

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 27 June 2023

The SPEAKER (Hon. D.R. Cregan) took the chair at 11:01.

The SPEAKER: Honourable members, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to elders both past and present.

The SPEAKER read prayers.

Bills

APPROPRIATION BILL 2023

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 15 June 2023.)

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (11:02): I rise today to begin the opposition's contribution to the state's recently handed down budget. It is the nature of these speeches that they can, from an opposition's point of view, be quite negative, so I want to begin by highlighting some of the things within the budget that I certainly support on behalf of the community that I represent, on behalf of the party that I lead and, I believe, on behalf of South Australia, because you cannot have a budget of such a quantum without aspects of it that are positive, that should be positive and that should be celebrated and championed and supported by both sides of parliament.

There are a number of things I want to highlight specifically in that field: the \$6.2 million for additional road safety campaigns in the face of one of the most heartbreaking road tolls in South Australia for many years; likewise, the \$3.8 million for the rider safety reform program to support motorcycle riders to travel on our roads in a safer fashion, because we know that far too many motorcycle riders are losing their lives on South Australian roads.

Speaking as a local member, I was heartened to see the \$494,000 included in the state budget for the licensing scheme to be implemented for the ultra high-powered vehicles in our state, a direct response to the tragedy that befell the Naismith family, who I am proud to represent in this place and who were told by the previous government, of which I was part, that something like this was probably not possible.

I think that is a lesson to all of us: that bureaucrats can be challenged and that we need to lead from this place, because change can be implemented on behalf of the community. I was proud to see the government take up that initiative as an election commitment, not only pass the laws in this place but also back it up with a small but meaningful financial contribution in the state budget.

I want to congratulate the government on the implementation of the Office for AUKUS—such an important generational initiative, which I have made clear that my side of politics will give bipartisan support for at every possible step of the way. That is why, as well as an Office for AUKUS, we would certainly like to see a committee of this parliament established. We are not seeking to have a majority on that committee by any means, but we would love to see the government agree to the formation of that committee.

The motion is before parliament at the moment; there will be another opportunity to vote for its formation later this week. I do hope that the government will follow on from the creation of the Office for AUKUS by supporting that initiative that we have in the house at the moment, in the spirit of bipartisan support around such an intergenerationally significant project in South Australia.

The Premier has said that AUKUS will last beyond the life of his government, beyond the life of future Liberal governments, back to Labor governments, back to Liberal governments and, as a

consequence, that wholehearted and consistent bipartisanship is much needed. We will support the Office for AUKUS, but we hope it goes far beyond that as well.

We support the continued funding of the startup hub at Lot Fourteen: \$20 million over four years, providing support, mentoring, grants and a coming together of our state's startup community at Lot Fourteen so that we can be the startup state. I believe that the state government has a vision for that, I hope they do, and that has a sense of bipartisanship built around it as well. I do wish that startup hub and every single person who participates in it, every single entity that participates in it, all the success, because their success is South Australia's success.

We support the fact that this budget included some relief for first-home buyers in the form of the removal of stamp duty on new homes and builds under \$650,000. Time will tell if that goes far enough. It is certainly welcomed by South Australia's construction industry and will be welcomed by many first-home buyers. I do not believe that it necessarily goes far enough. The terms around that might be just a little too constricted to provide significant relief beyond a few thousand lucky first-home buyers. Let's hope the government is open to evaluating that program, ascertaining its effectiveness and seeing if it is going far enough to help South Australians into property ownership.

To own one's own home must be part of the Australian dream. We cannot let home ownership drift beyond the possibility of current generations or future generations. To be able to own one's home should be an aspiration for most Australians from childhood. I hope the government is open to continuing to evaluate and potentially move the goalposts on that commitment, should it not be delivering exactly what is needed.

There are many elements of this budget that the party I lead will speak in support of. I am sure my colleagues on this side of the house will make contributions over the coming sitting days where they will highlight things they were pleased to see. But, of course, there are a number of areas where we think the government has missed the mark.

This budget has built into it an extremely concerning level of fiscal ill-discipline. We know that it has missed the mark in terms of delivering a surplus, and in fact the deficit of almost one-quarter of a billion dollars sets this state up for some significant fiscal uncertainty into the future. The way the government blew their budgets—not just one or two government budgets—and then had those budget blowouts baked into their budgets going forward has rewarded bad behaviour, ill management by bureaucrats and the ministers they report to.

We know that in the state's budget, if you look across all the government departments, the overspend was over \$1.3 billion. That has essentially been forgiven and baked into the budget going forward, so the incentive for government agencies to do the right thing, in terms of managing their budgets into the future, has been removed by this government, and that discipline may just disappear altogether in future with the current crop of bureaucrats. If I were a chief executive who had had one of the smaller overspends, I would probably feel quite bad about that because now I have a smaller overspend baked into my new budget as opposed to some of the larger ones.

It is worth just reflecting on some of those overspends: \$387 million in the education department, \$754 million in the Department for Health and Wellbeing, \$66 million in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, \$43 million in the primary industries portfolio and \$54 million in the Department for Environment and Water, which had a budget of \$301 million to start with, so an exceptionally concerning overspend there. If we use the Department for Environment and Water as a case study looking forward, \$54 million has been added to that \$301 million, so the future budget has essentially had that baked into it, and ill discipline has been rewarded.

When the Treasurer and the Premier sell this budget, one of the key lines they have been using, one of the case studies they have been using, which has been picked up by some people, including some in the business community, and perhaps even applauded is that we are doing well because we are not doing as badly as Victoria. Now, I hardly think that comparing ourselves favourably to the failing socialist republic to the east is a badge of honour.

Thank goodness we are better than them. Thank goodness for South Australians. Thank goodness for South Australian businesses. Thank goodness for South Australian property investors. Thank goodness for those who are trying to get ahead in this state that we are not as bad as the

Andrews government in Victoria. I am relieved on behalf of all South Australians that that is the case, but that is not the measure that we should be trying to use as our benchmark for success.

We can do much better than that. The Malinauskas Labor government can do much better than that, and to compare ourselves to Victoria is not a badge of honour. Every single thing that we should do every single day in this state should be trying to be better than Victoria, whether it is sport, whether it is business, whether it is government, but they are not the benchmark for success and they never should be. I want to move through some areas where we have specific concern and then move into the areas of focus that the party that I lead will be taking in the coming months and years when developing a policy agenda as we move through this term.

We talk a lot about health care in this place. The member for Schubert, the member for Frome and many other members on this side of the house, but those two members in particular, speak regularly about the Labor Party's headline election commitment. They were going to fix the ramping crisis—we have heard that many, many times. We know that although there has been record spending in the healthcare system, record amounts handed down in this budget and future budgets, there is still a downward trajectory when it comes to the measurement of healthcare success across almost every measure in this state at the moment.

When we think of Labor's management of the healthcare system, we should reflect on the past: the party that closed the Repat hospital, the party that brought us Transforming Health, the party that built the new Royal Adelaide Hospital with an emergency department that we know was not fit for purpose and has exacerbated ramping since the day it opened. In fact, the Labor Party in South Australia are the architects of ramping, and I suspect they will continue to be the architects of ramping for many years to come.

Interestingly, when we look through the budget papers for the forthcoming financial year, where they have promised to deliver a modest surplus, they have also promised to cut spending in the health department by almost the quantum of that modest surplus. I am not sure if there is any time in recent memory when the health budget has diminished in a financial year and so we do not hold our breath for that to be achieved and perhaps we should not because if we want to see that world-class health system, if we want to see the ramping crisis resolved, if we want to see our emergency departments not being full of patients waiting for beds in a month like this month when almost every other day we have had a Code White across our metropolitan hospitals, maybe we should not hope for that cut for our healthcare system.

Maybe we should hope for more effective spending in a way that delivers the system-wide reform that our healthcare system needs in South Australia, not another bandaid solution before moving to the next fad that comes out of Focus Week—if we ever hear what comes out of Focus Week. The healthcare system in South Australia has fallen off a cliff since Labor came to office. They have delivered record spending and they have delivered record ramping, and I think it takes a special type of incompetence to manage that.

One of the things that is so lacking in this budget is a central vision for economic development for South Australia. Where is South Australia's economy going? What do we want for South Australia's economy? What are the jobs of the future and how are we going to get there? What are those industries which have served this state well for decades or centuries and how are we going to make sure that they continue to deliver for this state in a way that they have done for generations?

I do not think that my job is to continually look back to the four years we were in government, but one thing I do want to highlight is Growth State. Growth State was a really clear economic agenda, co-designed in partnership with industry and industry bodies. There had been a huge amount of thought put into Growth State. Many of the areas were where South Australia had traditionally done very well—again, for generations—in terms of what our state's economy was all about and how we could continue to sustain that and take it to the next level.

But, equally, Growth State had a relentless focus on future industries as well. It had nine sectors: international education; defence; space; high tech; health and medical industries; food, wine and agribusiness; tourism; energy and mining; and the arts and creative industries. These areas created a sharpness in terms of where the government was going to focus our efforts, our support, our desire to partner with industry to deliver innovations and take those sectors to the next level.

They were the sectors that we wanted to frame our state when we pitched to the world about what this state was all about when it came to business and economic development.

We know the last budget walked away from Growth State. I think it was one of those situations where a new government comes in and they just throw out the economic vision because it belonged to the previous government and because it was put together by the previous government.

But Growth State was not put together by the previous government. Growth State was a partnership between the previous government and industry. Business was at the table. Business representative bodies were at the table. We had spoken to our trade partners overseas. Trade offices had been involved in designing Growth State. Growth State was our pitch to our state, to the nation and to the world regarding South Australia's business and economic development DNA and I think our state is lesser for not having that economic clarity in the budget.

It is one thing to have a budget that is framed around health care and housing. That is what the government wants this budget to be framed around and those are worthy things, and we welcome that. But if you do not have a vision to pay for health care and housing through continued economic development in this state and a way of turbocharging the growth around those nine platforms of Growth State, I do fear for the future of our state's economy.

Those sectors are the sectors of South Australia's future and now they are fragmented. They are fragmented across the cabinet. They do not have ministerial leads anymore. The economic vision that this budget contains, if you can find any economic character within the budget at all, is almost entirely focused on pet projects.

One of the answers the Premier continually gives when he is asked for his economic vision for the state is the Hydrogen Jobs Plan. It is also the answer they give when they are asked about their energy vision for the state. It is also the answer they give when they are asked about their environmental vision for the state.

In some ways, the Hydrogen Jobs Plan is a very small, experimental project—an experimental project within an embryonic industry. I believe that hydrogen is a fuel of the future and I believe that South Australia has a big role to play in delivering that fuel of the future, both in Australia and globally, but we cannot put all our eggs in the Hydrogen Jobs Plan basket. I wish them well with the Hydrogen Jobs Plan as they contort an election commitment into an economic reality. Good luck to Rik Morris and his team as they whip that one together.

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: Sam Crafter.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Sam Crafter, that's the other bloke, one of the highest paid public servants in the state. He is doing well out of the Hydrogen Jobs Plan. I am not sure about many other South Australians, but he is doing well. He is a one-man economic stimulus, but the Hydrogen Jobs Plan will not deliver everything for this state. We wish them well, but we are yet to be convinced it is not simply a frolic that will waste, is it \$500 million? Is it a billion? Is it \$1½ billion?

We know the proposed power plant has now been changed in terms of its scope and the storage element has been withdrawn from it. We do not know if it will plug into the system effectively and we do not know if there is enough water to create the hydrogen, so good luck to them as they develop the hydrogen industry in South Australia.

It is an important industry, but we have to be more than just that. We need to be looking at international education, defence, space, high-tech health and medical industries, food, wine, agribusiness, tourism, energy, mining and the creative industries. That was Growth State, and we cannot forget the importance of those industries.

As we move through this term, the opposition will be increasingly talking about the importance of tax reform. We need state-based taxes to raise revenue in this state, but we must constantly be looking to see that the way those taxes are set and the way those taxes are evolved are meeting the purposes from a revenue-raising point of view and also whether they are positioning South Australia to be competitive nationally at the moment.

As I said a moment ago, we welcome the removal of stamp duty for first-home buyers, for new builds and new homes up to \$650,000. We welcome that small change to the way stamp duty will be administered for the coming years.

But where else can we go with our tax reform in this state? I was delighted earlier in the year to appoint the Hon. Heidi Girolamo MLC as the shadow minister for finance and tax reform to take a leadership role in looking at where South Australia's taxes should be at the moment, working alongside the shadow cabinet and in particular the shadow treasurer, Matthew Cowdrey, to look at opportunities for making our taxation system better in South Australia, making it work for all South Australians and particularly making sure that our tax regime in South Australia is structured in such a way that it ensures that we are a competitive state moving forward and not having Victoria as the benchmark regarding what competitiveness looks like.

Heidi and her team have already pulled together a tax reform working group with a whole range of industry representatives and experts to start providing that thought leadership around tax reform in this state. They will look at stamp duty, the emergency services levy, payroll tax, land tax and water bills. Water bills in some ways are a tax, and we fear that the forthcoming regulatory determination for SA Water bills going forward could create an opportunity, like they did last time Labor were in government, to be a major cash cow for the state government's bottom line. Heidi and her team are going to be looking at this on an ongoing basis, and we will have a lot to say over the coming months and years about where South Australia's tax regime should be headed.

We will also have a great deal to say about skills in South Australia. We have a skills shortage. Some of that can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the particular global challenges that that created—the drop-off with regard to migration for a couple of years. That has put South Australia's business community and skills in a situation of significant challenge when it comes to meeting our skills needs in this state.

It is firmly my view, though, that Labor are failing on responding in terms of providing South Australia with the skilled workforce that we need for our future. In many ways, they are falling back on their same old ways. Between 2012 and 2018, South Australia had the worst training system in the nation, presiding over significant declines over a six-year period. Labor today will not commit to delivering increases in training participation.

Rather, they seem to be focused on feel-good advertising campaigns—billboards about skills, newspaper advertisements—but not necessarily a lot around actual hands-on intervention in the skills market to be able to make sure we have the right people in the right places to do the right jobs. This is something that I experience as I travel around the state. It is a big problem in Adelaide, but the further I get away from metropolitan Adelaide, the greater the problem becomes. We just do not have the skills in South Australia at the moment to meet the needs out there.

The government have their technical colleges. I think the jury is out on those. Are they just a slogan, going back to a term that was used historically? A lot of people know what a technical college is, and a lot of South Australians benefited from technical colleges in the past. We will certainly see what those technical colleges deliver, but I think the intervention that is required is probably far more than five technical colleges scattered around the state. We will watch that exceptionally closely, but our skills development industry in this state is in need of significant ongoing and, importantly, consistent assistance so that we can get our apprentices and trainees into the right jobs with the right skills.

I believe incredibly strongly in the value of apprentices. I saw what the member for Unley did with his single-minded, relentless and sometimes painful focus in cabinet in terms of when he was the minister to drive our take-up of apprentices across the state. When he was a minister, he got results and because of his time as a minister we have more people doing apprenticeships today in South Australia than we otherwise would.

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: Twenty thousand.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Twenty thousand more, in fact, and how good is that. As the son of a retired carpenter, as someone who grew up ignoring every occupational health and safety rule in the book, running around on building sites when my dad was supposed to be looking after us, I

believe so strongly in supporting apprentices, not only inspiring people to take up apprentices and inspiring people to see that as a credible career pathway but also providing wraparound support throughout the life of the apprentice, particularly during the first couple of years when dropout rates can be up to 50 per cent.

We need support for the mental health of apprentices, we need support to ensure that our apprentices have the right tools for the trade and can afford those, and that is something I will be exploring and doing a lot more work on, particularly with the deputy leader and my broader team, over the coming months and years. I actually think South Australia's economic future can be apprentice-led and our skills crisis can be overcome by leaning into the world of apprentices, keeping more people in apprenticeships and supporting private businesses to take on apprentices. I think there is a great opportunity for this state to lead the nation with regard to that.

Linked to our skills challenges is our need to make sure that we are bringing in the right migrants to South Australia. As I often say, with an accent like mine you cannot be anti migration, and I am quite the opposite. I think our doors should be open to get the right migrants in the right places in the state. But migration is a highly competitive field. We not only compete with other states but we are also competing with the world. We are competing with Canada in particular, with New Zealand and with the USA. All those countries, and many others, are facing similar challenges to us and, as a consequence, are pitching themselves as a desirable place for migrants to go.

It is a competitive field and, while migration sits largely in a policy sense with the federal government, states do have a real role there. States have a role to be part of that competitive environment and to be pitching to potential migrants in other parts of the world that this is a great place to live, that this is a place where you will get a job and that this is a place where you will be welcomed to build a great life. As a state—and I think this is something we should do in a bipartisan way—we should pitch to other places in the world the values of coming to South Australia, what makes life good in South Australia and how you get there.

People often ask me why we live in Adelaide, why my family lives in Adelaide. They expect some sort of romantic notion. We live here because it was the easiest state to move to, because it had regional migration status and because in the late nineties and the early 2000s there were a number of things about migrating to South Australia that made our state one of the easier places in Australia to move to. We still have some of those advantages, we do not have them all, and there is a place for the state government to lobby the federal government and to pitch to the world that this is the place to move to. That is why I am the Leader of the Opposition in South Australia today—because my family found it easy to move to a place we had never heard of, the city of Adelaide, and I am glad that we did.

Energy policy is particularly important in South Australia. Energy prices are soaring, and that is putting massive additional pressure on households in the face of a range of other rising costs, whether they be interest rates, the price of fuel or the price of groceries. We also know that it is putting massive pressure on small business. I was speaking to a small business at around 8am today about the challenges they are facing paying a range of their bills, but the one they mentioned first—and they had a go at me when they were serving my coffee—was, 'What are you doing about our energy bills, David?' I said, 'Well, I am writing my budget reply speech, so I will mention you in it.'

Josh—who is the owner of CREAM on Jetty Road at Brighton—this is your special mention, and my staff will clip this and send it to you. He does a great coffee to start the day. I also had eggs, toast and a hash brown this morning because after he said that about his costs I thought I had better contribute a little bit more to him. I never normally have breakfast as a practitioner of intermittent fasting.

We have the highest energy prices in the nation, and in a couple of days' time, with the arrival of the 2023-24 financial year, our energy prices will surge by up to 30 per cent. That is going to be extremely difficult for many small businesses and households to absorb. Energy policy is crucial in Australia. Other nations look at us and think that we really have no excuse given our natural resources, both in terms of renewables and non-renewable resources, for the energy crisis that seems to be enveloping our nation at the moment.

In a bipartisan way, this side of the house has supported a climate policy in this state in one way or the other for a couple of decades as we have transitioned towards clean green renewables. South Australia's opportunities in this regard are immense. We should be proud of what this state has done across both political parties since the turn of this century, at not just state level but also federally. We cannot create a situation in this nation or in this state where wealthier people living in the inner city can dictate what our energy policy looks like, while the further we get from the CBD the harder it becomes for people to keep their lights on and keep their homes warm in winter.

I really worry that if we do not start having some vision and creativity with regard to energy policy we are going to drift into a space where people in suburbs like Trott Park and Sheidow Park, which I represent, are going to struggle to keep their homes warm over winter or decide not to put on their cooling over summer. We could end up with an energy-based underclass in this nation if we do not get energy policy right. Unfortunately—I think largely through ideology driven by the federal Labor government—we are heading into a very scary place with energy policy.

I believe we need to have an open mind with regard to all energy solutions that are available in Australia at the moment. What we need particularly is an open mind when it comes to that transition to net zero. South Australia may be an exception from time to time, but increasingly there is a view that, without having the nuclear fuel cycle as part of the energy mix, the dream of net zero simply will not be possible for many Western jurisdictions. I say that South Australia may be an exception because we do know that there are days now when we have 100 per cent renewable power penetration, but I suspect that dream is almost impossible for the rest of the nation if we want to maintain our economic trajectory, if we want to maintain affordable energy and if we want to maintain energy security.

It may very well be that consideration of nuclear energy in some form (likely small modular reactors) will be necessary. We know that the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy undertook in the middle of last year a community consultation to discuss what South Australians thought about moving in this direction—at least having the conversation—and a majority of South Australians were interested in having the conversation. It did not mean a majority of South Australians were open to having nuclear power established in this state, but they were open to the conversation.

I think we have to be open to the conversation in 2023 if we are serious about that transition for our nation and having leadership in the energy space within our nation. It is now seven years and one month since Kevin Scarce handed down the royal commission findings into the nuclear fuel cycle, an inquiry that he undertook as the royal commissioner. A lot has changed in the world since May 2016 when he handed down those recommendations, both in terms of the desire of the world and this nation to move quickly towards net zero and in terms of the security outlook of the world from a defence point of view.

Of course, nuclear-powered submarines are now proposed to be built in Adelaide and that could very well change the direction of thinking around this area as well. It will certainly change the way that we behave with regard to the presence of nuclear material in South Australia and the range of security requirements that will be required and the range of skills that will be required. Perhaps it is the time to reopen that royal commission again—have a royal commission 2.0—and start thinking about what South Australia's role could be in that fuel cycle, some seven years since we last considered it.

Seven years is a long time when it comes to innovation and technology and now could be the time to start having that conversation again. I think that conversation should be bipartisan, and the Liberal Party in South Australia is certainly willing to offer a bipartisan level of support towards the conversation. It is just the conversation at this time, but with the level of uranium deposits in this state, with nuclear-powered submarines being likely built within a decade or so in South Australia under AUKUS, now could be the time to have a considered conversation with the business community, with people from all walks of life in South Australia, about what our role is with regard to the nuclear fuel cycle going forward.

One thing that was very apparent to me as a gap in the budget was support for our police service. There are some particular challenges facing the South Australian police at the moment, an

organisation that did so much to support us in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, that went well beyond what people would ever consider to be the role of police officers. We know that many people left the police force in that time and have not necessarily been replaced. We know that there was particular strain put on our police force and the support that they need now might be quite different from what they have historically needed.

We know that there are parts of our state in the grip of a crime wave at the moment, and we only need look out the front of this building to see one of those hotspots. There was a reason that *The Advertiser* described our cultural precinct as 'North Terror' a couple of weeks ago in a front-page headline. Other towns are suffering from the same fear of crime. A few weeks ago, I visited Port Augusta with the member for Flinders and sat down with a number of business and community leaders, who told us tales of significant crime.

