will take direction and work with the minister, and the commissioner will have to work and engage with all tiers of government, with business and with the community, etc.

Again, the intent of removing clause 9 is to simplify the bill, to make sure we do not inadvertently—because I think the intent of this comes from a good place—bind the hands of the commissioner. All they are doing is writing an annual plan and then reporting on that annual plan without actually doing the work that needs to be done. If I could allay people's fears, there will be an

annual plan. It is in this legislation. They will have to consult and they will have to produce an annual report that is tabled here in parliament. So all those things are covered off.

What I am removing with my amendment here is the very prescriptive nature of it, and again it looks to me like it is lifted pretty closely from the Kangaroo Island bill of 2014, yet the two commissioners are set up for entirely different purposes, with entirely different outcomes that they want to achieve. One was an infrastructure one that absolutely had to put those plans together because they dealt with the council on infrastructure.

With this one there is quite a lot of stuff that will not involve a local council at all. It might be state government to state government. It might be federal government. It might be business to state government. Whilst the council is a key partner in this, they might not need to be consulted on every single piece of planning that is going forward. Again, it is really just to simplify, and not tie the hands of the commissioner before he or she is able to hit the ground and actually make some runs.

Mr WHETSTONE: We are talking about clause 9, the annual plan. Member for Mount Gambier, in your first sentence you referred back to clause 8(g) and you said to 'prepare an annual plan'—and I missed that last bit. My paper tells me it is to prepare an annual plan in accordance with section 9, so the only thing that is prescriptive is ensuring consultation with the community, and I guess there is no minimum requirement for consultation.

Mr BELL: I will address that by amendment No. 4, which is what we just passed. It was clause 8 deleting 'in accordance with section 9' and substituting 'in consultation with the Minister'. We just deleted part of that line and put consultation with the minister in there. That part has already been done.

In terms of the member for Chaffey's question, there will be consultation. It may not necessarily be with the council on that particular deliverable, KPI—whatever we want to call it—because quite frankly we do not know the scope of the issues that the commissioner will start on. What gives me comfort in this part was the previous amendment that the minister will be guiding the process and, of course, local MPs are key stakeholders. It says in clause 8(b) 'to work and engage with all tiers of government', and that obviously includes local members.

Clause negated.

Clause 10.

Mr BELL: I move:

Amendment No 6 [Bell-1]—

Page 6, lines 28 to 33—This clause will be opposed

Amendment No. 6 in my name is that this clause be opposed; that is what the amendment says.

Mr WHETSTONE: Member for Mount Gambier, you mentioned the power to require information. What is it that you are opposing, that the commissioner should not have the power to request or require either information or the performance of the functions of the act?

Mr BELL: The information that I have is that, again, this is an unnecessary clause for two reasons. One is that it is consequential to the previous clause which, for reporting purposes, is not required, and the intent of the bill is for this position, this commissioner, to be collaborative and foster or facilitate bringing people together. If there is a need for requiring information that a department will not hand over, the commissioner has the support of the minister and the support potentially of the cabinet.

We could not think of a situation where the commissioner would be requiring or forcing a department to hand over information that they would either not be able to get or have access to, or a situation where a minister or the cabinet, if it was deemed extremely important, needed that information. It is the intent of the role to be collaborative, to bring people together, to foster solutions and not necessarily to be adversarial to other government departments. Of course, when you take the scope of this position wider than just South Australia—this is a very important point—the commissioner will have no power to compel another state government or federal body to hand over information.

If we are going to start going down this road of putting in legislation that they can compel, you are setting up an adversarial system when, quite frankly, I do not see the purpose in it nor the need for the compulsion of evidence or information that would not be able to be obtained, either through a minister, who the commissioner will be working very closely with, or the entirety of the state government.

Clause negatived.

Clauses 11 to 14 passed.

Clause 15.

Mr BELL: I move:

Amendment No 7 [Bell-1]—

Page 7, line 19 [clause 15(1)]—Delete 'Act' and substitute:

section

Mr WHETSTONE: Member for Mount Gambier, you are saying that you are looking to substitute 'act' with 'section'. What is it that you are deleting, as far as any delegation from the commissioner or the minister to the commissioner?