Businesses had decided to withdraw from the CBD of that important regional city, to close up shop because they were losing too much trade to people being scared away from the main street, to shoplifting, to broken windows and to a long list of problems that need a quick, rapid and zero-tolerance response, in my view. You can add Ceduna to that list as well.

A unique wraparound level of policing is required for the challenges that we are facing with crime at the moment. We cannot put our heads in the sand with regard to this. We have to name it, we have to respond to it and we have to give our police force in South Australia the tools and the resources to be able to deal with crime in the state.

We cannot leave it to get to a point where the assaults and cases of verbal abuse spiral to become more serious, because if it becomes more serious that could result in someone losing their life. We do not want that. It is time to give the South Australian police the resources they need to step up to hit this quickly, and hopefully that problem can be dealt with and they can get back to what they need to be doing.

Regional South Australia in any given year, depending on the type of season that we have, contributes between \$20 billion and \$30 billion to our state's economy. Of course, much of that is in some of those traditional industries that South Australia has done so well in, whether it is food and fibre production or whether it is mining and resources. In more recent times, we have seen the tourism industry step up in regional South Australia because the vast majority of the travel destinations that people come to South Australia to visit, particularly those from interstate and overseas, are found within regional South Australia, our diverse and beautiful landscape that can be such an attraction to visitors.

Our regions provide a contribution to what South Australia is all about. While we are a city-centric state in terms of our population—the facts say that 77 per cent of people live in metropolitan Adelaide and 23 per cent of people live in regional South Australia—our state is defined by our regions. The places, the communities, the people contribute so much to making South Australia what South Australia is and to making this state tick. Yes, I have mentioned the economic contribution, but it is a cultural contribution as well and it is an incredibly valuable part of what we are all about as South Australians.

There is absolutely no doubt that the budget that was handed down by Labor a couple of weeks ago reverted to the same old Labor ways of being city-centric in terms of spending. Yes, there is a population here in metropolitan Adelaide, but we have to look after our regions. It is providing appropriate levels of funding so that the standard of regional health care can be what regional people expect. I actually do not think they expect to get the same service that you would get in metropolitan Adelaide. I do not think they are after that. I think they are quite willing to come to metropolitan Adelaide for some services, if supported through the PAT Scheme to be able to do so.

There needs to be a certain standard, and that standard might vary in different parts of the state, but that standard needs to be really clear: if you live in this community, you can expect this; if you live in a particular community, you can expect a doctor; if you live in our third largest city, being Whyalla, you can expect to have a baby locally, which you cannot do now. We need to maintain that standard, and whoever is in power needs to set that standard and fight for funding to deliver that standard.

I will be working with the member for Frome, the shadow minister for regional health services in South Australia; the member for Schubert, the shadow minister for health; and each member who represents regional South Australia on our side of the house to define that standard and to make sure a future Liberal government delivers that standard.

We know that across the state we have a \$3 billion backlog in road maintenance, and the vast majority of that is where the vast majority of the roads are: in regional South Australia. We need to get on top of that. I know, when we were in power, we made massive inroads into the backlog of road maintenance and, as a consequence, our roads are safer today in regional South Australia, but they are not as safe as they could be.

As I said at the beginning of this contribution, I welcome the government's expenditure on road safety campaigns. It is critical. We want to make sure that people get home to their families after a long day at work. We want to make sure that, when you are travelling through regional South Australia, you reach your destination safe and alive because we know the heartache and the destruction that come from losing family members and friends on our roads. There would not be one person who represents regional South Australia who does not know the legacy of road carnage in their families or in their wider circle of friends.

When my uncle in rural Scotland was travelling home from school in year 12, as a 17 year old, he was hit and killed by an oncoming vehicle. My family never ever recovered from that. My grandparents never recovered from that. They entered their grave early as a consequence of that, and my mum remembers her brother every single day and wonders what sort of life he would have had if he had married and had a career and had kids. That is what a lack of road maintenance can lead to, and we need to fight for every single dollar we can get for regional Australia.

The member for Hartley, in his role as shadow minister for infrastructure and transport, and the member for Hammond in his role as the shadow minister for regional roads, will take up that fight relentlessly in our coming months and years in opposition.

A quarter of the government's entire regional spend is being directed towards the city of Mount Barker. We welcome that. That community is crying out, as you know more than anyone else, Mr Speaker, for an appropriate level of spend, but Mount Barker is not a regional community. I would not begrudge it a single penny or cent of spending but, under the government's own definitions, Mount Barker does not reach the definition of regional. In fact, you can get from Mount Barker to the CBD of Adelaide quicker than you can get from my house in the southern suburbs to the CBD of Adelaide.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia: Especially if Tom's driving.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: 'Especially if Tom's driving,' says the member for Hartley. I will not respond to his inappropriate interjections. But, Mr Speaker, this is not to diminish Mount Barker, because your community deserves more expenditure.

The SPEAKER: My regional community deserves more expenditure.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Regional communities—real regional communities—deserve significant expenditure. Mount Barker is a future suburb of Adelaide—

The SPEAKER: No. No, it is not.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: —and it deserves to be given the infrastructure that it deserves. Quite frankly, regional South Australia's roads, the further you get away from Adelaide, get worse and worse. Perhaps the definition does need to be changed if we are going to call Mount Barker regional. My point is that regional roads, regional health care, regional schools—regions, full stop—need to be respected for what they contribute to South Australia's economy and they need to be invested in accordingly.

As I close, I want to reflect on the way that the government behave. I think, when they came to power last year, they shrugged their shoulders and thought, 'Well, the planets have realigned: the four-year aberration is over. The Liberals will go back to being hopeless and we will go back to being in government.' That is not my vision for this opposition, and it does not appear to be the way they are behaving either. The arrogance is unbelievable, and we all see it every single day. It is locker

room arrogance: jobs for the boys, chortling in the front benches, mocking, Twitter insults. It is unbecoming of a government. They do not respect South Australians, they do not respect our regions and half the time they do not respect each other.

South Australia deserves a lot better. They deserve a lot better from their budget, they deserve a lot better from their ministers and they deserve a lot better from their backbenchers. The party I lead, the opposition in South Australia, will work relentlessly to hold them to account, to articulate an alternate vision for the state of South Australia and to make sure that this state has a suite of ideas across every policy area to consider as we get closer and closer to the 2026 state election.

It is a great privilege of mine to be a member of this place, and it is a great privilege to be the Leader of the Opposition. This state needs a good opposition as much as it needs a good government, and that is exactly what we intend to be.

Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (11:55): I thank the opposition leader for his contribution. Before I get into my speech, I really want to stress how much of an opposition leader's speech that was. It is very, very rich for a party that took net debt from \$14.6 billion to \$33.6 billion in its last term of government to lecture this parliament on superior economic management. Another thing to point out—there were lots of points I could pick up, but I have 20 minutes—is their mention of nuclear energy. The point I want to make there is that if it means so much to them, they have just come out of four years in government, so why did they not do something about that in the last term?

However, I rise to say some happier and positive words about the Appropriation Bill and to open the account for the government. It might seem a little bit unusual coming from this side, but I am more than happy to begin by stating facts on how much of a positive investment this will be for the state. At both a state and a local level I could not be happier that this year's budget is addressing some of the key priorities affecting residents in my electorate. At a time when we all need a little bit of extra help, it is pleasing that this budget focuses on the basics rather than elaborate projects like a \$664 million basketball stadium.

While there is always more work to do there is a lot locally we are pleased with, especially in relation to our schools. I will talk a bit more about what I call the macro investments a little bit later but, specifically in relation to my community, we are overjoyed with the commitments made to improve our schools. Central to this is a commitment to fully fund a new gym at The Pines School. For those who do not know, Parafield Gardens is one of the largest suburbs in Adelaide; it is so big that it needs three government primary schools to service the local community. Led by Cherie Collings, if you factor in preschool and the Intensive English Language Program, The Pines School provides a great education to about 830 students.

In many ways, this school is a victim of its own success, having an excellent music program that has over 100 participants. It has also done amazing things in STEM learning, with a team selected last year to compete in the national finals of the Tournament of Minds in Canberra. With so much to offer, its one major setback has been its inability to get the entire school community under one roof. Thanks to this budget, I understand that this problem will soon be a thing of the past because of our commitment to deliver a brand-new gym for the school.

Having worked as a school infrastructure adviser on and off for a number of years in the previous government, I know how keen the community has been for this project to get off the ground—and I emphasise the word 'community', because I know Ms Collings is very keen to share the gym with local sporting clubs and other groups within the surrounding area. It will help not just the kids but it will also be an asset to the entire community, who will all have the opportunity to enjoy it.

This may not have been the case initially, as I had word that the architects were initially considering just a three-quarter sized court. Upon hearing this, I raised my concerns with the minister and recently received some very welcome confirmation that the new gym will be full size and will include a foyer, storage, teacher preparation area, and kitchenette, along with staff and student amenities. As soon as the announcement was made, I visited the school and realised how impossible the task would have been to contain the excitement of staff, students and parents.

Just outside my electorate is Paralowie R-12 School, which is still very important to my community as it is zoned to take in students from the northern parts of the Playford electorate. The budget commits to replace the HVAC or, as I call it, the air-conditioning system in the school. Several people from within my community have expressed their concern that the existing system was failing, and I was pleased to also write to the minister to draw this to his attention. Just as Salisbury Downs Primary School received a commitment for a new system last year, we are getting on with the job of fixing this so that the elements do not get in the way of learning at these two great schools.

The main government high school in my community is Parafield Gardens High School. It was established in 1976 and built at a time when spiral staircases not only were fashionable but also seen as functional. Hindsight and, dare I say, a few accidents have made us realise that they are probably not the safest thing for a school. I am pleased that a commitment has been made in the budget to have it removed and replaced with something a little bit more sensible.

While I am not sure if this can be found in this or last year's budget, I also want to commend the minister for finding a few dollars to invest in some Aussie Rules goals for the school. Late last year, I was approached by the newly elected school captain, Thomas Oxford, who made it his sole purpose to get the goals for the school in his term as the SRC captain. A few letters to various ministers later, I am pleased to say that it is now a case of mission accomplished. We found out in the budget week that the goals will be funded, and the school could not be happier. The whole exercise will not just give these fantastic young people an opportunity to play football but it is going to be used to show students that they have a voice, and it will be heard.

I spoke to a number of teachers about Thomas's hard work and they are now unpacking this great news to ensure that it complements learning across the school. Given it took only six months for Thomas and the SRC to achieve this goal (pardon the pun), I am a bit worried where they will set their minds for the second half of the year. One thing is for certain, though, and that is I am sure Thomas Oxford is destined for great things and we will be hearing a lot more about him as time goes on.

I do not believe there will be mention in the budget this year of a Settlers Farm R-6 campus. That is because its \$5 million redevelopment has been completed. I did read in the online version of *The Advertiser* that the project was experiencing delays. The good news is that this could not be further from the truth, and it is nice to take this opportunity to set the record straight.

I mentioned earlier that the weather can be a distraction for a student trying to learn, and so is an empty stomach. There are schools across my community with breakfast programs, and I could not be happier that across the state they will receive a \$6.5 million boost. This is the largest investment of its kind and will see more than 1.4 million extra meals provided to South Australian children over the next four years. A child learning on an empty stomach equates to an uphill battle, and I imagine the loss of concentration they sustain is probably felt across the entire classroom. The great thing is that this service is free to students, courtesy of two fantastic organisations that run the program, KickStart for Kids and Foodbank SA.

A lot of schools I represent are deeply interested in the new grant program to help enshrine good nutrition within their communities. This will include funding to support new community gardens, additional kitchen equipment for cooking classes and other related activities such as training and specialist advice to address concerns in relation to food security, nutrition and body image issues. It is investments like these that get the basics right. They point to happier, more attentive and healthy students which is sure to unlock the full potential of so many more South Australian kids.

The community is hurting with the rising cost of living, and we are hearing this loudly. Each month it seems we hear the terrible news that interest rates are on the rise again which, in turn, sucks more and more cash out from our community. I am not seeking to state the obvious, but it seems no matter where you turn something is on the rise which has a domino effect on increasing the cost of something else. When people are suffering, there is no time for a pat on the back, but I do feel that it should be recognised that this budget indexes fees and charges at 4.8 per cent.

Sure enough, there will be predictable stories on what is going up on 1 July, and I recognise that the papers do need to print something. Sadly, governments cannot be spared when it comes to the rising costs of goods and services and these do need to be passed on. To my understanding,

while it appears to be heading downwards, the rate of inflation is sitting stubbornly at around 7 per cent. The fact that the Treasurer and his team have managed to absorb over 2 per cent of rising costs without passing on inflationary pressures in full should not go unnoticed. It is efforts like these that do not add extra flame to the fire, and I want to express my particular thanks for that.

Also helping to tackle the cost of living is the \$500 energy concession for eligible households and \$650 for small businesses. We have all been hit by some outrageous spikes in our electricity bills, and I would hope that this modest contribution helps in some way. I take this opportunity to point out that, while the electricity retailers seem quite happy to bump up their charges, they do not seem to be adjusting how much they return to consumers who are supplying the grid through surplus solar energy. I hope this is something that we can turn a spotlight on in the weeks ahead.

A few weeks back, it was my privilege to introduce constituents to the Premier at Paralowie Village. As we toured the shopping centre, we visited Jimmy, who runs Stanley's—a rather iconic fish and chip shop. The Premier asked Jimmy what was his number one concern; he promptly responded that the rising cost of energy made running his small business more challenging. While we all work within the constraints of a privatised market, we are definitely hearing voices like Jimmy's loudly and clearly.

I know that \$650 is modest, but this should be seen as a sign of intent to the small business community. Nobody is sitting idly by hoping global forces will shift for the better. There are some very serious reforms in this sector (spearheaded by Minister Koutsantonis) to improve the regulatory framework as well as establish our own hydrogen power facilities in Whyalla.

On a broader level, this budget deserves a big tick for what it does around housing. One of the key reasons I stood for parliament was that I was worried about the cost of housing and, rather than just complain about it, I wanted to be part of the solution. While there is still heaps of work to do, I am really pleased the state budget will make it easier for new-home buyers, especially young people, to enter the property market. We are doing this in several ways.

Firstly, we are getting rid of stamp duty for eligible first-home buyers who want to build a new home up to the value of \$650,000, or \$400,000 for new land. The cap for the First Home Owner Grant has also been raised, from \$575,000 to \$650,000. I understand that this provides eligible applicants with up to \$15,000 towards their new home. In collaboration with HomeStart, a new lending product has also been developed. This will allow eligible borrowers to build a new home with as little as a 2 per cent deposit.

We are also releasing more land, with 25,000 new blocks to be released in Adelaide's north and south. More land helps lower housing costs for pretty much everyone, as it helps reduce overall demand across the entire market. Irrespective of whether we are talking about building a new home or choosing something more established—be it for first-home buyers, empty-nesters or growing families—the extra supply should help push down some of the inflationary pressures our market has been plagued with for several years.

There is also significant investment in public housing, which should be commended for multiple reasons. I am a big fan of public housing, not just because it puts a roof over the heads of South Australians. As a member of the Labor Party, I feel we cannot escape our role in accepting that we could have done a lot better in this space. I lament the winding back of the Housing Trust and, with it, a powerful lever that once helped control housing prices in South Australia. That said, this budget does present some hope that the tide is beginning to turn.

I understand that in the last 30 years there has only been a single year when the amount of public housing in the state has increased. I am really encouraged that this budget begins to seriously turn the tide with the announcement to expand the government's public housing commitment, with an additional 564 new homes, and halt the sale of a further 580 public housing properties. This means that by 2026 there will be over 1,140 more public housing properties compared to previous plans. It is encouraging that this is likely to grow further, with a boost of \$135.8 million from the Albanese government for additional public housing. This is anticipated to deliver a further 300 to 400 homes.

There are a few realities that we must take stock of in relation to the problems we have around housing. Firstly, the decline in housing affordability did not happen overnight. It was something that happened across the best part of a generation due to the neglect of successive federal and state governments. Unfortunately, as it has taken this long for the rot to set in, without a magic wand it will take years to put right. I will not pretend there is not more to do, but I would rather be where we are now than facing the situation when we first came into government. There is hope now that things can be better and this budget is hopefully a sign that there is more good to come.

In winding up, I think most South Australians have their worries regarding our health system. While we have some amazing employees working in public health, the reality is we need more of them and spaces to put them in, and therefore I am not going to begrudge an extra \$2.3 billion in our health service. I note that \$1.3 billion will be used to meet extra demand in the system, but there are also allocations such as a little over \$100 million extra for the Mount Barker hospital. We need to be very careful not to begrudge investment outside our backyards.

I think we all have stories of having to rely on hospitals outside our local areas and investments like this will give South Australians confidence that there is capacity to be looked after no matter where you tread in the state. I think we also have our own experiences where weekends have got in the way of discharging people back into the care of their loved ones. This is something my family had to grapple with towards the end of my dad's life. He was never happy in hospital, and I feel that the \$200 million to help increase the number of patients discharged over weekends will be something that is very warmly welcomed.

Locally, there has been a lot of interest in the announcement of the new hospital avoidance hub in the northern suburbs. I understand that no decision has been made on where it will be located, but I am pleased that a number of exceptional property owners have approached me for details on how they can express their interest in housing the facility.

As you can see, I am encouraged by this year's budget. It is a blueprint that aligns closely to the Labor pillars of health, education, housing and the cost of living. It is a true honour that the public have given us this trust to act in their best interests. I feel this has been repaid and, with this in mind, I am pleased to commend the Appropriation Bill to the house.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:11): I, too, rise to make a contribution on the most recent budget handed down. As a regional MP and as a representative in this chamber, I stand here quite disappointed. There were a few small nuggets of hope, but from what I have seen in this place for a number of years now, and as one who has been here longer than most, it was a budget handed down by a Labor government that was quite typical of what Labor do.

Sadly, the regions have been cast aside. I understand that the philosophy of Labor is about looking after marginal seats or city-centric rhetoric. It has a typical flavour about it, and that is that there are those who receive and those who do not. Reflecting on what was a very short stay in government, the Liberal state government can hold their head high because I think there was a much better balance of governing for all of South Australia, not just for the city, not just for the country, but there was a fair balance to undo what had been forgotten for 16 long years.

Our infrastructure network had been left with a significant backlog in maintenance. We saw one of the largest infrastructure projects in the state's history—that is, the north-south corridor—partially started and partially finished. What we are seeing now is that the government are kicking that can down the road and that has seen a significant long-term impact on the progress of that project.

These large infrastructure projects are very hard to start and very hard to continue, but they are even harder to restart once they have been pushed aside. What we are seeing now is that the north-south corridor project has been held up for all sorts of political reasons, and that is because there is a priority given elsewhere: there is a priority given to election commitments and there is a priority given to those who were promised more at the most recent state election. That is something we will reflect on for many years to come.

I do not want to prattle on about how bad it is and what the priorities are, but it is a fact of where we saw the priorities lie. One of the biggest hurdles that every South Australian, every

Australian, is facing at the moment is a state government that has the ability to create positivity, whether it be the cost of living—everyday householders, everyday people are doing battle with making ends meet, making sure that their remuneration covers the cost of living, covers the cost of doing business, covers the cost of a satisfactory education system—or making sure that when we need a doctor, when we need the health system, it is there to service our needs, and making sure we all have a roof over our head.

One of the really important aspects lacking in the budget is the ability to give the primary sector recognition and acknowledgement of just how hard it is. They, too, have those day-to-day living expenses. The cost of doing business has never been greater than it is today. Not just here in South Australia but globally, it has become harder and harder. It is very evident now that in this most recent budget there is almost nothing for people living in the regions and, just as importantly, for those people who produce our food, produce the fibre, make sure that every South Australian has three meals on the table a day, make sure that food is affordable, make sure that we have a workforce that can rise to the occasion, make sure that we have a workforce that is able to plant, pick, process, pack and get it to market. We are seeing a lot of headwind there.

We have seen almost nothing in the budget, bar some exaggerated biosecurity announcements. There was a headline that there will be \$25 million extra for biosecurity to combat one of the world's most invasive species, which is Queensland fruit fly, yet once we break down that announcement there is very little to see. There is a reannouncement of some of that funding, there is about \$10 million of money that would be considered new money, but once we look at the obligation of the government there is a large component of a federal tip-in and a diminishing amount of money from the state government for their responsibility to keep biosecurity as an absolute priority, particularly with food production in South Australia.

Having a fruit fly free status for many years now is being questioned. I acknowledge the good work the current government has done, the ongoing good work by a former Liberal government, because it is an invasive species that, if we do not continue to have the eradication programs in place, will take over. It will change the way we live our lives in ways we cannot understand. Looking across the border—my community lives on the border—there is not a backyard fruit tree that is not infested by Queensland fruit fly, and there is not a vegetable patch not impacted by the Queensland fruit fly.

If we reflect on commercial orchards, commercial crops, it is coming at great cost to have that fruit, those vegetables, that produce, treated. I say to every person in this chamber that we as legislators have a responsibility. As biosecurity legislators, we must continue the fight. The eradication agenda must continue so that we have a competitive advantage when we go into our markets, whether it be a domestic market, a global market or international markets. We have to continue to have that advantage, and that competitive advantage is about being fruit fly free.

It is about having a status of area of freedom so that we have an advantage over our competitors, so that when we put our product into a market at a price we do have that advantage. It is pertinent for the government of the day to continue to satisfactorily fund those biosecurity programs. I cannot emphasise enough that we must have it as a priority, we must have it as an agenda item and the Treasurer must continue to honour the reputation that South Australia has long stood by, that is, having that fruit fly free status.

Again, we look at the ability for a government to promote our product into interstate and international markets, and it is about how we better serve our economy. I am privileged to have the trade and investment portfolio. As a shadow minister, it is pertinent for me to remind the minister on a day-to-day basis that we have to do more. It is one of the most important portfolios as an economic driver. When we are exporting products, we are bringing new money into our economy. When we are selling products into existing markets or ongoing markets, it is putting new money into pay packets, it is putting new money into investment, it is putting new money into the technologies that we need to be globally competitive in.

Sadly, we have seen very little in the way of government putting money into and investing in our food production, in our markets and in making sure that we do have satisfactory representation on our global shores, in our global markets, in those new markets or emerging markets that we so

desperately need to hang onto or grow. Every other competitor internationally is also looking into those markets to get their produce into their warehouses, onto their shelves and onto consumers' tables. That is why we need that competitive advantage.