Mr BELL: Absolutely none. It is my understanding that maybe this is a typing error that has slipped through. To avoid confusion, the proper reading of this section should be as I just outlined, that subject to this section the minister and the commissioner may delegate any functions under this section. Coincidentally, I have used the Commissioner for Kangaroo Island Bill 2014 not disparagingly but as a contrast, and in this case that is exactly how it is written under the Commissioner for Kangaroo Island Bill 2014.

My advice is that it is the correct determination and it will avoid confusion, because if you keep it the way it is the delegation could be over the entire act, and that is fine but it is this section that gives that power of delegation. So instead of reading that you will delegate under this act, the correct reading of it is that you are delegating under this section of the act, and you may delegate a whole range of aspects from there.

It is really just tidying up that one word. There is no intent to remove delegation powers, change it or anything like that; it is really just tying it up. It is semantics to a degree, because we are splitting hairs on this, but my advice was that that was a word that really should read 'section' because that is the section where the delegation comes from.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clauses 16 and 17 passed.

Clause 18.

Mr BELL: I will not proceed with my amendment on this clause.

Clause passed.

Remaining clause (19) and title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (20:16): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

I congratulate the member for Mount Gambier on his skilful navigation of the committee stage. It shows he is now not only a crossbench member but also a legislator, which is a very fine title to have indeed. With those few words, I thank the opposition, thank the crossbench and commend the bill to the house.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (20:17): This has been an issue that many regional MPs have had to deal with for quite some time. I have a level of concern that this is a very centric appointment for someone in Mount Gambier. I would have liked to see something a little broader that gave everyone the opportunity to apply for the job, not only people living in Mount Gambier.

A commissioner's role has to be on behalf of five borders with South Australia, and we have a complex set of issues. Not every border has the same concerns and not every border has the same issues or the same barriers to dealing with the complex situation we have recently been through. As history tells us, we know that New South Wales embarked on a border commissioner some years ago in 2012 and Victoria picked it up in 2018. It looks like 2022 here in South Australia.

I want to make sure that the right person is there for the right job. I do not think the centre of the border communities' universe is in Mount Gambier. If we look at it sensibly, it should be someone who is best for the job, whether that be someone living in Ceduna, someone living in the far outback or someone living in the far east of our state. I do wish them well, and I am hoping that the best person for the job is appointed, not just someone who is a favourite son living in the South-East.

Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (20:19): I also want to thank all the MPs who have made a contribution to this bill. I especially want to thank those who have put in time and effort for careful consideration and amendments in the other place, the Legislative Council. I do believe that those amendments were put in with very good intent, but I also believe that what we have done in this chamber is to simplify the bill—not to confuse that with a simplified bill, which was a disaster, but that is another story—and really give the cross-border commissioner position the best chance of being an active position, not just a planning and reporting type of position, although both of those aspects are extremely important.

To give some comfort to those in the Legislative Council, where this bill will now go back, I really want to highlight the review of the act that is in this bill. The review of the act should give comfort because the minister, legislatively, must cause an independent review of the operation of the act to be conducted and a report on the review to be prepared and submitted to the minister. After this act has been in operation for a period of three years, and at the end of each period of five years thereafter, the minister must cause a copy of a report submitted under subsection (1) to be laid before both houses of parliament within 12 sitting days after receiving the report.

That is a very important part that is unique to this commissioner's role: it is not under the Small Business Commissioner and it is not under any other commissioner's role. This provision is specifically in the bill to give comfort—the ability to have independent oversight or an independent review of the act and a report back to this house, so that if changes need to be made or if it is not working as it is intended, corrective action can be taken.

I want to highlight that part because I think it is very important for people to realise that what we have done here tonight is streamlined and less bureaucratic, with less red tape. The most important part, which I think is a sticking point and unique in comparison to other commissions, is the review of this act. It should give everybody comfort that there will be independent oversight. Going forward, I think there is nothing to be worried about. The bill should be embraced because the review is clearly in the legislation if, of course, it passes the Legislative Council.

Bill read a third time and passed.

At 20:23 the house adjourned until Thursday 7 July 2022 at 11:00.