It is also very important that when we are opening up new global trade offices, when we are opening up new understandings of what the world is calling for, we are looking at ways we put more protein into some of those emerging markets or emerging economies. It is more important than ever that we learn how to grow better protein, that we learn how to grow more protein, but we need to learn how do it better and how to do it cheaper. In other words, how do we be more globally competitive?

I think it is very important that the government of the day has a much straighter focus on how we drive our economy. We talk about hydrogen plans, we talk about defence, we talk about all sorts of longwinded projects that are a long, long way away. They are not renewable. We look at some of the government's priorities, particularly with defence, with energy, particularly with hydrogen. What we need is the ongoing commitment to a renewable commodity, which is food, which is the primary production, which is exactly what the regions of South Australia put on our tables every day.

I cannot emphasise enough that we need to earmark more money and that our government's commitment needs to be about producing and making sure our primary producers, who predominantly live in the regions of South Australia, have the tools in the toolbox not only to grow the food but to get it to market, making sure that we have roads and infrastructure that are of a satisfactory standard and not just neglected, as we have seen in this most recent budget.

I have spoken about the primary sector in a little verse, but to attract people to our regions we need a satisfactory regional health system. Very little money in this most recent budget would see the very much-needed upgrade of our regional health system—hospitals, attracting doctors, attracting nurses, making sure that we have satisfactory ambulance networks, making sure that we have all of the health system in train not only in the city but also in the regions so that we can actually sustain a regional economy that was a growing regional economy. Only a short four years of a Liberal government saw that turn around from an ever-diminishing regional population that we saw leaving the regions for Adelaide.

South Australia is in a unique situation. As you know, Deputy Speaker, South Australia has one city and only a couple of satellite large country towns, those being Mount Gambier and Whyalla. That puts us at a disadvantage when we are looking for more stability in our regional centres and making sure that we have those health facilities needed, making sure that we have education programs in our regions, making sure that we do not just see technical colleges out there in the city—there is also a need for that education program to be in our regions. Some of the great educational institutions have historically been in regional South Australia. There does need to be a refocus, a readjustment, on making sure that the regions of South Australia are also given that ability to coexist.

As I have spoken about the cost of living, energy has been probably one of the biggest contributors to the increase in cost of living. I know that as of 1 July we are going to see up to a 30 per cent increase in our energy costs. In the great electorate of Chaffey, we are large consumers of power. The majority of that power consumption is used for re-lifting water. A lot of it is used for processing food, vegetables, horticulture, fruit, and also sustaining one of the great narratives within primary production—the wine industry, which uses large amounts of power.

I have constituents who are already receiving large requests by power companies for hundreds of thousands of dollars as a one-off cost to adjust. That is not about the cost of power; that is only about the supply of power. There has to be something that the minister within the government of the day can do. There has to be something that the Technical Regulator can be a part of to hold these power retailers to account.

As I have said, due to lifting water and the high cost of manufacturing and processing, food comes at a great cost. Not only is that passed down to consumers in some way, shape or form, but what we are seeing now is that the margin for primary producers is becoming so skinny that we are seeing a lot of questions being asked by banks and by an aged primary sector. That is really worrying me, as a member of this place who represents a large amount of primary production—a lot of small

family businesses, some 6,000. What we are seeing now is that there are a lot of questions being put into play, particularly within the wine industry.

I see that there is an emerging issue that every South Australian, every Australian, will feel the brunt of, and that is the engine room of the wine industry in Chaffey. The engine room of the wine industry is on its knees. The most recent vintage has seen large amounts of fruit right around the state—not just in the Riverland, not just in Chaffey—either left on the vine or harvested onto the ground. That is going to have a telling tale maybe not this year but in the vintages to come.

Obviously, we are feeling the effects of the COVID hangover, particularly with the middle class. What we are seeing now is that the cost of relief is going to hit that middle class even harder. Interest rates are having a profound impact on mortgage repayments and this, coupled with power, coupled with the cost of food, coupled with the cost of doing business, is going to see South Australia worse off under the current conditions. That is why I am calling on the government of the day to put vision into the way they run the state. Get the Treasurer to put some vision into his budgets, not just look at pet projects, not just look at marginal seats and not just look at a city-centric budget.

Again, what I am seeing is that the issue around the China fallout has had a profound impact on every economy that deals with China. China is still our largest trading partner, and we are very, very small fry, but we still rely heavily on inputs or imports from China. We have to make sure that this government, this state government, works better and more cohesively with our federal government.

I know that I have met with federal government counterparts over a number of meetings in recent weeks to look at ways that we can not only rekindle the relationships that we have with China, but diversify our markets, making sure that we are not totally reliant on one global economy, that we are reliant on many. As Australians, as traders we suck because we are reliant on sugar hits. We have existing markets that have been in play for many, many decades and yet we have sweeteners that come along and we drop our long existing relationships with countries for a new sugar hit; someone who pays a few dollars more, someone who is offering to take every piece of fruit that we have on the property.

I think we need to look at ways that we can diversify our economy more, and that is the job of the government of the day. That is a job of not only the state government, but working with the commonwealth government, working with the federal government, to making sure that we do take advantage of the Brexit, we do take advantage of the European Union; making sure that we have trade offices that have staff, that have the lights on; making sure that when we have delegations who go to those countries that there is a reception party there, there is someone there giving them a hand to making sure that South Australia is in better stead for growing our trading economy.

There is much more to be said, and I will do that at another time, but I think what we have seen is a city-centric budget that has very much disappointed me as a regional member of this place, and I look forward to the government of the day being more responsible when it comes to the state of South Australia, not just the city of South Australia.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES (PROTECTION OF PROSPECTIVE TENANTS) AMENDMENT BILL

Final Stages

Consideration in committee of the Legislative Council's amendment.

The Hon. A. MICHAELS: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment be agreed to.

I rise to advise the committee that the government supports the amendment that was made in the other place on 13 June. It was an amendment moved by the Hon. Robert Simms to the residential tenancies immediate priorities bill. The reason for that is that section 101 of the Residential Tenancies Act already allows for the Residential Tenancies Fund to be used for the purposes that are in the Greens' amendment from the other place.

More specifically, section 101 of the Residential Tenancies Act already provides for income derived from the fund to be applied towards a range of purposes, including education, certain research, more specifically for the benefit of landlords, tenants, rooming house proprietors, rooming house residents and park owners, and residents of residential parks in such ways approved by the commissioner and, more broadly, for any other purposes connected with, or arising under, the Residential Tenancies Act or the Residential Parks Act approved by the commissioner.

My advice is that the existing provisions of section 101, for which the fund may be applied, are already quite broad and could be applied towards tenant advocacy and representation, and the government is actually currently doing that. For example, AnglicareSA already receives funding for the resolution of tenancy disputes to provide financial counselling and also for advocacy services for vulnerable tenants.

I would like to put on record what a fantastic job Anglicare does to support tenants and many other services that Anglicare provides for vulnerable members of our community. I also want to put on record our recognition of the wonderful work done by other advocacy groups like RentRight, SACOSS, Shelter SA, Uniting Communities and other organisations that do already support tenants already and many vulnerable members of our community.

I also want to thank a number of organisations that provide advice and support to landlords and property managers, including the Landlords' Association and the Real Estate Institute of South Australia. As the minister, I will continue to support the great work that these organisations do and will continue to work with the commissioner as part of the broader review on the Residential Tenancies Act to ensure we are supporting these organisations to provide support, advice and advocacy to both tenants and landlords.

Speaking of landlords, I do want to note for the record of this place the position of the opposition and I want to acknowledge the opposition's support for the Greens amendment. I for one welcome the opposition's support for the creation of a union. I note that when the opposition spokesperson in the other place, the Hon. Michelle Lensink, spoke on this amendment she strongly advocated for the passing of this amendment that has the primary purpose that specifically called for using the Residential Tenancies Fund to support an industry association, that is, a union.

It is good to see that the government and the opposition can both agree on the importance of unions and using the Residential Tenancies Fund to support and advocate for tenants. However, we believe it is important that we use the Residential Tenancies Fund to support landlords and tenants and it is important we get that balance right.

That is why, as part of the broader reforms of the Residential Tenancies Act, which I will touch on briefly, the government will also be including in the draft bill a requirement that landlords distribute a prescribed fact sheet to tenants at the start of their tenancy. The aim of that fact sheet is for it to be drafted in plain language and very clearly articulate the rights and obligations of landlords, as well as the rights and obligations of tenants in moving into a new tenancy arrangement.

As members may be aware, the Premier and I recently announced that the government is now responding to the broader review of the Residential Tenancies Act with a draft bill, which is in progress at the moment, and taking greater action to support renters while also supporting landlords.

Some of the reforms we have announced include making it easier to have a pet in a rental; ending unfair evictions, by requiring landlords to provide tenants with a prescribed reason in order to end a periodic tenancy or not renew a fixed-term agreement; and, given the record low vacancy rates in the residential market in South Australia at the moment, we are proposing to increase the minimum notice period required from 28 days to 60 days to end a fixed-term tenancy. They are just some of the broader reforms we will be including in the broader bill that is being drafted at the moment and I will introduce to the house at a later stage.

With that, I want to thank this house and those in the other place for the swift progress of this bill and we look forward to implementing the outcomes, which include, of course, banning rent bidding, prescribing the type of information a tenant is required to disclose on a rental application form and better protecting tenant information. I commend this bill as amended to the house.

Mr TEAGUE: I just briefly rise and note the minister's contribution. Clearly, the application of the income of the fund is appropriately directed as is set out in (a) and (b) respectively towards the cost of administering and enforcing the act and the operation of the tribunal—clear enough.

As we see in the paragraphs through to paragraph (f), they are really directed in principle towards education, projects that are directed for relevant purposes, research and for the benefit of those stakeholders. The amendment in what will be (ab) is directed more specifically than is currently set out to those associations and organisations that the commissioner is going to need to be satisfied are, as their primary purpose, doing the sorts of things that are contemplated in paragraphs (c) through (f), essentially.

To the extent it is observed that there might be a covering of the same ground, that is noted. Hopefully, the focus on the possibility more specifically to direct it towards an organisation is one that will provide us with opportunities in the future to reflect on the good work of Anglicare and others that are doing substantial work in this space and have done for a long time. I endorse the contribution of the minister in that way and otherwise indicate the opposition's support for the amendment as it has been returned to us in this place.

Motion carried.

APPROPRIATION BILL 2023

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL (Mawson) (12:41): I rise to support this bill and to congratulate the government on the budget in which the electorate of Mawson once again prospered by the delivery of funds to all sorts of projects and services across the almost 6,000 square kilometres of the seat that I proudly represent in this place.

Last week, I had the pleasure of hosting the entire cabinet on Kangaroo Island, as the Premier and all the ministers came over to listen and to meet with and to go on site visits with people, businesses, sporting organisations and other groups on Kangaroo Island to see firsthand how things go on the island. I must say that the response from the people of Kangaroo Island was overwhelmingly warm and welcoming. The forum on the Thursday night was terrific in terms of people getting up and thanking the government for various things we have done for them in our short time back in government.

We also heard a heart-wrenching story of a mum whose three-year-old child was misdiagnosed on the island and had to come to the Women's and Children's Hospital where they spent the best part of 23 days in a very bad way. You could feel the compassion from members of cabinet and also everyone in that room as our hearts went out to that woman.

Thankfully, the three year old made a recovery, but it is one those important stories you do not necessarily hear unless you go out and, in a way, expose the cabinet to any questions community members might want to ask. There is a microphone, there is no-one vetting who is going to get up, there is no-one vetting what the questions are going to be and there is no-one vetting what the statements are going to be. I was so proud to be there as almost the junction between the community that I represent and the cabinet that represents our party and all the people in South Australia. It was just so good.

I remember being here in opposition and lamenting the fact that the Liberals had dropped the whole idea of country cabinets. Their excuse was, 'Oh, we've got members from all around the state in here. We don't need to have country cabinets because we already represent country areas.' That is alright for the one member, but do you know what? I can come in here, I can ring up ministers, I can write to ministers, I can bring up in the party room the issues that we have in our area, but until the cabinet goes as a whole, the discussions do not occur.

We did this as a shadow cabinet as well. The shadow cabinet came down on 20 and 21 January 2020 during the bushfires, while those bushfires still raged across Kangaroo Island. It was a snap decision to bring all the shadow cabinet across. We go as a whole, as a collective, so that we can listen to those stories, we can do the site visits, we can have the meetings, we can see

and hear firsthand what those issues are and then, out of that, discussion happens between the ministers. The senior public servants are all there, and they have discussions as well.

I have been a part of this process since 2002. The first country cabinet I ever went to was at Taillem Bend in the electorate of the former Speaker, Peter Lewis. We went to his electorate in 2002. It was the fourth country cabinet that I have been a part of on Kangaroo Island—the first was as a media adviser, the second was as a parliamentary secretary, the third was as a minister, and this one last week was the first time we have had country cabinet where I have been the local MP. That is because the Liberal Party did not turn up; they did not come and listen.

Do you know what they did? After 16 years in opposition, after losing Kangaroo Island and the seat of Mawson by just 115 votes and after having generation after generation of Kangaroo Islanders faithfully voting Liberal, in their very first budget they took away the concession on motor vehicle registration. The hit to the budget was about \$1.3 million. The hit to Kangaroo Islanders was a doubling of registration on every vehicle, every trailer and every motorbike that they owned. When you are talking about people who have farms, that is a lot of vehicles.

It also drove the price of freight through the roof. For just one of the many freight carriers on Kangaroo Island, his registration bill went up \$70,000. That is just one person—\$70,000. As soon as that happened, I started getting a petition together. We had more than half the people of the island sign that petition. The then opposition leader, the now Premier, Peter Malinauskas, said that he would reverse that decision if we were elected.

I had election posters up all around Kangaroo Island saying, 'Vote for me and we will reintroduce the registration concession.' We had another lot of posters up as well. Some were saying, 'Standing up for Kangaroo Island: Leon Bignell,' which obviously I do, but the other one was '\$10 million for the Kangaroo Island Hospital.' Not only did we come up with the \$10 million but we have put another \$5 million in there as well, and yet the Liberal Party at the last election offered nothing to the people of Kangaroo Island in terms of looking after their health.

We heard from that young mum at the community forum about just how difficult things are. Despite the greatest intentions and efforts of the health professionals that we have on Kangaroo Island, it is an isolated community and it is sometimes difficult to be able to get all of the medical requirements that you might need. That is why we are putting in this extra \$15 million. That is why we have returned maternity services, birthing services, to the people on Kangaroo Island.

It was great to join with the Premier and the health minister. The health minister, I have to say, is the best guy out in terms of, if I pick up the phone and say, 'We've got this issue,' he always seems to find a solution. We met young Daisy and Adam, these little tiny babies who were born only in the past few weeks on Kangaroo Island. It is a pretty small club to be in, to have a passport that says 'Born in Kingscote', and yet for some time it was not available to expectant parents on Kangaroo Island to have their children born there. They had to come off island several weeks before the due date and have the baby a long way from their family and friends.

One of the great joys in life for those lucky enough to become parents is having your family around you at that time to celebrate this creation of new life and everything else. Can you imagine being from an isolated community like Kangaroo Island where that happens off-island and by the time you get back the grandparents, the aunts and uncles and the siblings of the newborn are really gagging to meet the new one in the family. That is why we do country cabinets: to get out, to listen to people, to talk with people, to learn.

The member for Chaffey said that the Liberal state government can hold its head high for governing for all of South Australia. That is what he said in here. I think they are still tone deaf to the electorate, because if you look at what happened at the last election eight of their MPs lost their seats. If you look at not only the majority that we have in here in terms of numbers of seats won, based on the number of voters that we have, that is one thing, but let's have a look at the land mass of South Australia. We have about a million square kilometres in South Australia. It is a big state, bigger than a lot of European countries, and between the Labor Party and the Independents we hold over 70 per cent of that land mass.

That is 700,000 square kilometres out of a million square kilometres, and yet the member for Chaffey says that the Liberal state government can hold its head high, and he said that Labor is a city-centric government. Well, I do not think that. When you look at the members of cabinet, you have the member for Stuart, who defeated a sitting Deputy Premier to win that seat, and that goes from Port Pirie, Port Augusta, all the way up to the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales border. So he is in the cabinet and he has a fair say. We have Clare Scriven, from another place, in the cabinet, and she is from Mount Gambier.

If you look around our caucus, we have the member for Giles, whose electorate goes from Whyalla, West Port Augusta, Coober Pedy, all the way to the Northern Territory border and across to the Western Australian border. Were you really the government that looked after all of South Australia? That is a question that you probably need to ponder and ask yourselves. I can certainly tell you that there was a lot of love in the room for our cabinet last Thursday and during those site visits that the cabinet did on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. I told a story there, which I have told in this place before, about the first time I turned up as a local MP having won the seat of Mawson by 115 votes.

The first time I turned up on Kangaroo Island as the sitting MP I went out and got in my car the next day, drove around the corner, something felt funny with the car. I get out and yes, sure enough, I had a flat. Then I looked and I had two flats. I went around the other side, I had three flats. Mark Turner at Turner's tyres said, 'Lucky you didn't get four because I have only got three types of that tyre on the island at the moment, so you would have been stuck here for a little bit longer.'

I have to say after that less than warm reception I was probably not looking forward to that so much. But, as I said in that room the other night, I did not want that to define me, nor did I want it to define the community of Kangaroo Island, because I knew they were good people. I had spent a lot of time with them and I had decided not to put my hand up to go into the shadow cabinet because I wanted to spend more time with them.

I am so glad I did because we had those terrible bushfires of 2019-20—an awful summer—and a time where, again, these people who think we are the city-centric ones, did not turn up and spend the sort of time you need to spend to get in with the community and find out how you can help. It was left to low-level public servants to help these people in their most desperate hour, and I do not think anyone will ever forgive them for that.

At the election last year, I was watching the results come in, and I got quite emotional to see those booths on Kangaroo Island that had never gone Labor's way, all four booths where people voted for us because of the fact that we listened to them on registration. Liberals, double it. We say we will return the concession, tick, we did it; \$10 million for the hospital, tick, we did it. We will be there, we will listen to people, we will do it, we have a track record. So for someone to come in here on the other side whose party has been absolutely humiliated from the city to the far-flung corners of this state, to say that we are the city-centric ones, I don't think so.

Let's look at the seats of Kavel, Independent; Mount Gambier, Independent; Yorke Peninsula, Independent. The member for Finnis is here—almost Independent—and you had a life and death moment there for those few days after the election. You shake your head, mate, but I know that Lou Nicholson—an excellent Independent candidate—almost prevailed in the seat of Finnis. It could have fallen to an Independent. Then, of course, we have the member for Stuart, who is also an Independent and who knocked off the Deputy Premier of the day.

I am really proud of our record. I am proud of all the money that is being invested into regional South Australia and, in particular, into the regional parts of my electorate. I am also really pleased with the continued investment and the expansion of projects which we had already funded back in 2017 and which were then put in the slow lane. In fact, they actually pinched a lane off the Main South Road duplication. It was going to be three lanes.

I tell you what, here is a tip for the people who gave us the one-way expressway: do not come down south and say, 'We've got this great idea. We're going to take your four-lane road and make it a three-lane road, and we're going to give you one lane in one direction and two in the other direction,' because, I tell you what, you are looking for a 16 per cent swing against you when you do that—oh, that is right, you did do it.

Talking about roads, we are going to have a veloway along the Main South Road duplication. One of my mates has spent a lot of time on South Australian roads because he is an endurance rider. I want to send a big cheerio and a big congratulations to Rupert Guinness. I was up in the wee hours of the morning watching him complete the hardest cycling race on earth—almost 3,000 miles from one side of the USA to the other. Rupert and I have known each other since 1994—we met when we were both covering cycling, and I was living in Europe and had a few years in Switzerland working as a freelance journo—and we met down in Palermo in Sicily covering the world cycling championships.

Rupert is one of the nicest blokes you will ever meet. Everyone—all the teams, all the riders—loved talking to him because they had so much respect for him. We had been working together in various roles as journalists, competing against each other for stories but always getting on very well when it came to pizzas in Palermo and maybe the odd beer or cerveza in Spain, and we had a few of those, as well as the birras in Italy. I was the media manager for the Australian cycling team at the world championships in Perth in 1997 and Rupert was over there; again, he was a delight to work with.

Rupert is now an author. He has also been doing ultra cycling for a long time now, and he rode those 2,934 miles in 12 days, 19 hours and 41 minutes. His pit team need a huge round of applause and congratulations because, when Rupert's neck was slumped forward, they had to devise ways to keep his neck upright, such as bike tubes. They ended up gaffer-taping his neck so that his head would stay upright. This is the pain you go through to ride from one side of the USA to the other.

To Rupert, from all your mates back here in Australia, well done. I hope you have had a big sleep and you are having a couple of quiet beers today. Congratulations on coming first in the age 60 to 69 men's category. It was tremendous, and you are only the eighth Australian to achieve this great epic feat of riding across the USA in the hardest possible endurance event known to cycling. To your teams at Trek bikes, Shimano and Wilson Asset Management, I am sure you could not have done it without them either.

On that note, I fully support this bill and all the great improvements we are going to see right here in South Australia.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Basham.

Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:00.

SUPPLY BILL 2023

Assent

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

NATIONAL PARKS AND WILDLIFE (WOMBAT BURROWS) AMENDMENT BILL

Assent

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (SEXUAL OFFENCES) BILL

Assent

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

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

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

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

By the Speaker—

Office of the Inspector—Review of the investigation and prosecution of Mr John Hanlon—
Report 2023-01

By the Premier (Hon. P.B. Malinauskas)—

Ministerial Staff—Report 2022-23

By the Deputy Premier (Hon. S.E. Close)—

Summary Offences Act 1953—

Dangerous Area Declarations return pursuant to section 83B Report for Period
1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023

Road Block Authorisations return pursuant to section 74B Report for Period
1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023

Rules made under the following Acts—

Supreme Court Act 1935, District Court Act 1991, Environment, Resources and
Development Court Act 1993, Youth Court Act 1993, Magistrates Court—
Joint Criminal—No. 2

Supreme Court Act 1935, District Court Act 1991, Magistrates Court—Uniform
Civil—No. 9

Supreme Court Act 1935, District Court Act 1991, Youth Court Act 1993,
Magistrates Court—Uniform Special Statutory—No. 1

By the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport (Hon. A. Koutsantonis)—

Regulations made under the following Acts—

Passenger Transport—Metropolitan Taxi Fares—No. 2

Road Traffic—Miscellaneous—Expiation Fees—No. 2

By the Minister for Energy and Mining (Hon. A. Koutsantonis)—

Regulation made under the following Act—

Mining—Prescribed Costs

By the Treasurer (Hon. S.C. Mullighan)—

Regulation made under the following Act—

Fisheries Management—Fees Notice—Fishery Licence and Boat and Device
Registration Application and Annual Fees—No. 3

By the Minister for Education, Training and Skills (Hon. B.I. Boyer)—

Regulations made under the following Acts—

Education and Children's Services—Fees Notice—No. 2

South Australian Skills—Fees Notice—No. 2

Parliamentary Committees

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Mr BROWN (Florey) (14:05): I bring up the 30th report of the committee, entitled New Edwardstown Ambulance Station.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Mr BROWN: I bring up the 31st report of the committee, entitled New Norwood Ambulance Station.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Mr BROWN: I bring up the 32nd report of the committee, entitled New Woodville Ambulance Station.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Mr BROWN: I bring up the 33rd report of the committee, entitled Flinders Medical Centre, New 20-Bed Inpatient Ward.

Report received and ordered to be published.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call questions without notice, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Becca Adams, a year 11 work experience student from Westminster School, a guest of the member for Gibson. Welcome to parliament.

Question Time

AMBULANCE RAMPING

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:06): My question is to the Premier. When will the Premier fix ramping? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: The Malinauskas Labor government has delivered record ramping to South Australians. It has been reported that no beds have been available at any metropolitan hospital on 11 separate occasions alone this month. From 19 June, all our hospitals were Code White for five consecutive days.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:07): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As the Leader of the Opposition is well aware, and anybody who was paying attention to the state election is well aware, we made it plainly clear, repeatedly, throughout the election campaign that we wanted to fix ramping, and when we were asked 'What does fix ramping mean?' we said, 'We want to reduce ramping—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Hammond!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —to make sure that ambulances start rolling up on time.' I welcome the opportunity—

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

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —from the Leader of the Opposition to remind South Australians—

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —that last year—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —at the state election, when people were calling 000, even when it was a lights and sirens emergency only 33 per cent of the time would the ambulance roll up on time.

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

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I can't imagine how frustrating—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —it would have been, whether you were an ambulance officer—

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Chaffey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —or a loved one calling 000 on behalf of the patient, how disconcerting and frustrating it would be to call 000—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —in the knowledge that two things were happening at the same time—

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

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta is warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —in the first instance that someone called 000 and two-thirds of the time the ambulance wouldn't roll up and at the very same time that the then government wasn't even acknowledging that the problem exists.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That's why—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Florey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That's why we went to the election and said—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Adelaide!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: 'We acknowledge the problem exists and we've got a plan—

The Hon. D.G. Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Unley!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —to do something about it!' That is why progressively, since the election, we have been employing hundreds and hundreds more people to be able to work within our health system to actually be able to make a difference. The question from the leader—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Premier, please be seated.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There are repeated interjections from a number of members, particularly the member for Morialta, who is on a warning. The member for Chaffey is now on one warning, the member for Hammond is on one warning and the member for Unley is on one warning. I appreciate that interjections have become, regrettably, a feature of parliamentary debate, but it is impossible presently to hear the Premier. The Premier has the call.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We have progressively since the election been rolling out a lot more resources within our health system, consistent with our election commitment, and that begs the question: well, how are we going? Let's look at the most recent statistics.

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Last week, when we look at ambulance response times, remembering—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta! Member for Chaffey! Member for Florey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —that at the election one-third of the time the ambulance would roll up on time, last week for the very same metric, for those particular call-outs to which we are referring, that number has improved—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —to 62.4 per cent. So we have come close—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —to doubling the likelihood of the ambulance rolling up on time.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I can't think of a greater contrast between those opposite and this government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta is on a final warning.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We are employing hundreds more doctors, hundreds more nurses, hundreds more ambulance officers. We've got hundreds more beds opening up in the system—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Yes, hundreds more millions being spent on our health system, and the result in 15 months—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Morialta! Member for Frome!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The result in 15 months is that we have doubled the improvement when it comes to ambulance response times.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The counterfactual—

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond is on a final warning.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —is imagine if none of that had occurred.

Mr Brown interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Florey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: If none of that had occurred, what we would be in today is a situation where we would be stuck on 32 per cent of the time ambulances rolling up on time. We've got it up to 62 per cent.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Elder, order! The member for Morialta is on a final warning, the member for Chaffey is on two warnings and the member for Hammond is on two warnings. The member for Hartley is on one warning. The member for Florey is on a warning.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Schubert, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery today, as well, of year 12 legal studies students from Xavier College, who are guests of the member for Light. Welcome to parliament and thank you for joining us.

Question Time

NORTHERN ADELAIDE LOCAL HEALTH NETWORK

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:12): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister explain the performance of emergency departments in the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: The 2023-24 state budget shows that only 19 per cent of patients presenting with an emergency to hospitals in the north are being seen within the clinically recommended time frame of 10 minutes, backwards from 48 per cent the year prior.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:12): I thank the member for Schubert for her question. The member references whether or not the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network is meeting within that recommended time. What she doesn't mention is that for the full four years of the previous government they didn't meet that recommended time either—which is very interesting.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Florey! Member for Newland! Member for Unley! The minister has the call.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: As the Premier outlined—

Ms Savvas interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Newland!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —we are a government that acknowledges there are issues in our healthcare system that need to be addressed. We aren't doing what was the previous plan—which was cutting frontline staff, making nurses redundant during a global pandemic, bringing in corporate liquidators to cut the budget. What we are doing instead is hiring additional doctors and nurses and expanding our hospitals and putting in place more beds.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morialta is on a final warning.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert! The minister has the call. Order! Member for Hartley, we will come to you and your adornments today.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: When it comes to the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network and the Lyell McEwin Hospital and Modbury Hospital, what we need is additional inpatient beds—and that's exactly what we are delivering and what our plan is to deliver. Of course, we can't click our fingers and put in place these beds because there were no plans for these beds to be put in place when we came to office, but it's great news that anyone can come up—

Ms Stinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Badcoe!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —to the Lyell McEwin Hospital—

Ms Clancy interjecting:

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

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert! You have asked the question, the minister is answering.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: It's great news that anyone can now go to the Lyell McEwin Hospital and see the crane that's massively at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, which signals that construction has started on 48 extra beds at the Lyell McEwin Hospital.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Badcoe! Member for Adelaide! The minister has the call.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Anybody here who is serious about this issue understands that its critical component in terms of making sure that people can either get responses in the community to 000 calls through our ambulances, or people who arrive at our emergency departments can be seen on time, is making sure that the inpatient capacity is there so that people don't get stuck inside our emergency departments waiting for a bed.

That is the critical component. It means that when people get stuck waiting for a bed they can't come in from the waiting room, they can't come in from the ambulance and clearly people then don't get seen on time. That's why we need those 48 additional beds at Lyell McEwin, that's why we need those 550 additional beds right across the system—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —and that is what we are delivering. There is no alternative strategy, there is no alternative plan whatsoever—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Badcoe is warned! The member for Florey is warned!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: The only alternative seems to be going back to the bad old days of cuts, cuts, cuts—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —of making our frontline staff redundant in our healthcare system, as opposed to what we are doing—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Minister, please be seated.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morialta can depart under 137A and the member for Newland can join him—for the remainder of question time. The minister has the call.

The honourable members for Morialta and Newland having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: It is fantastic to see that development happening at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, and that will soon be joined by additional beds that will be built—44 additional mental health beds—at Modbury Hospital as well. We recognise that a critical component of access block and bed block in the system is people waiting for mental health beds in our system as well. To get people treated faster at the front door we need those additional beds at the back door, and that's exactly what we are delivering.

SOUTHERN ADELAIDE LOCAL HEALTH NETWORK

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:17): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister explain the performance of emergency departments in the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: The 2023-24 state budget shows that of all patients presenting to our emergency departments in the south, only 24 per cent are seen on time, that is, less than one in four people.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:17): Once again, clearly under the four years previous they didn't meet those targets either, and once again—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Once again, the critical need that we have at Flinders Medical Centre and Noarlunga Hospital is more inpatient beds to make sure that people don't get stuck in the emergency department, which is what happened. The alternative plan that was tried and failed previously was to close inpatient beds, convert them to emergency department beds, which an independent report commissioned by the previous government just said made the situation worse.

We have an alternative plan, which is to expand the number of beds quite dramatically across the southern network. In fact, at our election we promised 24 additional beds at Flinders and 24 additional beds at Noarlunga. Upon coming to office and seeing how bad the situation had become, how big the challenge was in terms of addressing the lack of inpatient beds, we have now gone substantially further in terms of our commitments.

Mrs Hurn: And look what it's delivering.

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Instead of delivering 24 beds at Flinders Medical Centre, our budgeted plan is now to deliver 132 beds at Flinders Medical Centre, a vastly substantial increase in terms of the capacity of that hospital. Instead of 24 beds at Noarlunga Hospital, we are now going to be delivering 48 beds at Noarlunga Hospital—the biggest capital upgrade that hospital has ever seen. Very clearly, whether you talk to any of the experts or any of the clinicians, they will tell you that the key critical problem that we have is the access block, that people get stuck in the emergency department waiting for a bed.

While we are in the process of delivering those major upgrades, as the member for Florey tabled a report from the Public Works Committee today, we are delighted that we are in fact fast-tracking a number of those beds at Flinders Medical Centre to make sure that they can come on as soon as possible to make sure that we can get as much of that additional capacity as quickly as possible. Essentially, we are moving out the executive staff of the hospital to convert that area into inpatient space because we critically need those beds, because every day when you have people stuck in the emergency department, they can't get into those beds and that means other people can't get into them when they need them and that causes the delays in terms of people being seen.

This is a government that absolutely recognises the problem. We have a plan to address the problem. We don't have a plan in terms of closing beds like those previous; we don't have a plan in terms of cutting—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —and making our frontline staff redundant.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hartley is warned.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: We are increasing staff and we have already increased our staff by 550 in our first year of office and we need those additional beds, those additional staff, in terms of being able to get people through.

The other component, which we are thankful that the Treasurer was able to commit in the budget last sitting week, is in terms of additional staff to help the access block that happens in terms of people being discharged who otherwise are healthy to be discharged but get stuck waiting on the weekends. Having those additional doctors, additional allied health professionals who are able to make sure that people can get timely discharge from the hospital so that we can free up those beds means that people from the waiting room or the ambulances can come in and be seen at an appropriate time. These are the critical things that need to be done. There is no alternative plan as to what should be done except for cuts, cuts, cuts and we are not going to go down that path.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

OVERSEAS HEALTH WORKERS

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:21): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Have any health workers from the United Kingdom moved to South Australia to work in our health system this year and, if so, how many? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: The government announced a trucks and Twitter campaign to lure healthcare workers currently on strike in the UK. By comparison, the Victorian government actually put in over \$200 million to attract and retain their frontline healthcare workers in the budget in May this year.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:22): I know we continue to face this opposition to our attempts and our work that we are doing in terms of attracting and retaining staff in South Australia, but we are very ambitious in terms of getting more staff here in South Australia, as opposed to the previous plan of making our staff redundant across the system, which has trialled and failed.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: I have some very good news in relation to—

The Hon. N.F. Cook: They won't want to hear this.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: That's right, they won't want to hear this. I have some very good news, hot off the presses today—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The minister has the call.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —some very good news in terms of the work that we have been doing in terms of recruitment of doctors from around the world in that at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and The QEH we have now secured an additional 41 doctors who will be coming to South Australia to work at those hospitals between August and November this year, which is fantastic news. In fact,

of those 41, 23 of those are coming from the UK. That's fantastic news in terms of getting the best and the brightest from around the world to work in our hospitals here in South Australia.

In fact, I am advised by the Central Adelaide Local Health Network that this will mean that this will be the first time that their junior medical staff will be fully staffed since the onset of COVID some three and a bit years ago. That's a substantial improvement in terms of the number of doctors who will be working in our system. Obviously, that's very important in terms of the access to care and the issues for patients that we have been talking about as well.

NATIONAL VOICE TO PARLIAMENT

S.E. ANDREWS (Gibson) (14:24): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise the house on his position on the national Voice?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:24): I most certainly can, because I firmly believe there is a need for a national Voice to our federal parliament, just as I believe that there has been a need for a Voice to our South Australian parliament. I, for one, will do everything I can as Premier of this state to advocate for—

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia: How's the polling?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —a yes vote to our national parliament. I think there is a value to consistency of position—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections between the member for Hartley and the member for Hurtle Vale will cease.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I think when it comes to matters of principle, there is a value in consistency of position; there is a value in advocating for a cause regardless of what is occurring to the political wins of a particular moment in time. I am fervently of the view that a Voice to our parliament, at either a state or a federal level, can see to a greater degree of engagement with Aboriginal people regarding policies that affect them.

We have seen the tragic consequences, over many decades, of policies that are seeking to advance the interests of Aboriginal people but not having the effect that all have desired. All too often, that has been a function of a lack of engagement, a lack of them making a contribution to that public policy effort, which is why the Voice could be an exceptionally powerful tool to turn that around. I am not alone in this view. Not too recently, it was said in this place:

The national discussion about the needs for a First Nations' voice speaking to government and parliament has been gaining momentum, especially since the Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2017. There is a clear call for government at all levels to better engage with Australia's First Nations peoples and to find ways to formally include their voice at the highest levels of decision-making.

Those, of course, were the words of the member for Dunstan back on 13 October 2021. They say that if you change the government, you change the country; it is also true that if you change the leader, you change the party.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia: Watch them change Albo real quick.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That position of the member for Dunstan—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —which I agree with, of course is very different to the lack of clarity of the position of the current Leader of the Opposition, who said on 19 January that, 'Clearly as a party, we see a need for such a vehicle in respect to a Voice.' He also said, 'In a broad sense, we're supportive of an engagement body.' Then in February he went on to say something very, very different indeed. He said, 'There was a real worry amongst members of parliament on my side of

politics that this would be a third chamber competing with the lower and upper houses of parliament,' which we of course know is patently false.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Then on 20 April, the Leader of the Opposition said:

I suspect in the coming weeks I'll happily make a statement on how I'll vote because I think people would be interested to know what their alternate premier thinks on this, but I'm not quite at that point yet.

The Leader of the Opposition seems to be moving around all over the place in respect of the Voice, which is his prerogative—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Flinders!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —and he is entitled to adopt a position that he so chooses.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Schubert! Member for Hammond!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: But just so everyone in South Australia is clear, ever since the Uluru Statement from the Heart was established my position and my party's position has been to support that statement, to deliver it in a practical sense. That is why we delivered a Voice to Parliament in South Australia for the first time anywhere in the nation, and why on this side of politics we will be campaigning for the Voice when the referendum comes later this year.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Hartley has been consistently interjecting. One approach is to turn to 137A; another is to have him explain why it is he is dressed the way he is today. Member for Hartley, rise and address the house.

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA: If you mean my scarf, it is because MetroStars unfortunately beat Campbelltown on the weekend.

The SPEAKER: And you lost a bet. I call the member for Frome.

KANGAROO ISLAND PAEDIATRIC SERVICES

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:28): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Has the minister taken any action to address paediatric services on Kangaroo Island? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: On 22 June at a public forum, Kangaroo Island mother Claire reported to the minister that her child's ruptured appendix was misdiagnosed as she pleaded for paediatric and diagnostic services.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:29): Thank you very much, and thanks to the member for Frome.

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

The SPEAKER: Member for Mawson!

The Hon. G.G. Brock interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Frome!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Thank you very much, sir, and I understand that the member for Frome saw vision from the news in relation to our visit to Kangaroo Island last week and we had country cabinet in Kangaroo Island. As part of that, we have a community forum where people are able to ask questions of any nature to the cabinet. One of those questions was raised—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The interjections are making it difficult for us to hear the minister, who has the call.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: A mother did raise some serious concerns in relation to the care of her child at the Kangaroo Island hospital. I then spent a significant period of time meeting with the mother and also with officials from both the Department for Health and Wellbeing and the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network. We committed to the mother that we would make sure those issues in terms of the care of her child were properly investigated and that we would follow up with her. That work is now underway.

I understand the mother didn't necessarily want that to be dealt with publicly, and journalists who tried to question her, she wasn't keen to talk to, so I am clearly going to make sure that, in relation to how we respond to those issues, we do so in an appropriate manner. That is what the mother would like in this scenario. But I can assure the house that those concerns are being dealt with extremely seriously, and we will make sure that we properly investigate those concerns because clearly our ambition is to make sure that people right across South Australia are able to access the appropriate medical care when and where they need it.

We have already taken substantial action in relation to Kangaroo Island services. Since we came to office, there are now additional doctors, additional staff, who are available on Kangaroo Island providing care for that community than what was there previously. We will obviously treat this particular case with utmost seriousness and consider the response in relation to the investigation as it proceeds.

CYBERSECURITY

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (14:32): My question is to the Minister for Small and Family Business. How is the state government supporting local small businesses to improve their cyber safety?

The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (14:32): Thank you to the member for Waite for her question and for her support of local businesses in her area. It's a good question for today because it is World Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day, which is a really great opportunity for us all to be thanking our small and family businesses for their contribution to our economy and to our local community. This year's UN theme is Small Business Matters, and indeed it does. I encourage all members to support and promote their local businesses in their electorates, particularly today.

We know that cyber attacks are on the rise. Beyond the high profile cases that we have obviously heard of in the media, we have some new data out from the Australian Bureau of Statistics that shows that 22 per cent of businesses across the country had experienced a cyber attack in the 2021-22 financial year. That compared with only 8 per cent in the 2019-20 year, so that is a substantial increase and I suspect the 2022-23 figures are going to be another increase on that.

Last week, I represented South Australia at the Data and Digital Ministers Meeting, where we were told that the federal Albanese government has appointed Air Vice-Marshal Darren Goldie as Australia's first Cyber Security Coordinator. He is going to be supported at the federal level by a National Office for Cyber Security within the Department of Home Affairs.

We know, as South Australia prepares to play a key role in the AUKUS security partnership, including manufacturing nuclear subs here in South Australia, it is more important than ever that supply chain businesses are equipped to mitigate their cybersecurity risk. Digital and cybersecurity knowledge were consistently raised as areas of concern during our statewide engagement that we

undertook with small business owners after we set up the Office for Small and Family Business last year.

Many small business owners said that implementing a cybersecurity plan was, to them, overwhelming. They didn't view themselves as valuable targets for cyber attacks, even though a majority (62 per cent) said they were storing their financial information digitally. Alarming, 68 per cent of respondents said they wouldn't know what to do if their business was subject to a cyber attack. That's something we urgently need to deal with as a state and as a country. It is something I advocated for commonwealth support for at the Data and Digital Ministers Meeting, but we are doing something here at home as well.

To counter this trend, the Malinauskas government has provided a \$500,000 grant to the Australian Cyber Collaboration Centre, through the Office for Small and Family Business, to deliver the small business cyber uplift program. We want to make sure that cyber resilience is accessible, attainable and affordable. We really want to make it as easy as possible for small businesses to engage on this really important issue. Over 12 months, this program is going to equip small businesses with the skills and knowledge required to implement cybersecurity measures as part of their business operations.

The program will include one-on-one consultations, workshops, self-paced online learning modules and networking events. The program is designed to remove the uncertainty and burden for small business owners, coaching participants through the critical steps to implement cyber safe systems and processes. The Australian Cyber Collaboration Centre's ecosystem of industry specialists is uniquely positioned to provide up-to-date, essential cybersecurity education, and I want to thank Matthew Salier and his team for partnering with us on this important initiative.

South Australian businesses of all sizes are susceptible to cyber attack, and this proactive measure will ensure small business owners are able to protect their operations, their reputation and their customer information. The program will provide practical steps to secure our organisations in the digital world. I am pleased to announce that registrations will be available from tomorrow through the business.sa.gov.au website.

REGIONAL BIRTHING SERVICES

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:36): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister update the house on the status of regional birthing services? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: As of yesterday, birthing services in the country town of Whyalla were withdrawn indefinitely. On radio last night, the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch), Elizabeth Dabars, raised concerns about other country communities, like Waikerie, Victor Harbor and Gawler.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:37): Firstly, in relation to Whyalla, I am clearly concerned and disappointed in relation to the fact that there had to be a temporary suspension of birthing services at that hospital. I know both the Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network and the Department for Health and Wellbeing are working as fast as we can and also in conjunction with other local health networks to try to re-establish those services, which all come down to the midwifery workforce at that site.

I was also asked about the Waikerie birthing service. My advice was that that birthing service at Waikerie was closed under the Marshall Liberal government, so I am not sure what the question was in relation to that particular service.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: Clearly, though, right across regional Australia, birthing services are one of those services that needs constant vigilance in terms of being able to maintain those services, as I am sure the previous government found in relation to Waikerie. It's not just obviously

the midwives that are needed; it's the medical cover, in terms of obstetrics and also in terms of anaesthetics cover, that needs to be there, so there are a range of different services that need to be provided.

In terms of some good news on the birthing front, I can advise that we have now re-established birthing services on Kangaroo Island. These services faced a prolonged shutdown due to workforce shortages, and there was a lot of work that happened between the government and the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network, working the Women's and Children's Health Network as well, to re-establish those services on Kangaroo Island. The Premier and I were able to visit last week and meet a number of the parents who have been able to give birth on the island.

Clearly, that's a service where it is not one hour down the road to the next service when you are isolated on an island, and therefore it was a critical need in terms of the isolation of mothers on Kangaroo Island to re-establish those services. I want to thank all of the team who have done that, who have put that work together. Obviously, there is a lot of work now that needs to happen in relation to Whyalla services and also work in terms of maintaining those other services right across regional South Australia.

WHYALLA HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SERVICE

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:39): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Will the government incentivise the recruitment of midwives to Whyalla? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: As of yesterday, birthing services in Whyalla were withdrawn indefinitely. CEO of the Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network, Craig Packard, said on radio, 'It's about recruiting. We are certainly in discussions with applicants, agencies and other hospitals. We certainly welcome any interest or contact from anyone that knows someone that would be interested to come and work in Whyalla.'

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:40): Yes, this government has put in place incentives recently in relation to relocation expenses, which is up to \$15,000 in terms of people to relocate for their expenses in relation to regional areas. As I said, in relation to Whyalla, there is substantial work that is being undertaken in relation to re-establishing midwifery cover to enable those birthing services to continue in Whyalla, because we recognise that that's a significant hospital and there is an appropriate desire and need from that community to maintain those services.

OUTER AREAS REGISTRATION CONCESSION

The Hon. L.W.K. BIGNELL (Mawson) (14:41): My question is to a great friend of Kangaroo Island, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the minister update the house on the outer areas concession?

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:41): I thank the member for this important question, and it was great joining him and my cabinet colleagues on Kangaroo Island last week. One of the key election commitments the member for Mawson insisted we take to the last election was to reintroduce the outer areas concession—an initiative that targeted some of the most vulnerable communities for cost-of-living assistance. Some political genius, some master strategist, on the now opposition benches thought it was a good idea to remove this concession. What genius could be at work to think it was a good idea to hit some of the most regional remote communities, from a political party that professes to be of the regions?

An honourable member: 3D chess players.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: 3D chess players—I can't compete with the political prowess of such people. This is really quite masterful. It was a decision that saw registration costs

for Kangaroo Island and other remote areas increase overnight by 50 per cent. What a genius move! It was 50 per cent for light vehicles and 40 per cent for heavy vehicles that were eligible for the scheme.

However, effective from 1 July 2022, after the change of government and after a decisive election result, which saw Kangaroo Island for the first time in its history endorse a Labor candidate—a remarkable result. In fact, I remember in 1993 there were some booths where Labor only scored one vote, and Michael Atkinson and myself were trying to identify the one person who voted Labor in that booth so that we could thank them personally. But I think now the reverse might be true.

Today, I can inform the house that in the first 12 months of operation that scheme has benefited 12,623 vehicle registrations across the state, saving regional communities just over \$3.1 million. Specifically, for the people of Kangaroo Island, 5,411 vehicle registrations have benefited from the reintroduction of the scheme, returning to that island \$1.2 million in precious money that they can spend on cost-of-living relief. That is a remarkable result—entirely on a result of the election of this government based on the advocacy of their local MP who fought for them, who fought for them day and night, and that MP is the member for Mawson.

That's more money back into the pockets of the people of Kangaroo Island, Coober Pedy and Roxby Downs—again, another advocate, the member for Giles. Not only is this initiative providing some relief to our remote communities, as I previously informed the house, but this initiative is also supporting local small businesses. The member for Mawson has informed me that a trucking company in his electorate will save up to \$70,000 per year on registration costs—so much for the party opposite being the party of lower costs on business.

I thank the member for Mawson and the member for Giles for their continued advocacy on this issue since 2020 in making sure that a Labor Party in opposition took to the election this policy to reverse this genius piece of tactical political advantage moved by some genius opposite who thought it would be a good idea to attack regional communities in this way. What an appalling decision by members opposite. What a mean-spirited and small decision made by members opposite, mean-spirited and arrogant, people who thought maybe the second term was already won.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Mawson!

CBD CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:45): My question is to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. Have rates of crime and antisocial behaviour increased in the CBD over the last year, and has the minister received any feedback from local businesses?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:45): I am happy perhaps to touch on the second part and get directly to the point of the shadow minister's question regarding statistics as well as the antisocial behaviour. The feedback from city traders is very clear: they are very pleased with the significant response the government has made, along with SAPOL, to increase the police presence in our CBD.

That response is very clear to anyone who may have walked in or walked out of this building and up North Terrace and around the CBD this morning. That is really important because we know that so much of the behaviour that is leading to those traders I meet with regularly, whether it be larger hospitality and tourism providers right down to smaller businesses—it is the sense of wellbeing in our CBD. We as a government and city traders want a vibrant CBD; I could even accuse the opposition of wanting a vibrant CBD. Whether it be major events or whether it be workers returning to the CBD, we want people in the CBD to be here enjoying the best that our CBD has to offer.

With that, it is absolutely critical that those people who are working in the CBD, enjoying their time in the CBD, feel safe—feel welcomed but also feel safe. Antisocial behaviour often, by its very definition, does not meet a criminal threshold. There is a visible presence of police in our CBD, police who are from a variety of operational specialities, including the Licensing Enforcement Branch, mounted operations, the SRS and road traffic section. There are also additional assets in our CBD, including all-terrain vehicles and, of course, our beloved police greys.

That is very much around providing a sense of wellbeing, a sense of safety, and dissuading and disrupting that antisocial behaviour. Sadly, much of this antisocial behaviour is influenced by factors such as alcohol and homelessness. Drugs, of course, have certainly never been lacking as a factor, but also very significant social disadvantage. I do not want to lose sight of that social disadvantage that leads to this, hence why the suite of responses from this government is so important.

That is about disrupting. The police presence in the city is also about taking a zero-tolerance approach to matters that are of a criminal nature, whether it be violence or whether it be other offences of public disorder. It is recognising, as we do on this side of the house, that police do play, and have been playing for time immemorial in our CBD, a very important role when it comes to responding to this type of behaviour. Not always does antisocial behaviour lead to criminality, but at times and often it does, too. It is disrupting it before it occurs and it is ensuring there is a very firm and clear presence in our CBD when it does occur.

The heart of this is about supporting our community. It's not just supporting it with our response; it's also supporting it through budget. There is \$94 million in this state budget alone to put more police on the front line—180 new sworn police security officers—but also to get 900 cadets through our Police Academy in the next three years.

CBD CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:49): My question is again to the Minister for Police. Have additional police officers been allocated to the CBD and, if so, what is the cost and operational impact on SA Police? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr TELFER: Hours after the government dismissed recent concerns about antisocial behaviour and crime, it was reported that new resources were committed to dealing with this.

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:50): The additional police resources into our CBD have been scaled since late last year, late 2022. The member may be referring to the escalation of Operation Paragon resources that has been recently announced by the government. As for the total cost of that, I can't advise, and that will simply be because the costs will be borne as a real cost. It has been a response from the acting police commissioner to me in that resources are not an issue.

The very clear message that I, as minister, gave to the police was: 'Leave no stone unturned and leave no resourcing question unresolved to support our community in this endeavour.' The costs of this will be material. We won't know the costs until, of course, budgets are reported, or in the financial year next year, but the reality is that resourcing is not an issue. Cost is not an issue. The only priority of our government is to ensure that our police are supported in their endeavours on the front line.

CBD CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:51): Thank you to the Minister for Police. Supplementary: did the minister intervene to direct SAPOL to provide additional resources and, if so, when?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:51): I would give the member advice to read the Police Act and that would be very clear in his mind then around the ability for ministers of police to direct the statutorily independent police. If he hasn't read it—I know he hasn't read the budget papers—he should probably read the Police Act as well. This has been an ongoing matter of discussion between myself and the broader government. This isn't one agency that is charged with this. It is a matter that has the full attention of government, but my attention and my discussions with police have been extensive and will continue.

CBD CRIME AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:52): Additional supplementary to the Minister for Police: what are the targeted outcomes and time frames of any additional resources allocated to the CBD?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:52): I articulated the goals in my previous response and that is very clearly around disruption and response. There are no time frames, though. I can advise the member there are no time frames. Like all operational matters, these are reviewed in a dynamic way, but there are no time frames that have been set.

Parliamentary Procedure

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Torrens, I recognise the presence in the gallery today of members from the Adelaide TAFE women's education course, guests of the member for Reynell. Welcome to parliament.

Question Time

FOOD SECURITY BUDGET MEASURES

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (14:53): My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Can the minister advise how the state budget is providing support for food security and financial counselling now and into the future?

The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services) (14:53): Thanks to the member for Torrens for this question. I have visited her community and this has actually been a topic of conversation that we have had with local community members, not just there but across South Australia, especially in recent times, as the community is managing critical needs while times are tough.

Within the hundreds of millions of dollars in cost-of-living support, I am really proud that our budget has included \$5 million for financial counselling and food relief. The additional funding will deliver immediate support and help over the coming four years. The commitment begins with \$1 million in extra funding over two years for financial counselling outreach services in community centres. This builds on our 60 per cent boost to community centre funding and reinforces the assistance for local people, bringing people together in this place, offering help in the place where they live. The package also includes \$2 million over four years for Foodbank to assist their critical work, and a further \$2 million over four years for other food relief organisations.

This package follows announcements of support for school meals, reduced school charges, indexation of concession payments, and a new energy rebate worth up to \$500 per household for around half the homes in South Australia. The new package of financial counselling and food relief supports our broader work around emergency relief, balanced by building long-term capacity and resilience within individual families and their broader communities.

The Department of Human Services has been working alongside Wellbeing SA on the Secure Food Systems Review. This is expected to be completed by the end of this year and will guide our future plans in relation to this type of work. Food security is a critical determinant of health, and food relief is an essential part of the service system, providing an immediate response to those in financial crisis. For many, food insecurity is a chronic rather than short-term issue.

The Food Centre reports unprecedented levels of demand for services, and many organisations are telling us about first timers who have never needed help until now. Foodbank reports that 50 per cent of their recently presenting clients are in employment and 30 per cent of those have mortgages. These kinds of reports show us we need to do more, but we also need new responses for new groups with different circumstances.

The ongoing work between the Department of Human Services and Wellbeing SA is exploring alternative models that support equitable, culturally appropriate, and dignified access to nutritious food. This work will support us to understand the best way to help communities experiencing high levels of food insecurity. The additional funds will help more South Australians navigate tricky financial situations and provide dignified and non-judgemental support.

In closing, I want to stress the importance of people feeling okay to ask for help. Wherever possible we want households to have the dignity of work and be able to provide for themselves and

make choices about how they spend their money but, when times are tough, it is important—more important than ever—for people to feel okay about asking for help. It is hard enough to deal with sudden increases in costs and loss of work without also loading yourself up with a perceived stigma about needing help.

A key role of government and the community is to support the people around us in challenging times, and that is exactly what the Malinauskas Labor government is doing.

CITY WEST AREA

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:57): My question is to the Minister for Police. Has the SAPOL Declared Public Precinct for the City West area expired? If so, will this be extended or expanded?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:57): I am happy to take that on notice. Of course, the Attorney-General is the responsible minister for that and it is entirely a matter for him. My advice on this is very clear, and I have urged and requested SAPOL to provide that application to the Attorney with haste. Any support they need from me, as minister, is there on offer.

MARRYATVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CROSSING

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (14:58): My question is to the Minister for Police. Will the government install advance warning signs or advance warning lights at the Marryatville High School crossing, and, if so, when?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:58): In respect of the early warning signals, I can advise the member that is likely to be completed by the end of this week. There has been some inclement weather in the last couple of days, but I am advised that, all things going well, it will likely be this week.

The red-light speed camera across Kensington Road, as the member would be very familiar with, does have a number of considerations. That advice is still forthcoming; however, I can give the member some comfort today in two respects. First, should advice be forthcoming from our experts that a camera can be accommodated—or, more importantly, should on balance be accommodated—we can do so in as quick a manner as possible. Red-light cameras aren't something we can go to Bunnings and purchase; they do take some very considerable time to purchase. That is work that is being undertaken simultaneously with advice coming through from experts.

The other matter that is for consideration that I can advise the member is that there are, as he would be aware, two existing red-light and speed detection cameras within about a kilometre stretch of Kensington Road down at the corner of Portrush and, I believe, Shipsters at the other end. I am seeking advice to ensure that if there were to be a further placement of a camera along that stretch that it would be consistent with policy. Of course, it is not appropriate practice to put detection cameras, particularly of a speeding nature, that close to each other.

I am also aware that there has been some testing of the vicinity in which cameras or detection devices are located before the courts. The advice I have asked for is to ensure that, if there were to be further placement of those cameras, or if there were to be changes to those cameras, it wouldn't be inconsistent with other decisions that the courts have made in adjudicating these matters.

I can also advise the member that, arising from this tragic but certainly could have been far more tragic collision at that intersection, there has been a full audit of 200 PACs for which remedial work has been undertaken. I think I have advised the house previously that some of that remedial work was as simple as the pruning of bushes or the maintenance of hedges, all the way through to some additional signage that is being undertaken at those particular sites.

For this particular pedestrian actuated crossing on Kensington Road at Marryatville High School, there has been also the imminent wrapping of poles in very high visibility red and white bunting or wrapping, again to add an additional layer of warning and visible warning for drivers who are undertaking that stretch of road. Again, to close, the advice is not before me yet, but we are ensuring that, when it is able to be actioned, no time has been wasted in the provision of the work to be undertaken.

PUBLIC SECURITY SERVICES

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:02): My question is to the Minister for Police. Have private security contractors been engaged by the government or SAPOL to provide public security services in the CBD and, if so, at what cost to the taxpayer?

The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (15:02): No, not that I am at all aware of. It's certainly not common practice for that to occur. I will take it on notice for further advice, but it's certainly nothing that I am aware of.

COMMUNITY SPORTING CLUBS

Ms STINSON (Badcoe) (15:03): My question is for the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing. How is the government supporting community sporting clubs throughout the state through investment in equipment and program costs?

An honourable member interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD (Reynell—Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (15:03): I thank the member for Badcoe for her question. I acknowledge her fierce passion and support for local clubs in her area—clubs that she regularly visits, including the Millswood Bowling Club, the Edwardstown footy club and a range of others she advocates for all the time in terms of support for the betterment of their club, for those who engage with particular clubs and for the local community in which they play their particular sport.

A couple of weeks ago, 502 clubs were informed that they had been successful in their application for funds through the Active Club Program. I congratulate every one of those clubs and acknowledge all the volunteers who prepared the applications for funds through the grant program. This round 51 of the Active Club Program was available for program and equipment funding and was assessed on a statewide basis.

Within this funding, clubs with 100 members and above were eligible for funds up to \$3,000 and clubs with less than 100 members were eligible for \$1,500. For the first time, recreational fishing clubs were deemed eligible for this grant funding stream. That follows a commitment that we put to people at the election. I was really pleased that that commitment has been honoured and that through that action our government has recognised recreational fishing as an active recreation activity eligible for recreation-related grant programs.

As I have spoken about in this house before, clubs were also able, for the very first time, to utilise their funding to help break down barriers around menstruation that can impact female participation in physical activity. This includes using grants for period products, flexible uniform offerings and menstrual health training and resources. I am really proud that our re-established Women in Sport Taskforce identified the need for this inclusion in the grant program and that we were able to quickly act upon that recommendation. Of the 502 successful organisations, I am really pleased to announce that 210 organisations indicated that they would utilise their funding, or part of their funding, for menstrual health initiatives.

Other eligible projects or purchases that clubs will undertake using this funding include sporting equipment; uniforms and protective gear; professional development for coaches or officials; and medical training, such as trainer courses, first-aid courses and concussion-in-sport education. They can use it for medical equipment, club promotion, technology associated with growing participation and playing venue maintenance of equipment. I'm really happy to advise the house that successful applicants were found right across the state, with 34 per cent in regional areas and 19 per cent in the greater metropolitan area.

Following the execution of these grants, I will be writing to all members and providing certificates for them to use to provide to successful applicants in their electorates. I really hope all members take up that opportunity to congratulate their local clubs and the hardworking volunteers within them. I also encourage members to encourage clubs in their areas to apply for the Active Club Program again when it opens later this year.

Sporting clubs are at the heart of communities, doing so much to bring people together. I thank the volunteers who make them so and the volunteers for their efforts in applying for this grant funding stream.

Grievance Debate

CAMPBELLTOWN CITY SOCCER CLUB

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (15:07): Today, I rise to talk about two powerhouse clubs that met at the weekend in the Federation Cup: Metro Stars and my beloved Campbelltown City Soccer Club. I have to say, what an absolutely fantastic game that it was.

It was, of course, also the same day that Campbelltown City Soccer Club celebrated its 60th anniversary, so it was a big day. That night, at the National Wine Centre, we celebrated the 60th year celebration of Campbelltown City Soccer Club. I want to take this opportunity to thank Don Leombruno, as Chairman of Campbelltown City Soccer Club, and all who assisted in putting together the *Golden Decade* booklet I have in front of me.

I start with Orazio Di Carlo and the various people who were involved in putting this together. Many were responsible for things like facts and stats: Aldo Perilli OAM and Ken Carter, the club photographer. I also thank Michael Menechella, junior director; Julie Ciccocioppo, secretary; Joe Rechicchi, the women's coaching team, past player and member; Keith Puyenbroek, the FSA Awards and Honours Committee Vice Chairman and leader of the museum group; Andrew Butler, the women's subcommittee and women's sponsor; Andrea Castello, board member as director of women's football and coach; and, of course, Vince Ruotolo, also the junior director. Thanks especially go to Don Leombruno and also Aldo Perilli and Orazio Di Carlo for the research and preparation of these various records. What a great job they have done to capture the club's history.

Office bearers, committee members, captains, leading goal scorers, senior coaches, assistant coaches, support staff, club B&Fs, player of the year awards, and it goes on—over 400 people must have been present at the National Wine Centre celebrating Campbelltown's rich 60-year history. It has been an absolute pleasure to be involved with the club in my now over nine years as the member for Hartley. Of course, we will do everything possible to ensure that we can continue to invest in that club to make sure that it is the best that it can be not only for our local residents but also for people right across the state.

As I mentioned, two powerhouse clubs came together to take on each other at the Federation Cup Final at ServiceFM Stadium. Only three points separated NPL SA leaders MetroStars from second placed Campbelltown, and it was always going to be an enthralling encounter. Despite their proximity geographically and also on the ladder, the recent meeting between the two teams was not as close as we expected. Coming into that big game, MetroStars had defeated Campbelltown in each of their last five encounters, and this was a game that was fought absolutely ferociously.

We know that Campbelltown obviously hit the board first, but it was very much back and forth for most of the game. I have to say, unfortunately for me, I saw one of the best goals I have ever seen in this league when Hamish Gow sent fans wild as he kicked the ball with quite a smashing effort, bulleting it into the top corner to give MetroStars the lead in a half when he definitely did not play his best football, but it was definitely a turning point in the game. Instead of feeling down on finding themselves behind after a strong half of football, Campbelltown came back for the second half with certainly a renewed sense of determination and once again put MetroStars on the back foot.

In the 64th minute, unfortunately Campbelltown went a man down, so they actually had to defend for most of the game with 10 players on the field, which of course is a mighty, mighty effort. I thought they were going to hang on; they managed to hang on. Michael Matricciani, coach, is an old Rostrevor boy who used to play with me in the schoolyard—obviously he was much better than me. He coached extremely well and they almost managed to pull off the impossible. It almost went to penalties; I think there were only about two or three minutes to go and of course MetroStars scored this miraculous goal to win their first bit of silverware for some time.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Campbelltown City Soccer Club on 60 fantastic years, and I wish them all the very best for the next 60 ahead as well.

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (15:12): I rise today to update on the work that the Malinauskas Labor government is undertaking with our community language school network in SA. I am incredibly proud that at the last election we took to the people of South Australia one of our most comprehensive multicultural affairs policies ever presented, supported by an additional \$16 million in funding over four years to provide assistance to community associations across our state. We have made enormous progress delivering on these commitments, including:

- bringing back the Multicultural Women's Leadership course;
- the introduction of the Multicultural Media Grant;
- the establishment of a Multicultural Chamber of Commerce group;
- assessing diversity in both the Public Service and the broader private sector to explore ways to maximise skills and reduce barriers to employment;
- the establishment of a multicultural women's microbusiness fund;
- annualising the Multicultural Festival; and
- the introduction of a community boards and governance program.

In coming weeks, we will finalise our Ambassador Program, working with the private, local government and not-for-profit sectors on embracing the Multicultural Charter and improving diversity and cultural inclusion through improved employment practices. We will also shortly be announcing our Multicultural Resource Directory.

These projects are incredibly worthy and I am very pleased we have been able to roll them out, but today I want to focus on community language schools, formerly known as ethnic schools. Of that additional funding, \$4 million over four years will go to support communities to keep their languages strong amongst younger generations. We currently have 89 fully accredited community language schools in our state teaching 47 community languages.

In August 2022, I approved a funding proposal developed by Community Language Schools SA in consultation with multicultural affairs to deliver several activities in year 1 of this project. Year 1 funding incorporates service improvements and additional resource requirements to achieve high-impact results for new and existing language schools. We looked at and identified three priority activities from the first year funding: first, in conjunction with the language schools and an industry provider to develop and deliver a governance and compliance training package. The training package includes assistance for schools to develop a plan for their ongoing governance and to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements.

Second, it was to increase staffing at the association to provide intensive case management and curriculum development services for new and existing community language schools for the initial 12 months. The third priority was to deliver face-to-face personnel training courses (teacher workshops and child safe workshops) in the north of Adelaide, as all previous training was provided at Hindmarsh and Goodwood. Relocating the training to the north of Adelaide will make it more accessible to a considerable proportion of community language school staff.

In October 2022, multicultural affairs and Community Language Schools SA executed a funding agreement for the first three priority activities. In March 2023, I joined the Minister for Education, Training and Skills to announce a second instalment of funding and that focused on support for government and non-government schools that host community language schools.

One of the biggest challenges facing schools is securing a host facility providing the appropriate learning environment after hours in which the school can operate. Traditionally, only public schools received this funding. We have now taken a broader approach and extended this support to include private schools and other facilities. A memorandum of administrative arrangement has been signed to facilitate the distribution of top-up host school funding for government schools also hosting community language schools.

We are providing funding for 12 months to schools without a current host school arrangement which do not currently have their own premises to assist with the cost of rental or relocation once a host site is found. In the second tranche of funding, we have increased needs-based funding to provide additional financial support for classroom learning materials and equipment. We also rolled out grants of up to \$100,000 for eligible community language schools to develop or upgrade their community-owned facilities. They have been notified and the successful recipients will begin that rollout next month in July. It has been a great opportunity to have a multicultural lens on community language schools and I remain committed in years 3 and 4 to roll out their funding.

STIRLING HOSPITAL

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (15:17): I take this opportunity today to bring to the house's attention an update on progress on the retention of Stirling community hospital at Stirling as it approaches 100 years of proud service to the local community. Since 1926, Stirling Hospital has, with community at its very centre, provided steadfast and high-quality healthcare services for Stirling and surrounding districts.

As I have addressed previously in the house, recent events have moved the community in a way that I have not seen in my years as member for Heysen. That included, most recently, last Thursday evening again at the RSL Hall at Stirling. Folks from around the state will recall last Thursday and, in particular, last Thursday night, as about the most rugged weather experience that we have had this year and for some time in the Hills. I think about 80 millimetres of rain fell, the wind was strong, and towns around Stirling were flooded.

But that did not thwart nor, in fact, did it chip any of the response by the community that night who came in sodden and under layers of winter clothes to a hall that had had 140 seats added to the room just to make sure that everyone could jam in on an occasion to hear from the board of the hospital answers to questions that had been identified on a previous jam-packed occasion in the hall on 11 May and over the month following about just how exactly could a board of a hospital, carrying that 100-year legacy, come to a conclusion that the only way forward was to shut up shop and move elsewhere.

It is a pretty compelling statement of community intent to show up twice in such numbers—more than 250 people, twice—to the Stirling RSL to make clear that not only do they appreciate the service of the hospital to the community but they will stand up and make sure that no stone is left unturned when considering the way forward for the hospital.

I pay particular tribute on this occasion to the work done by my predecessor as the member for Heysen, Isobel Redmond. Isobel, as members may be aware, was herself a member of the board of the hospital for 27 years. She was among so many others of long service on the board present on those occasions, including board chairs that go back over now generations, who have spoken up in the clearest of terms. We have the capacity both as to skills and resources within the community to confront any challenge, and the board ought to make sure that it is engaging with the community in terms of considering options going forward.

Let's make no mistake: the Stirling Hospital, led well as it has been, made an important decision some decades ago not to take up state support and become a state-run hospital but to remain independent. It has done so and remained in the black at all times throughout its history, and that is to its great credit. We are not now at a point as a community—and the hospital indeed is not at a point—where it has come to a crisis that is essentially driven by finances. On the contrary, there is no significant request for money, just as there has not been at any time over the history.

But I do say to governments, state and federal, as I have over this journey, that it is not enough for the Minister for Health to stand back and say, 'Well, it's a private institution. Let them get on with charting their own future.'

Ms Stinson interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Badcoe!

Mr TEAGUE: What the minister needs to remember is that central to all of this is an accreditation process for which SA Health is right at the centre. The hospital has a history of

three-year accreditation because it has always maintained the highest of standards. Just as all hospitals do, it confronts the need to remain accredited and provide services in full compliance. It is that point where ministers, state and federal, need to step up and make sure that they are providing the support.

What we know is that the board must now reset. It must now go back to the starting point, consider all options and engage with leaders of the local community in coming to a solution that keeps Stirling Hospital open at Stirling.

ANZAC HIGHWAY, GLANDORE

Ms STINSON (Badcoe) (15:23): I rise to update the house on a long-running issue, the matter of maximum heights along Anzac Highway, particularly from South Road to Beckman Street, which is effectively the length of Glandore. I will also take the opportunity later in this address to recognise and also thank a particular local resident who has been incredibly vital to this fight. He has led this fight from the residents' perspective, and he has been instrumental in the progress to date, which I seek to update you on.

Glandore people fought really hard about 10 years ago for the establishment of the Glandore character zone. For those who are not familiar, please do come along and have a little drive around Glandore, because what you will see is a feast of Art Deco homes and beautiful streetscapes. They are absolutely worthy of preservation, and certainly the people who live there thought so and fought incredibly hard to establish a character zone some years ago. Unfortunately, during the last term of parliament, they spent pretty much every waking hour defending that character zone from infringement by the former government.

It is worth mentioning that in the lead-up to the new PDI Code, the Planning and Design Code, residents including me were told as part of the consultation process—which was quite extensive for the code, with many public sessions and feedback forms—an anomaly had seen eight properties along Anzac Highway have their heights at eight storeys, rather than the three storeys it was meant to be along that stretch, and that it would be addressed through the code, that there was no need for a separate code amendment because the extensive consultation that the former government was conducting would bring that height back down to three storeys.

Indeed, the materials that were presented to the public presented it at three storeys. So, of course, people did not put in submissions objecting to this because it was exactly what they wanted. The plan said this area in the new code would be three storeys and everyone agreed with that. The code was issued on 19 March 2021 and that three-storey limit was there for all blocks that abutted the character zone, and that is exactly what the community wanted.

But then—surprise surprise—1 July rolled around, and those of us who are assiduously reading the *Gazette* would have seen that it was suddenly changed, with a stroke of the minister's pen, back up to eight storeys for those eight blocks. There was no consultation. It came as a complete surprise to my community—in fact, they were quite shocked—and hundreds turned out to a community meeting that I and Kevin and others called to talk about this issue, and thus began quite a long campaign that continues now to try to get this fixed.

We all thought that this was a mistake, but of course we forgot that the planning minister at the time, Vickie Chapman, does not make mistakes. She never makes mistakes. In her entire time in parliament, she never made a mistake—and you just ask her about that because she does not make mistakes. So, on 27 July 2021, she finally publicly defended this decision and on ABC radio gave what could only be described as an amazingly creative but wholly nonsensical argument, saying that this was not a mistake of hers whatsoever and she was correcting someone else's error, which made absolutely no sense to anyone involved in this matter.

I am pleased to report that since that minister's departure and the arrival of a new government, we now have a government that listens to the community, to residents, to the council, to the local MP. We have had a community consultation period and the results have now been made public. There were 235 submissions and 221 of those, a stunning number, said that they want this at three storeys and it was what they had always understood to be the case. The decision is now

with the minister and I respect that he will look at that feedback and make the right decision for our community.

In the remaining time, I want to pay tribute to Kevin Kitto, a long-time Glandore resident; some 20 or 30 years he has lived in the area. He first came to me about protecting the character zone way back in 2017 and we talked incredibly frequently about it. I was really sad the other day to call Irene, his wife, to learn that Kevin unfortunately had a sudden illness and had passed away. I want to thank Kevin greatly for the hours and hours, months and years that he dedicated to defending something that he believed in for our local community. God rest his soul, and thank goodness we have people like Kevin Kitto in our community to defend the things we believe in.

Time expired.

PARLIAMENT HOUSE SCHOOL VISITS

Ms PRATT (Frome) (15:28): I take this opportunity to celebrate schools, education and the opportunity that visiting parliament brings for them as well as for the members of parliament. I was delighted last week to break a record for my term as member for Frome. I had three schools in three days, enjoying the presence of Kapunda High School, Owen Primary School and Riverton. Without a doubt, for each group that came through, what was clear was the level of engagement: their participation, their enthusiasm, their curiosity, and in fact their intelligence when it came to previous conversations with their teachers about civics and citizenship, parliamentary processes and the rights of an individual to live in the community and make decisions that improve their experience.

Kapunda High School coming through with their year 7s made me reflect on the success of the transition of year 7s to high school. I was proud to contribute to the writing of that policy as we saw the former Liberal government deliver that initiative. I want to pay credit to the schools, the principals and leadership team that supported that transition across the state. It was a pleasure to be receiving year 7s as part of a high school trip to parliament. Of course, for those schools in country SA, making a trip to the city is not easy, but Kapunda does have buses parked on West Terrace during the day, so it was a pretty straightforward process for that school to provide their own transport and come to Adelaide.

I want to acknowledge the particular work and leadership of principal David Marino, who is leading his school through a particularly challenging time on the back of the tragic fire that took place in the old Eringa homestead at the high school. As a coincidence, I note that the Minister for Education is in the chamber and has worked very closely with the school to get them back on track for the restoration. I would like to make note of teacher Tash Koritsa, who has done a fantastic job in supporting her students through the first half of this year in providing that pastoral care and level of excellent teaching that we expect in our country schools.

When Owen Primary School came through on the Tuesday, they were being supported and supervised by their teacher Ben Foley, who was able to share his own personal experiences with his students in this chamber, reflecting on the previous time his father, the former member for Port Adelaide, spent on the Treasury bench. It was great for students to hear a personal account from their teacher Ben Foley. We walked around the chamber of the house as we do, and we interacted with Dr John Weste, who does a remarkable job hosting, entertaining and delighting our guests young and old with anecdotes when we visit the parliamentary library.

Riverton Primary School came through on the Wednesday. I want to pay great respect to Natalie Badcock and Edgar Thompson in our education office. Mr Speaker, I am sure you appreciate as well as I do what a fantastic job I think they have but also how important it is that we have educators with an understanding of the procedures and protocols that happen in this house. When we are short for a word—and we are probably not often short for a word—we have the experts step in to conduct those debates and engage students with all the questions they bring.

On that particular day, it did not matter where I was in the building; if I was not here with the Riverton Primary School students, I could hear them in every corner of the building, so engaged were they with their debate. They set themselves an ambitious agenda on the back of their debate, and I remind them of that today.

This is their aspirational hit list: they are looking for a bike track, basketball court, improvements for the footy grandstand, more entertainment in Riverton and a safety fence at the golf course boundary. They want to reduce littering with a clean-up action day. They want a BMX track, a vet based in Riverton, a car wash and more takeaway. With the revered artist Robert 'Alfie' Hannaford based in Riverton, they are also looking for more immersion in the arts and creative activities. It is an excellent civics and citizenship shopping list, and I hope that I can help deliver some of those with them today.

INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (15:33): I rise today to talk about some really inspiring women I am lucky to have in my circle. That includes all my amazing female colleagues here in this place and the other place, and also in my role I get the amazing opportunity to meet with really incredible, talented women. One of those opportunities came up today.

We invited our Australian of the Year South Australian recipients into parliament to acknowledge them, celebrate them and talk about just how much they have done to contribute to our society. Amongst them were our South Australian Senior Australian of the Year, Aboriginal rights activist Sandra Miller; our SA Local Hero, Christine Robertson OAM, who is the co-founder of Lost Pets of SA; and in particular, last but not least, the amazing Taryn Brumfit, who went on to claim Australian of the Year for 2023.

Taryn is a body image activist. She is a writer, she is a director, she is a keynote speaker, she is a mum and she is an incredible inspiration to me and so many others. For those who might not have seen her documentary *Embrace*, which was released in 2016, it gives you a new perspective on how you go about living your life based on who you are on the inside and what you contribute to society rather than what you look like.

Taryn went on to work on a piece of work called *Embrace Kids*, which looks at imagining a world where young people do not have to worry about what they look like but where young people are appreciated for who they are and what they do rather than what they look like. I was really inspired by this piece of work, having two young children of my own, and it got people in my community thinking about how we can bring this piece of work to more kids in my community.

Enter the beautiful Piccadilly Cinema and the incredible Deanna Wallis from the Wallis family, an amazing South Australian family. I was able to visit the Piccadilly yesterday and give Deanna the exciting news that the state government will be supporting a screening of *Embrace Kids* at the Piccadilly Cinema for the local autistic and autism community.

This is an initiative that has the support of our Assistant Minister for Autism, the Hon. Emily Bourke MLC in the other place, and also our Premier. The idea is that we will be putting on a screening of Taryn's amazing piece of work, *Embrace Kids*, in the next school holidays in October for the local autistic and autism community. We will be making sure it is an appropriate sensory experience for those people coming along, and we cannot wait to bring this incredibly important documentary to more people within our community.

For those who have not been to the Piccadilly, I want to give a big shout-out to the amazing team behind its restoration. It is such a beautiful Art Deco cinema. It was closed for 14 months and they have lovingly restored this absolute gem, this iconic cinema in the heart of North Adelaide. I really want to encourage people to go along, to support our local businesses in our area, to support amazing cinemas like this that have been so lovingly restored. There are some great movies coming out. There is *Barbie*, there is *Indiana Jones*, there is *Mission Impossible*, so if you have not been down to O'Connell Street lately I encourage you to go along, see a movie, grab some popcorn and support an amazing local building in my local community.

Bills

STATUTES AMENDMENT (NATIONAL ENERGY LAWS) (EMISSIONS REDUCTION OBJECTIVES) BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 14 June 2023.)

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:38): I take the opportunity to speak in parliament about the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Emissions Reduction Objectives) Bill 2023 and indicate that I am the lead speaker for the opposition. This bill comes into the South Australian parliament at a time of skyrocketing energy bills both for South Australian households and for businesses. In May, the Australian Energy Regulator released the finalised default market offer for South Australian, but also for New South Wales and Queensland, electricity users who are on standing offers. That default market offer had an average household power bill in South Australia increasing by nearly 24 per cent. That translates to an increase of between \$439 and up to an additional \$512 on South Australian households' electricity bills.

The electricity bill increases will take effect from 1 July—in only a couple of days, as it is already 27 June—and will heap additional pressure on families and their household budgets, especially now that we are in the middle of winter. Of course, the number of South Australian households on the default market offer is not the entire customer base; it is roughly around 60,000 households. The remainder of households here in South Australia are on contracts with their electricity provider, and the recommendation is that those on these standing offers try to shop around for better deals.

What we are starting to see in just the last two weeks—especially in my office, and I am sure in many other members' offices as well—is people writing to us or contacting our office saying they have started to see customers not on the default offer, customers who are on their own contracts with these electricity providers, now being contacted by their electricity retailer and finding that the new contracts are also going up substantially. In most cases, they are moving at least in line with that 24 per cent increase the default market offer went up by, but in some cases it seems to be much more; if they were on a contract that was quite low, there is a lot of catch-up going on.

This significant increase in household electricity bills is a crippling blow for families and the most vulnerable coming into winter—and we are in the middle of winter now. Coupled with what we are seeing with interest rate rises, rental increases and the cost-of-living crisis, it is making it really tough for South Australians this winter.

Some analysis has been done by the opposition in the lead-up to the state budget, and it showed that an average South Australian family with two children and an average mortgage is nearly \$20,000 worse off under the Malinauskas Labor government, as living costs from interest rate rises or rental increases, petrol prices and food and grocery prices are all rising, with South Australia experiencing the highest inflation rate in the nation at 7.9 per cent. The \$20,000 increase in the cost of living for families also did not take into account the electricity bill increases that are to come into effect later in the week.

Of course, households are not the only ones feeling the pain, as the default market offer for small businesses also showed an increase of \$1,310. With the cost of business going up, this will have a big impact. I recently visited a restaurant with the leader, and it was quite clear that there is only so much a small business can cut back on to reduce their costs. In many cases, simply turning off the power is not an option: they need their fridges and freezers on all day every day so that they can run the business.

That \$1,310 increase for business represents a 29 per cent increase for the average small business in South Australia. This is the biggest rise in the nation, and South Australian businesses deserve better. We have already had the highest unemployment rate in the nation, and we do not want to see businesses have to choose between paying their electricity bill or employing more staff. These price rises for business will also start to flow through into the goods and services they provide to consumers—and, of course, what consumers buy, in turn, ultimately feeds into inflation as well, so there are huge and ongoing concerns around these electricity price rises.

The federal budget that was handed down late last year by the government's federal colleagues showed that electricity bills were forecast to increase by 56 per cent over the next two years. That is in stark contrast to federal Labor's claim before the election that they would bring down electricity bills by \$275. Those opposite have tried to deflect blame and not take responsibility at all by saying that this is all an east coast problem, but yet again, as I have demonstrated before,

South Australia has the highest of the price rises of all states connected into the National Electricity Market in that recent default market offer in dollar terms. Of course, Peter Malinauskas, the Premier, had no plan at the election to ensure electricity supply was affordable and reliable, and now South Australian families and businesses are paying for it.

We also have the Treasurer saying on radio that it is up to the federal government to find a solution in the next 12 months, effectively saying, 'It's over to you, Chris Bowen,' the man who said that he would bring down electricity prices by \$275. So these skyrocketing electricity prices under the Premier and this government are yet again a clear sign that we have returned to the very bad old days of Labor when we really did experience the highest power prices in the nation.

It is in this environment of skyrocketing electricity bills, when there should be a total focus on how to bring down household and business electricity bills, that we see these changes to the national energy laws arriving here in the South Australian parliament. They have come from the Ministerial Council on Energy, and this includes the federal and state energy ministers.

As I have said before, with these types of legislation South Australia is the lead legislator for the national energy laws. Now, we see these changes for including emissions reduction objectives into the objectives of the national energy laws being introduced here into our parliament. As I have said previously, the convention for such changes to the national energy laws is that the legislative amendments make their way through the South Australian parliament and then, in so doing, make their way across to the other jurisdictions, so I indicate as per convention that the opposition will not be opposing this bill.

In terms of the actual bill itself, it seeks to make changes to three energy laws: the National Electricity Law, the National Energy Retail Law and the National Gas Law. Each of those laws has an objective to promote efficient investment and efficient operation for the long-term interests of consumers. At present, these objectives are in respect of the price, quality, safety, reliability and security of supply. These are decided on by the energy market bodies as part of an efficient and economic efficiency framework.

The main effect of the change that is being presented in this amendment bill is to also explicitly add into the objectives in each of those energy laws I mentioned previously the need to also consider greenhouse gas emissions in relation to targets set by a participating jurisdiction. This change was consulted on between December 2022 and February 2023 and received a good number of submissions, some of those of course confidential and I have not had the chance to read.

At the same time this bill was introduced into the South Australian parliament only two weeks ago, I put out requests for feedback from stakeholders as well. Being such a short period between then and now, I have not received feedback significantly on this. However, as this progresses through both this house and the upper house, I am certain that it will come about and we will be able to further take a good understanding of what the feeling is here in South Australia and, of course, I will convey that on to my colleagues in the upper house.

I should say that in those submissions that were made, as I mentioned before up to February 2023, the point was well made by some of those submissions that the market bodies are already taking into account the reduction of carbon emissions when making their decisions. The Australian Energy Council made the point that the electricity sector is the only emitting sector that has made substantial reductions and also that this has all occurred in the absence of an emissions objective in the NEOs, having been driven by government policies and private sector investment decisions.

In terms of who the Australian Energy Council are (otherwise known as the AEC), they are the peak industry body for electricity and downstream natural gas businesses operating in the competitive wholesale and retail energy markets. AEC members generate and sell energy to over 10 million homes and businesses and are major investors in renewable energy generation.

The AEC supports reaching net zero by 2050. Of course, it has many members and one of those members includes the Department for Energy and Mining in South Australia, so we really should take their point seriously. As an example, the Australian Energy Market Commission outlines in its 2021 strategic plan that it takes into account emissions reductions. In its October 2022 paper, *How the National Energy Objectives Shape Our Decisions*, the AMC states that its 'decisions guide

action towards a decarbonising, affordable and reliable energy system'. The AEC even then went on to make the statement:

There does not appear to be any case for amending the National Energy Objectives to require these regulators to have regard to emission reduction targets.

We have a number of amendments to the various national energy laws that have come through parliament in the last 15 months that really at face value make it look like changes are being made, but a lot of the feedback from stakeholders is that when rolled out practically they are not going to make a substantive change to customers especially. In this case, with these particular amendments, it is because the emissions reductions are already being pursued in energy systems.

From our perspective on this side of the house, the Liberal Party in South Australia have shown that we do not need to have emissions reductions as an objective in these energy laws to achieve practical reductions in emissions in the South Australian electricity network. Importantly, this has been achieved at the same time as prioritising reducing household and business power bills.

We saw over the four years that we were in government, from June 2018 to December 2021, the average South Australian household bill came down by \$421, according to ESCOSA's reports on the average household electricity bill. Having policies that bring down electricity prices for South Australians will continue to be our priority focus on this side of the house. What is vital is that the changes to these energy laws that we are debating today do not lead to more electricity price increases into the future.

When we look at emissions and mitigation efforts that revolve around reducing emissions, it is a very complex problem, as I have said before in this house, because whether it is carbon dioxide or whether it is methane that is emitted into the atmosphere by any one jurisdiction or any one country it is not constrained just to that country or just to that jurisdiction. While we might reduce our emissions, if another part of the world increases theirs, the global atmospheric emissions continue to rise.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a number of assessment reports in late 2021 and 2022 dealing with this topic. This is, in fact, the sixth iteration of their assessment reports that give both scientific and technical knowledge of the effect of emissions and climate change.

The third of these IPCC assessment reports, *Mitigation of Climate Change*, demonstrates quite clearly the growth in global greenhouse gases from approximately 38 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in 1990 to approximately 47 gigatonnes in 2005 and had increased to 59 gigatonnes or 59,000 megatonnes by 2019. It broke down the emissions into various regions and showed that eastern Asia made up 27 per cent of these emissions; North America, 12 per cent; Europe, 8 per cent; and Australia was bundled in with New Zealand and Japan in terms of our overall contribution.

Talking of Australia's emissions, in 1990 they were 630 megatonnes. They had fallen slightly to 625 megatonnes in 2005 and decreased further to 530 megatonnes by 2019. Within this, South Australia's emissions by 2005 were at 36 megatonnes and they had reduced by 2019 to approximately 24 megatonnes, so that is 24 megatonnes of the world's 59,000 megatonnes of emissions. Of course, that is not all just emissions based on the electricity sector—we have transport, industry, stationary power, agricultural emissions and fugitive emissions as well—but in terms of the electricity sectors percentage it made up less than 20 per cent of these 24 megatonnes.

There is a lot of talk around Australia around coal-fired generation, where that is going, and looking into some sources there. If you look at coal-fired power station capacity, in 2018 Australia had approximately 24 gigawatts of coal-fired electricity generation capacity. In comparison, the EU had 155 gigawatts, India had 220 gigawatts, the US had 261 gigawatts and China had 972 gigawatts.

Some of those jurisdictions (Australia, the EU and the US) are not looking to add any more coal-fired power station capacity to their generation mix—in fact, they are looking at retiring their fleets. China and India, on the other hand, are different propositions. China has under construction or planned approximately 200 more gigawatts of coal-fired power station capacity; India has either planned or under construction 65 gigawatts of coal-fired power station capacity. These stations are

long-term investments; they will have a life expectancy taking them well past 2050, but more than likely well past 2060.

When you look at the areas on the globe that are looking to try to reduce their coal-fired power station capacity, we have the EU and the US markets doing so. They have nuclear-powered electricity as a baseload power source. I think if we are going to put emissions reduction into the national energy laws as an objective, then the country really needs to be open-minded about all energy solutions available.

Increasingly, there is the view in Australia that without having nuclear-powered electricity as a component of the energy mix it is going to be very difficult, bordering on impossible, for the transition to net zero emissions, especially if Australia wants to maintain an energy system that is affordable to both households and families, that allows for economic growth, that will really continue to provide for our standard of living here, provide for careers and jobs, but also importantly, especially with the geopolitical tensions in our part of the world, really maintain our energy security as well.

The leader mentioned in his budget reply speech as well that this conversation is starting. I suppose at this stage it is about what nuclear power generation would even look like in Australia in an Australian context. You would have to say it is not about the big, bespoke nuclear power plants, similar to what we saw built by the former Soviet Union; it is more looking around where the future of these may go—next-generation, small nuclear modular reactors.

The other point is that it is not intended that nuclear-powered electricity generation will provide 100 per cent of the country's generation, but rather it will just be part of a mix of generation solutions. Getting back to what I was saying before, we have to look at available technologies and look at all solutions to be able to ensure that if we are going to reach net zero, that it is done in a way that allows our economic prosperity to continue here in Australia.

Getting back to those IPCC reports, they do highlight some of the global challenges that come with mitigating climate change. You have developing nations such as China and India trying to lift their large populations out of poverty that, at this stage, is primarily tied to coal as an energy source, so you see the continuing and resulting increase in global emissions. Of course, South Australia has a vital interest in the success of the global efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We really should be clear-eyed going into this that South Australia and Australia definitely have a role to play, but there needs to be a global effort from all countries in terms of trying to make progress.

The Minister for Energy in his second reading explanation made the observation that goes along the lines of what I was discussing around emissions and the trajectory here in South Australia. He said that in the 2021 financial year South Australia emitted 21.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, representing a 42 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 2005 financial year. South Australia has also met 100 per cent of its operational demand from renewable resources on 180 days in 2021. Of course, 2021 was the third year of the former Liberal government that played a significant part in these figures.

The minister then went on to proclaim that this was a legacy of the Rann-Weatherill governments. In fact, when you look at the actual legacy of the Weatherill government in which he was the energy minister, that legacy was an unmanaged transition to renewable energy that came at significant economic and social cost to South Australia. The electricity system became more and more unreliable, with blackouts occurring on a regular basis and, in 2016, the statewide blackout, where all of South Australia went dark, the first time that had ever happened in the world.

Over the four-year period between 2014 and 2018, seven million customer hours were lost to unscheduled load shedding. At the same time as the system was becoming unreliable, we had the nation's highest electricity prices. According to ESCOSA, prices for the average household rose by \$477 between June 2016 and June 2018. It was a mess. That is really the only way it can be described, and this is what happens when emissions become the only priority.

They really need to be this trifecta of emissions, but price and reliability certainly need to be at the forefront of people's thought processes. The former Liberal government recognised the importance of an orderly, practical transition that delivered economic growth and also competitive

power prices certainly within Australia. This required the right mix of interconnection, storage, generation and smart technology to balance supply and demand and to have grid stability.

Policies included working with industry to have the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector start to be built, the Home Battery Scheme and the Grid Scale Storage Fund. One of the focus areas of the previous government was to fast-track the construction of the interconnector between South Australia and New South Wales, which will provide 800 megawatts of capacity between the two states. This allows South Australia to export our excess renewable energy in times of high generation, when it is either sunny or windy, but it also helps to provide stability and reduce the likelihood of South Australia being separated from the rest of the National Electricity Market.

Our other connection to electricity markets nationally is via Victoria via the Heyward interconnector. We can see that when that goes over, it causes huge concerns. It happened only in November last year and we were effectively islanded from the National Electricity Market, and the consequent grid stability issues that caused really were perilous and could easily be overcome once we get this second interconnector in place.

The other important aspect to note with the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector is that when it comes online it is going to go a long way to South Australia generating net 100 per cent of our electricity needs from renewables, as it will export much more electricity than it imports. By virtue of that fact, it was attracting and is attracting investment into South Australia.

One great example I have spoken about before is Neoen's \$3 billion Goyder South project. It will feature 1,200 megawatts of wind, 600 megawatts of solar and up to 900 megawatts of battery capacity. The first sod-turning for that was back in January 2022, and we look forward to it coming online at its fullest. Of course, Neoen at the time said that two-thirds of its investment—\$2 billion of this—was because of the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector that was being built.

Additionally, South Australia has world-leading rooftop solar generation capacity, with the combined capacity on roofs fast approaching two gigawatts, and it is continuing to grow each year by at least 10 per cent. The interconnector with its 800 megawatt capacity will provide an additional market demand for any excess rooftop solar generation to be exported over to New South Wales. Just last month, ElectraNet released new modelling about the impact of the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector. It showed, and I quote, that households are set to save \$127 per year on their electricity bills, while small businesses will save from \$255 per year, with that saving becoming thousands of dollars for businesses that use significant amounts of electricity when the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector is energised.

We will begin to see some bill relief here in South Australia by mid next year when the first stage of the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector is completed, with the interconnector to be fully operational by mid-2026. This will be a huge relief for South Australians at the moment in the face of skyrocketing power bills that I spoke about earlier.

Another initiative to help with the transition, which the former Liberal government leaned into, was the Home Battery Scheme. This saw the world's largest per capita rollout of smart home batteries. South Australia is leading the nation in battery take-up, with approximately 20 per cent of all home batteries in the nation being right here in South Australian homes. Not only does this help cut power bills for the individual household but it will also help reduce peak demand for all users and, in so doing, cut costs for energy consumers, because invariably a lot of the costs that are experienced and that flow through to South Australians' bills are from big spikes at these peak demand periods, especially if there is no solar or wind at those times. That is exactly when batteries can come in and provide great utility.

We talked about excess energy and the ability of the interconnector to assist with sending that somewhere. The former Liberal government also recognised the opportunities of creating green hydrogen from renewable energy. We created the Hydrogen Action Plan in 2019 and then successfully secured federal funding for a hydrogen hub at Port Bonython. This is a sensible approach to what is a very new technology. It included national and global industry leaders who were committing their own significant capital and expertise to ensure the project is a success.

These and other policy initiatives cleaned up the mess we were left with when we came into government and ultimately saw zero customer hours lost from unscheduled load shedding over the period 2018 to 2022 as well. Importantly, it saw electricity prices fall over the four years, as I said previously, with ESCOSA reporting that for the average South Australian household prices fell by \$420 between June 2018 and December 2021. This side of the house showed that electricity prices can be made the priority, and should be, as part of any energy transition.

At the same time, while reducing electricity prices over the Liberals' four years, emissions also came down as the percentage of electricity generated from renewable sources went from less than 50 per cent towards 65 per cent. That managed transition certainly gave us a lot of confidence that South Australia was on track to reach net 100 per cent of electricity demand by renewable energy by 2030. As I mentioned, the Project EnergyConnect, the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector, will certainly make big inroads into the final part of that process. In so doing, this meant that the former Liberal government set a goal of reducing emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

The Premier had no plan when he was the Leader of the Opposition that he brought to the election to ensure that electricity supply was affordable and reliable. In last year's state budget, the Malinauskas Labor government axed the Home Battery Scheme, they axed the Grid Scale Storage Fund and they axed Switch for Solar—all programs that helped to bring down electricity prices. At the same time, the government is going to spend \$593 million on an experimental hydrogen power plant, which their own policy document claims to only target electricity costs for businesses, and this is not till the end of 2025. Even when asking the Premier in parliament very recently about how much the hydrogen power station will bring down household electricity bills, his response was that it will bring down emissions.

As was outlined at the start of my contribution, since being elected electricity bills have skyrocketed. The default market offer this year sees increases of 24 per cent for households and 29 per cent for business. These increasing energy prices under the Malinauskas Labor government are a clear warning sign that we could really end up going towards the same situation we have had here in South Australia previously under the former Labor government when we had the highest electricity prices in the nation and real issues around reliability in the grid. As I said before, we now have this legislation being introduced. It is not dealing directly with how to bring down electricity prices for hardworking South Australians and businesses.

I want to talk to the submissions that were put forward as part of this consultation process. Another one of those for this bill came from the Australian Aluminium Council where they made the statement:

The Council also notes that the NEO is often interpreted in favour of the long term, which can lead to short term disadvantage. For consumers, there is a higher degree of certainty around short term costs and a lower degree of certainty of long-term benefits.

So they are certainly concerned about prices rising so much in the short term that it makes the production of aluminium here in Australia cost-prohibitive compared with aluminium that is produced in other parts of the world that are ultimately much more emissions-intensive and have a larger impact on global emissions.

The consultation also investigated the framework for decision-making and decided to continue with the economic efficiency framework, which ensures that all components of the objectives—the price, reliability, safety and emission reductions—can be effectively balanced in decision-making. Of course, some of the stakeholders in their submissions wanted to elevate the emissions reduction component above the existing components, that is, above the price, above reliability, above safety; if that were to occur, it would have been a complete and utter disaster for the nation's electricity grid.

Ultimately, physics and power systems engineering will dictate if the lights stay on here in Australia and, ultimately, legislation that is put in place will not solve the real-world technical and economic challenges that the energy transition does present. Astoundingly, in the consultation paper for this bill that was released in December 2022, it stated:

Energy Ministers have agreed social equity and affordability issues are important matters for future consideration, however they are outside the scope of this process.

Again, I reiterate that prices and reliability have to be at the forefront of the energy market body's decision-making process and it would be a real mark of how out of touch energy ministers are, the South Australian Minister for Energy in particular, if they make the objectives of price reliability and safety take a back seat to emissions reduction.

The Australian Energy Council, as I said before, also made the point that the AEMC and AEMO already take into account decarbonisation when making decisions and even posed the question, as these bodies already have in regard to emissions reduction targets: what is the harm in including those targets as a national energy objective? They also gave an answer to the question they posed there, and their answer was:

The answer is litigation risk. There are, in Australia, numerous, well-funded organisations which frequently challenge decisions by regulators on the basis that the decisions do not have sufficient regard to climate change and other environmental risks. The challenges, although mostly unsuccessful, create considerable delay and expense for energy projects, at a time when the energy transition can ill-afford further delays and even higher expenses.

Of course, ultimately, those expenses and delays end up landing on customers' energy bills. The energy regulators, as you would expect, would have had regard to emissions reductions when making decisions, but importantly, going forward, these decisions will have to be really carefully recorded. Otherwise, there is a very real risk that a decision that has been made by the energy regulators has failed to take into account emissions reductions, and it could initiate a judicial review of the decision. Another litigation risk identified by the AEC related to:

If a regulator should, in the interests of energy system security, approve a measure which would result in a short-term increase in emissions, activists are likely to argue that the decision was 'unreasonable'.

We already have delays and non-investment in important dispatchable generation at a time when, even by AEMO's admission as part of its integrated service plan, the national electricity network will need to have an increase in gas-fired peaking generation to firm and support the massive increase in wind and solar. Certainly, by opening this up there is real risk from a litigation point of view that at the very least it becomes a disincentive, and at the very worst it stops vital generation capacity that is going to be able to support a sensible transition.

Another area that gives opportunity for litigation is around what constitutes a target. Is it the policy position of a government, or is it one that is legislated in the law by that particular jurisdiction? Of course, in South Australia at present, under the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007 we have the principal greenhouse emissions reduction target to reduce by 31 December 2050 greenhouse gas emissions within the state by at least 60 per cent to an amount that is equal to or less than 40 per cent of 1990 levels.

The two existing renewable energy targets to increase renewable electricity use and generation by at least 20 per cent by 2014 were of course achieved in 2010 and 2011. I have spoken before that the former Liberal government had a different policy target for this from what was there in the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act. Our targets were to reach net zero emissions by the year 2050, an interim target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030, plus a renewable energy target to achieve 100 per cent net renewable electricity generation by the year 2030.

You would have expected that, after declaring a climate emergency—I think it was over 12 months ago now in this place by those opposite—these targets that have been proposed by this side of the house could well have been legislated by the current government, but they have not. That may well lead to confusion for the market bodies around what the actual emissions objectives are in South Australia when the changes to the energy laws that we are debating today come into operation.

These are some of the serious consequences of what could arise from the legislation that the nation's energy ministers, both state and federal, are proposing by way of introducing emissions reductions into the national energy objectives of the nation's energy laws. Of course, South Australia is the lead legislator, and the convention is that, for these changes to come into effect nationally, they do so by passing through the South Australian parliament. As such, as I said earlier, the opposition will not be opposing these amendments to the national energy laws, but in so doing it

should be made very clear that these changes will not make a practical difference to what is already happening in regard to emissions reductions.

This legislation is not targeting the very real need for South Australian families and businesses right now, which is to bring down energy bills. The government should be focusing on such measures. The Liberals showed that, without having to put emissions reductions into the objectives of the national energy laws, they could actually reduce emissions and at the same time bring down South Australian electricity bills—by \$421, as I said, for the average bill—and bring back reliability and grid stability with zero customer hours lost from unscheduled load shedding into South Australia's electricity system. It is about time those opposite came up with a plan to do the same.

Mr HUGHES (Giles) (16:19): I also rise to support this bill, this important bill at a national level. It has been a long time coming. There is a lot to respond to in what the member for Morphett has had to say. In some ways, it is always interesting when bits are missed out and other bits are added in order to paint a picture which I would argue is not entirely accurate. I am going to read my prepared speech and then, time permitting, I might pick up on some of the themes pursued by the member for Morphett.

As parliamentarians, we often spend time dealing with issues of the moment, important but often transient issues, and sometimes issues that are not all that important but still have to be taken care of, but every so often we have the opportunity to make laws which will resonate down generations, and this is such a bill. This is a pivotal moment for Australia. It is the point where we put behind us the wasted years of inaction, the years of denying there is an urgent need to tackle climate change, the delays at the national level with the Abbott government initially, then Turnbull and then Morrison. It was nothing but disgraceful and reflected the divisions within the Coalition.

Hopefully, now we are going to get moving in a more coherent fashion. This is because the energy objectives are the foundation stones for the energy system, a system which does not merely keep the lights on for households but which underpins the whole economy. Adding emissions reduction to the objectives makes a formal change in direction. It shows that the Australian government now has the adults in charge.

I should point out, given the nature of this bill, the concurrence of the states. The Tasmanian Liberal government and the Coalition in New South Wales, as it was at the time, backed this change also. It proves that we want to catch up with most of the rest of the world and play our part, eschewing the coward's choice of saying we should do nothing because our emissions are but a small fraction of total global pollution. It sets us on course for cleaner, healthier and more prosperous times.

For years, the Liberal-National Coalition has dragged the chain, most particularly in the last decade, during which they failed to land a single coherent energy policy. I lost count of the number of policy initiatives that died on the roadside under the Coalition. I think it was something like 23 goes at energy policy at a national level and, as I said, that reflected the deep divisions in the Coalition at a national level. That inaction stifled investment, because businesses wanted to move ahead but did not know what the rules would be.

It is worthwhile reflecting upon that period of Coalition rule. For every four units of generating capacity that exited only one unit of generating capacity was added, because of the lack of investment certainty. We see the disastrous consequences of that today with Australia. This is a country with bountiful energy resources, yet we have been left vulnerably exposed to the international shock caused by Russia's war on Ukraine, a shock that has sent energy prices sky-high here for both consumers and businesses.

It is interesting, reflecting upon that once again, the opposition federally, the initiatives taken by the current federal government to put a cap on gas prices, to put a cap on coal prices. If that had not happened, we would have sacrificed a significant proportion of manufacturing industry in Australia. We can look at just my electorate. I had a meeting with GFG, LIBERTY Steel, to discuss what the impact would be if a cap had not been put on gas prices, and the impact would have been huge. We were talking about millions and millions and millions of dollars of an impact.

It is always interesting when we talk about prices. Who was the gentleman who wrote a book about electrifying everything—Saul Griffith. In the book he has done in Australia about electrifying everything he has a really interesting graph. If you look at energy prices in Australia, for many years they were relatively stable but they started to go up—and go up significantly—not when renewables were introduced but when we corporatised, privatised, our essential services, including electricity. Once we did that we changed the rules of the game.

When we privatised, that had a detrimental impact, over time, on prices. As part of that whole push, that whole micro-economic reform, we introduced a National Electricity Market, and the combination of the two things have changed the nature of energy production not just in this state but nationally, and it had an impact on prices. The privatisation of essential services is nearly always a bad way to go.

If you want an example of a state where prices have been relatively stable, look at Western Australia. For obvious physical reasons they are not on the National Electricity Market; they did something else and introduced a gas reserve. They looked after the long-term public interest in Western Australia and did not put the interests of the resource companies ahead of the public.

At the time they were vilified by the Howard government. When the then Carpenter Labor government introduced the gas reserves they were vilified by the Howard government and they were vilified by the corporates, by the resource companies, that said they would not invest in Western Australia in the future. Well, Western Australia was prescient: its gas prices went up last year by 1 per cent. They managed to insulate their economy from what was going on on the eastern seaboard, which is exposed to international prices when it comes to gas and, to a significant degree, when it comes to coal. There is a really valuable lesson there; a really valuable, real-world lesson.

Climate change denialism has run deep amongst Liberal members from South Australia from the days of the likes of Nick Minchin, a strong climate change denier, and Alexander Downer through to the bizarre claims of today's South Australian federal MPs like Alex Antic from Conspiracy Central. While a few lost souls on the furthest fringes are still calling for coal, it is interesting to note that by and large the far right have largely abandoned their calls to extend the coal era.

There are no longer columns in *The Australian* pretending we can turn back time—or maybe there are still one or two columns in *The Australian* that think they can turn back time—but they still fail to accept that the transition to clean energy is desirable and, hopefully, inevitable.

Locally, in South Australia the B team, confined by the Liberal Party to state politics, were seduced into complacency during the four years they occupied the Treasury bench. They bet heavily on connecting us to New South Wales without realising that that state's wholesale power prices were on the way to being higher than in South Australia. It is interesting when you go back to look at wholesale prices in the various states and how they have changed over time. This bill draws a line, and it is time to end the denial. Even though denial is less common now, we still have a muddying of the waters in order to generate delay when it comes to the needed transition.

I agree with the member for Morphett that this has to be a global effort and that there has to be far more heavy lifting on the part of a number of nations. It is interesting when you reflect upon what China and India are doing but, to a degree, you have to bring that down to the per capita emissions for those countries. It did give us the percentage. However, these were current percentages when it came to emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions, especially CO₂, is resident for a long time in the atmosphere, and the legacy of Western countries that industrialised first is still with us in the atmosphere and still contributing to global warming.

I would hate to be a scientist who has built a career around atmospheric physics and the other associated disciplines. They have been warning and warning us now for many, many years. When we look back to probably the mid-1980s or 1987, the evidence was fairly definitive that the probability of serious climatic change would be locked in if we did not change. Since that period, we have emitted more on a global level than in all the previous years since the Industrial Revolution. In a couple of hundred years of emissions, we have managed to outstrip that since 1987, and that is deeply concerning.

There is a note of hope because it looks like this year, when it comes to renewables globally, there is some very significant stuff going on. Indeed, when you look at how many gigawatts have been put in in China, and, to a lesser extent in India, that is encouraging. When you look at a number of other nations around the world, that is encouraging, but there is still a hard challenge ahead of us.

So let's look at what these reforms will do. They will oblige the energy bodies to consider the emissions effect of any decisions they make. That is, the Australian Energy Market Commission, the Australian Energy Regulator and the Australian Energy Operator will rank emissions reduction alongside the other objectives of price, safety, reliability and security of supply. They are all incredibly important because, if we do not get that right, public confidence in the transition will decline, and that in itself will cause delay.

As I said, when we start talking about price we have to start looking at something more fundamental. We Balkanised our electricity system: we privatised our electricity system. This is an essential service; it should be in public hands, but the horse has bolted from the stable. It is a bit hard to see how it can be stitched back together in this state and in other states. This is not some harebrained scheme to only consider emissions as some advocates demand.

The market bodies must avoid the risks of action that precipitate unintended consequences. They must plot the transition in an orderly and considered way. Also reflecting once again on the member for Morphett, some of the history is interesting. There was a blackout—that serious blackout. I remember being at the steelworks a day after the potential serious consequences that they were facing, and Minister Koutsantonis was up in Whyalla as well. He understood how serious it was.

That blackout was not due to something integral to the transition towards renewables. Indeed, when you come to look at some of the major blackouts globally, one of the biggest involving 56 million people was in the north-east of the United States—not a renewable project in sight. When you talk about wind or solar (there was some hydro), the transmission assets tripped and that very large market was plunged into darkness. There are a number of other examples of that.

The other issues of reliability were examples of load shedding where the private operators would not utilise the generating capacity they had because they did not believe it was in their interest to do so. There you had the profit motive overriding what was in the public interest. That type of load shedding would not have happened, I believe, under ETSA even though you can go back to that period when occasionally there was some load shedding.

It is also interesting to reflect that prices have been marginally higher in South Australia historically and that is because of the nature of South Australia. You have the population concentrated in Adelaide, but we provide electricity to places like Ceduna, very distant from Adelaide, and we do so for a very good reason, on the basis of equity, that whether you live in Ceduna, whether you live in Whyalla, whether you live in Port Pirie, whether you live in Mount Gambier, you are going to pay the same for electricity as people do in Adelaide—a very good socialist principle, in my view.

This is a fundamental acknowledgement that the transition must take place. These bodies hold the keys to which investments will get priority, how costs will be apportioned amongst consumers and businesses and how fast the transition will be. Up until now, there has been an underlying current trending toward decarbonisation, but the market bodies have not been able to take these into account in their formal and cautious methodology. That changes now. It will unshackle investment and deliver benefits all the way from the household level to Australia's contribution to saving the planet, and we should do our bit.

Already, Europe has established the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, which is an interesting mechanism and something we as a nation should look at. If we are going to make that transition, we do not want to disadvantage our hard-to-abate sectors or at least hard to abate in the short to medium term. We need to protect those as Europe is going to do with its hard-to-abate sectors for the time being. Of course, the US is pouring billions into clean energy with the Inflation Reduction Act. It is a massive investment taking place in the United States that might well influence where people choose to invest when it comes to clean energy.

China is actually leading the world on the installation of wind and solar, and I had a bit to say about that the other day. The sheer scale of what they are doing now—albeit they are still adding

coal, and hopefully that is going to diminish over time—when it comes to solar and wind is mind-boggling. They have added more this year than the whole of the installed capacity in the National Electricity Market in Australia. That is the rate of change. That is why the International Energy Agency is saying that 2023 might be a pivot year with regard to investment in renewables globally, but we still have a long way to go. I do not underestimate some of the technical challenges and the resource challenges as well that go with the transition.

Australian energy primary producers and manufacturers need to be positioned to take advantage of these new global trends if we want trade to flourish. This bill helps Australia to clean up our act and give our businesses a chance to succeed, and you do not have to take my word for it. A whole raft of organisations—some of them major fossil fuel organisations, major gas infrastructure companies, a whole range of institutional bodies, peak bodies—have come out in support of this change in direction or this enhancement of the direction we were going in. So it is incredibly fortunate there has been a change of government at a federal level.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:39): I rise to make a contribution to the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Emissions Reduction Objectives) Bill. In May this year, commonwealth and state energy ministers agreed to amendments to the national energy laws to incorporate an emissions reduction objective into the national electricity objective, national gas objective and national energy retail objective, respectively.

As with previous changes to national energy laws, South Australia is the lead jurisdiction and, as per the convention, the legislation has been approved by the Energy Ministers' Meeting prior to it being introduced in the Parliament of South Australia. It is interesting that in regard to this, and in his second reading explanation, the minister stated:

In the 2021 financial year, South Australia emitted 21.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, representing a 42 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 2005 financial year. South Australia also met 100 per cent of its operational demand from renewable resources on 180 days in 2021. That was the legacy of the Rann-Weatherill governments.

In fact, the legacy the Weatherill government left the state was an unmanaged transition to renewable energy that came at significant economic and social cost, including the statewide blackout in 2016 and the nation's highest electricity prices.

What we saw with the statewide blackout in September 2016, when we were sitting in this place, was the ineptitude of the government of the time. They were overseeing a situation where essentially, if you put it in very simplistic terms, one circuit breaker went out and threw the whole state out. I know people who used to work in the old power stations at Port Augusta. There used to be a system, five systems across the state—what was going on, that was pure genius that we lost the whole state.

The former Liberal government recognised the importance of an orderly, practical transition that delivers economic growth and competitive power prices. Policies included working with industry to have the South Australia-New South Wales interconnector built, which was interesting because Labor were all for this until they decided they were not for it. I am so pleased to see the interconnector well on its way, as it will help when we have an excess of renewable energy, because we do have a lot of renewable energy in this state and more going in all the time, with more wind turbines and more solar. A lot of solar is being put in around Tailem Bend, which used to be part of my electorate but is now in the member for MacKillop's electorate, and other areas of the state. Certainly, there are some new solar-generating power stations along the Murray River.

The Home Battery Scheme and the Grid Scale Storage Fund were part of our former government, which at the same time led to the emissions figures quoted by the minister in 2021. Between June 2018 and December 2021, ESCOSA reports show that the average electricity bill for households fell by \$421. We saw that the current Premier, Peter Malinauskas, had no plan at the election to ensure that electricity supply was affordable and reliable. In last year's state budget, the Malinauskas Labor government axed the Home Battery Scheme, the Grid Scale Storage Fund and Switch for Solar.

Since Labor was elected, electricity bills have skyrocketed in this state. In May this year, the Australian Energy Regulator's default market offer was released and it showed a nearly 24 per cent

increase in South Australians' household power bills of up to \$512 and, for businesses, an increase of more than \$1,310—a nearly 29 per cent increase. This is outrageous because it is putting livelihoods at risk and it is putting businesses at risk.

We have a lot of virtue signalling about where we go. We have made our position quite clear where we want to go on the transition to renewable energy, and we are well on the way. We are well on the way, but we have price caps put in place for both coal and gas. Do you know what that does, especially in the gas sector? It restricts exploration, it restricts access to more gas so that it can be drilled for, keeping the price of that gas down. The simple fact is that gas is 50 per cent cleaner than coal. We should be encouraging more exploration and we should be encouraging more exploitation.

For all those out there, the anti-frackers, the anti-gas, the anti-coal, good luck, because I bet there are plenty of members on the other side of the house who are getting those phone calls, those contacts from constituents who simply are not able to pay their power bills. As they get the notices that are coming through now from their power providers, they are not just up by 24 per cent or 29 per cent, but some quotes are coming through at a 50 per cent rise and moving forward. It is outrageous and I do not know how we are going to keep people in their homes. I simply do not know how people are going to be able to afford the power prices. It is just ridiculous.

We have Victoria, where essentially they have banned exploration. We have protests in Western Australia, protests in the Northern Territory, or north of the Northern Territory, by different groups fighting against gas development. These are just crazy times. We have had the discussion about the billions of people in China and India who are quite happy to burn coal, and a lot of that coal gets exported from Australia. Only a few years ago, Western Australia contributed \$260 billion to the national economy, and it is probably over \$300 billion now, which represents probably around 20 per cent of the financial capability of this country.

We see Queensland with their coalmines with a \$12 billion surplus. It was interesting when we had the federal elections in 2019, how many of those Labor coalmining seats came over to the Liberal National Party because of the anti working people policies of the Labor government.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: Yes, I support the transition but let's see some way how to get there. We just heard from the member for Giles about why the costs are dearer in South Australia because we do transmit power right across the state to Ceduna. Well, what a case for promoting the cause of small modular nuclear reactors so we can work to a zero net gain in clean energy, so we can work to clean energy and work forward in a proactive way. The minister laughs, because he's got no idea.

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: So the four years you were in office, where was the nuclear reactor then?

Mr PEDERICK: He's got no idea, and I hope there are plenty of people going into his electorate office complaining about the high bills that they are about to get, because I know for a fact that there are plenty of people getting told that they will have a 50 per cent increase in their power bills. We have to be a lot smarter in this country when we rely so much on the many billions of dollars of exports for the coal and gas that we export while we are crippling our own community, not just in this state but right across the country, but without a real outcome for the private citizens of this state and this country so that they can afford to stay warm, stay dry and feed their families. It is just outrageous.

There is not a real plan for that. I can see when the power bills start coming through in September, and then as they go through the rest of the financial year, we are going to have more and more people homeless. We have the cost of living crisis already which is crippling people and they are about to be crippled more by these excessive power prices.

We have to have an orderly transition, and we do have to have a look at real outcomes so that we can get to zero emissions, but it is outrageous that we do all this, crippling our economy, crippling our people's capacity to pay, but at the same time our economy is so reliant on these exports of coal and gas. It will be interesting where it all ends, but I really am concerned for the good people of this state that they can pay for their power.

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (16:50): It gives me great pleasure—and probably sadness and frustration—that I am going to be speaking on a topic not in a way that will be detrimental to any political party or any government in particular but in general terms of the country's issues, and perhaps this state's issues, in regard to energy.

When I sat in the party room yesterday and said to our party, 'Why are we following suit? Why don't we oppose this and question the validity of such proposals and how this is worked through?', they said, 'There's a national agreement. We want to fall into line.' If we were in government, we would be part of this process federally. We would be working together, like the Labor state government is, on a national front with the other state jurisdictions and the federal government on what the commonwealth and state energy ministers agreed to and the amendments that fall under the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Emissions Reduction Objectives) Bill.

As one of the few people in this chamber—and not the only one, and I certainly do not think that I am—who very much belong to a very old, conservative business, I want to say that costs and expenses are one of the most important driving forces for a business to be profitable. Probably it is no different from a household budget. When your costs outdo and outweigh your income, when they outdo your returns, things start going pear-shaped for not only households but businesses across the board.

Energy for this state was really highlighted through the Playford years when they built the Port Augusta coal-fired power station, which probably revolutionised the state with its reliable, cheap, affordable energy, and then put in a grid network right across the state that still functions today in a way that looks after those in Ceduna to those in Adelaide to those in Mount Gambier. It was a foresight that held the state in a position for huge opportunity and growth. No doubt it had its ups and downs through those periods as well.

What I am really wanting to speak to here is, no matter whether you are a Labor government or a Liberal opposition in a small state like South Australia, whether you belong to a Labor or Liberal political party in Queensland or even on a national front, I think it is imperative that governments start waking up and realising that the people who are driving this—making these rules and regulations, putting this in place and putting a huge amount of speed into this changeover to renewables—need to take a long, hard look and ask themselves about the sensitivity of the speed that this is being rolled out, with the technology that is keeping pace and where we are going with prices and costs to businesses, families and households.

If you look at the end of the spectrum and what the result is on people's lives and budgets, businesses' future prospects and their vulnerabilities—costs are going up and so forth—what really stands out is that there must be something going wrong for these prices to be rising at way beyond inflation. We can say there is a war on and, yes, that might have captured energy prices around the world and, yes, it is out of our control, just like I have to deal with seasonal fluctuations as a farmer, just like I have to deal with commodity prices that are on a world scale and beyond my ability to change.

Those sorts of things that come along like a war between Ukraine and Russia, again, are outside of Australia's energy market and there is no opportunity to change or to administer any sort of outcomes that are different to what is happening because of this. But you would think that the experts and the bureaucrats and the energy providers might be able to sit back and recognise the end result, what prices the grid is actually charging households, families and businesses, and that it cannot continue to do so in this vein.

If we take into account, as has been said by the other speakers—and no doubt the energy minister can say this too—we have a goal about renewables and we have a goal about carbon. Yes, we want a clean energy grid by such a date with such an outcome, whether it is 2030 or 2050. They can be absolutely magnificent goals and represent an achievement that maybe the voters and the electors said, 'Yes, we would really love a taste of this.'

But then I would ask those who believe in such goals at such a pace and time frame: does it absolutely work? Does it meet the agenda of looking after the most vulnerable, retirees, those who are invalid pensioners, those who are on the social welfare system? Does it work for the working class and perhaps what they are now calling the working poor? Why are they the working poor? Both

partners in a marriage can be working, they might own their own house or they might be renting, they are seeing both interest rates and rents rise, and they are seeing energy prices go up. The feedback is that they are working for nothing as the cost of living rises.

I know the Malinauskas Labor government is fully aware and cognisant of this trend and these costs and so forth. You see this roll out and see that the state and federal government have got together on 19 May and imposed more regulations, more restrictions and even bigger goals and earlier goals about what energy is going to be produced under, and how we are going to be able to market the fact that our country and our states are leading the world in renewable and low-carbon emissions in their electricity grids, yet the fundamentals out there so that people can work and use this electricity grid are failing all around them.

This is the thing that I really do not understand, in the sense that I can accept that we are a very clever species as the human race. We have developed and changed and we do that faster than any other species on this earth. I know that as we are challenged throughout the next 10, 20, 50 or 100 years we will develop the processes in place, whether it be hydrogen, whether it be a combination of both solar and wind energy—and whether nuclear needs to play a role in this or not is yet to be determined. I think it needs to be seriously considered, that is all.

I have heard voices in this parliament say, 'Why didn't the Marshall government pick up on this?' There are lots of things I could say as to why the Marshall government did not do it—I could, but this is not the time. What I will say is that I am hoping the other side will look at any potential answer that will address these high-cost energy prices, whatever that may look like, and put some sort of foresight into this energy grid. Does it require nuclear? How long would that nuclear last? Will hydrogen meet the needs of cheaper power generation and back up what batteries cannot? They need to look at all these sorts of things.

I have heard on the other side, too, the member for Giles, who talked about mammoth new renewable energy projects. In fact, what we consider huge for our state and perhaps even huge on an Australian scale can be small on the world scale. The rest of the world is moving down this path as well in a very fast fashion. It would be very interesting to see where our energy costs are going with respect to the rest of the world's energy costs, and are we still affordable or are we way off the spectrum; are we heading off the spectrum?

This comes back to the point that I talked about really from the start. When you talk about businesses, talk about families and talk about households, governments of all jurisdictions—I can even say local government, state government, federal government—we all have a responsibility if we are going to manipulate a market and move such clauses like goals and time frames and deadlines. We also must take responsibility for the consequences of these sorts of things. I cannot understand why any government can hang its hat on one goal, and this may be a beautiful goal, being a carbon neutral, a carbon-free energy grid by such a date. If that date was extended by five, 10 or 20 years, then yes, you might say there would be more carbon in the atmosphere for such a period and that would be devastating, but is it as devastating as seeing one million of your population out in the cold?

They have no roof over their head. They cannot afford to buy food, cannot afford to turn the lights on, cannot afford to heat or cool their houses and cannot afford to pay the rent; as we already know, we have a housing shortage. I do not understand where anyone gets off on that goal that I have just talked about, renewable, carbon-free energy from such a date, compared to the toll that may be occurring to our most vulnerable people in one of the wealthiest, best living countries in the world.

I will finish off by saying to the Labor state governments, in South Australia and around the rest of Australia, and to the Labor federal government: please do not have the wool pulled over your eyes by bureaucrats and businesses that perhaps can see some sort of windfall gain, be it financial gain or be it kudos from the fact that we could be the most green, renewable country in the world with our energy grid, but we lose half the housing and half the people in that area.

They fall into some sort of safety net. They need help or cannot manage their costs, lifestyle and living, but they want to participate in our society. They want to work in our society, they want to have a family in our society, but they cannot turn the lights on. I ask all governments in this country

to give serious consideration from a business point of view to the fact that costs do matter and that perhaps the goals that have been set in place are a detriment to that.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (17:01): I have noted with interest the remarks of members. Just so we are clear about what it is we are debating, we are not debating small thermonuclear reactors. We are not debating the cost of living, although I accept it is an important issue, and I applaud the passion with which the member for MacKillop has argued on behalf of his constituents. I do point out to the shadow minister and his other colleague the member for Hammond that the enthusiasm they have for small modular reactors was missing between March 2018 and March 2022.

I also note that the passion for nuclear energy and the nuclear life cycle was missing completely when there was a royal commission in this place, conducted by the then Labor government, where we wanted to look at all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle. Members opposite ruled out every single one—every single one. Now, while we are talking about a piece of national reform that simply means to change the rules and aspects of the way we look at infrastructure being built in the grid to take into account carbon, it has become a proxy debate for all sorts of things.

I applaud members' enthusiasm for their contributions but had there been potentially a stickler for the standing orders who might have got up and moved points of order about relevance, that might have been successful. I, of course, am not such a stickler for the standing orders. I like to see a thousand flowers bloom and see debate take off. I thank the shadow minister for his remarks. I understand he wishes to go into committee to pose a few questions of the government on this reform.

I do want to call out one thing. I do not want to use the term 'dangerous', but it is potentially unprecedented. Just to be completely aware, these reforms began long before I became the most recent energy minister. These reforms were agreed to by the New South Wales Perrottet government and the then Liberal Tasmanian government. The current Liberal Tasmanian government has endorsed these changes.

This is a bipartisan piece of work. I know that the Liberal Party had a debate in its party room considering not supporting this legislation and breaching the covenant that governs the lead legislator status of the nature of these reforms. South Australia is the lead legislator in the energy sector and the lead legislator for national heavy vehicle and rail, and these are important reforms held inhouse within South Australia and give South Australia a level of pre-eminence.

For the entire time the Labor opposition was in opposition—for those long four hard years—we never once opposed a national reform, although it was our right to do so, on the basis that in principle these are national reforms. I just say to the member for MacKillop: I understand his passion, I understand his concern, and he is probably one of the few rare members in this house who takes up the true meaning of the word 'liberal', which means it gives him the ability and opportunity to speak freely about the things that matter to him—probably the only one who exercises that right; the rest behave like a lot of Labor MPs, using solidarity and basically caucus rules applying a discipline on them.

The member for MacKillop, whose father or grandfather I understand was one of the founding members of the modern Liberal Party, has kept that culture in place, whereas I suppose other members are more inclined to toe the party line. On that basis, I applaud him. I do not necessarily accept the merits of what he is saying, and if one day nuclear power is considered appropriate for Australia this legislation will mean that all that development will need to take into account the carbon emissions—that is all it does.

It is a momentous piece of legislation and an important one. I thank the opposition in advance for its support for speedy passage through both houses of parliament. I commend the bill to the house and I look forward to the committee stage of the bill.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

Clause 1.

Mr PATTERSON: As I referenced earlier, a number of submissions as part of the consultation for this amendment bill made the point that the Australian Energy Market Commission, the Australian Energy Regulator and AEMO already take into account decarbonisation when making their decisions. One submission, from the Australian Energy Council, stated, 'There does not appear to be any case for amending the national energy objectives to require these regulations to have regard to emissions reductions targets.' Bearing that in mind, how much more will this bill reduce emissions in the electricity market and gas market than would otherwise occur?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: My advice is that there is no formal carbon target; it is regarded as a case-by-case basis, where they will be reviewing every proposal on the basis of taking into account its carbon emissions. You said earlier that they already take carbon into account. I am not sure where you were quoting from. Could you—

Mr PATTERSON: The Australian Energy Council, their submission.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The Australian Energy Council submission? I am not aware of what regulation or energy law they are referencing, but this codifies that all three bodies will take into account carbon on a case-by-case basis. I think AEMO put out some reports that talk about carbon emissions in certain scenarios, but this is the national energy law being amended to mean that carbon will be considered on all proposals.

Mr PATTERSON: On 1 July, we will see the new AER default market offer come into place and see South Australian households and other households throughout the country have determinations on their power bills if they are on standing offers. In the case of South Australia, households have bill rises of up to 24 per cent—\$512—and, as I said, other households on contracts will also see their power bills rise. What advice have you received about what sort of effect including the emissions reduction objective into the national energy laws might have on household electricity bills? Could it reduce them? Could it increase them? Could they stay the same?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The objectives that we currently consider when we are contemplating any investment in the grid require a framework around price, reliability, safety, security of supply, quality and now we are adding emissions. The framework will still require consideration on price. I do not anticipate this will add cost at all. If the opposition has evidence that it will, I would like to see it, but I do not have any before me that it will increase prices.

What is increasing prices in Australia and what is increasing prices around the world, as much as people hate to hear it, is the conflict in Ukraine that means 360 million Europeans who were once bathing in Russian gas, cheap Russian gas, have seen that gas turned off to a large extent and are now seeking gas from other sources, which has created a supply shortage around the world, and that supply shortage means that prices have increased. Australia's gas prices are internationalised, and that is what is seeing price increases in Australia.

It is not some secret plan. It is out there for everyone to see. The events coincide with the increases. Because there was less gas available in Europe, coal became the dominant form of generation in Western Europe. Record levels of coal were being used in Europe. Coal prices went up. There were coal shortages through shutdowns in New South Wales and Victoria. There were planned outages and unplanned outages. That all coincided with these dramatic international events that led to a very cold winter last year, supply shortage in coal and gas and a price shock that pushed prices up.

Some of those matters have been resolved through the code of conduct being implemented and the price cap being put on and the stabilisation of a lot of that plant and equipment that was out, but to link this bill with the international price shocks of war in continental Europe I think is a stretch. I am not saying that you have done that; I am just saying I think for some commentators it is a stretch.

Mr PATTERSON: I mentioned household electricity bills and gas bills, and then we are also going to see in July increases for businesses as well for the default market offer that saw

South Australian bills for businesses on default market offers increasing by \$1,310, or 29 per cent, and others on contracts seem to follow this price rise.

Other points that have been made by industry bodies such as SACOME are that, while sometimes householders are shielded from some of the ancillary charges—frequency control, voltage control—businesses are much more exposed to those spot prices and carry, they say, a disproportionate burden in terms of those that come about obtaining grid stability as we move through renewable energies. Again, what advice have you received around the impact of including emissions reductions as one of the objectives specifically on business electricity bills?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: In terms of those small businesses the member is talking about, what he omitted were the massive rebates that are being offered for the next 12 months. Yes, small businesses will see an increase, some of them of over \$1,000, but they are also getting \$650 in the rebate, and that means that the increase has been minimised for those businesses. Some households in South Australia will actually be paying less next financial year than they have this financial year as a result of the rebate.

So we are doing what we can, and what we have done is buy time. The commonwealth government has acknowledged that this is a national crisis. This is not a South Australian isolated issue. This is occurring in Victoria, this is occurring in New South Wales, this is occurring in Queensland, it is occurring in New Zealand, it is occurring in the United States, it is occurring in South-East Asia, it is occurring in Western Europe, it is occurring in North America, it is occurring all around the world.

What we are giving the commonwealth government with our co-funding of this massive, unprecedented subsidy of over nearly a quarter of a billion dollars directly into the pockets of South Australians that offsets their bills is time—time for the commonwealth government to come up with a national response to this, and we are supportive of it. But I do not think it is fair—and I am not saying that the shadow minister is accusing us; this is a very cordial—

An honourable member: Very cordial.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Very cordial. I do not think it is fair for people to say this is a uniquely South Australian problem. Clearly it is not. This is an international problem that has ramifications in South Australia, and we are acting. If there was no response, if there was no subsidy—so businesses will be impacted in the same way households are, but what we are doing is giving every small business in South Australia a \$650 rebate on the back of that increase. The increase could be as low as \$350 for some people, even lower for others, depending on what tariffs they are on and their time of use. We are trying to minimise that impact.

I accept subsidies are not ideal, because subsidies are an opportunity cost on something else we could be using that money for. So I agree, but we are where we are not because of any policy decision made here in South Australia. We are where we are because of a policy decision made by Vladimir Putin, not a decision of the Malinauskas Labor government. Like the rest of South Australia and the rest of the country, we are simply suffering under international conditions that have caused this.

Clause passed.

Clause 2.

Mr PATTERSON: The act comes into operation on the day it is assented to by the Governor, and the aim, in the consultation, is talking about September 2023. It seems like preparatory work is already being undertaken by some of the market bodies in anticipation of this, obviously still paying respect to our parliament but expecting it to go through.

As you said before, we have a convention here that is standard not just in terms of energy laws that are national but other national laws. There are no problems with that, but could you just explain what is going to happen straightaway? Are they looking to act straightaway? If so, in what regard? I might have some follow up questions in response to that.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The market bodies put out long-term thinking on the energy market, sometimes five-year plans; the Integrated System Plan is a good example. If we miss the

cycle, we could have another five years where carbon emissions are not considered as part of the key principle taken into consideration; so we are in a rush.

I have to say that this reform is long overdue; this reform should have been done a long time ago. I think, above all, this is one of the most consequential reforms we can make to decarbonisation of the electricity sector outside a carbon price. It is very consequential, and we do not have time to waste. We have seen the impacts of climate change accelerate. For us to give investment certainty to people about the Integrated System Plan that has been put out, the statement of opportunities that has been released, we need to make sure that the planning also takes carbon into consideration. It is important to give that lead time for investors, the market and the market bodies to prepare for it. That is the rush: this should have been done years ago.

Clause passed.

Clause 3.

Mr PATTERSON: Clause 3 talks about the acts that we amend. In a similar vein to the questions I asked around the short title, by including emissions reduction objectives into the National Electricity Law what advice do you have regarding whether wholesale electricity prices will be impacted? Will they be reducing, increasing or staying the same?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The Australian Energy Market Operator dispatches at lowest cost every single time. That principle is not being changed by this. Adding carbon will not change the principal of lowest cost dispatch, so I do not think it will have an impact on the wholesale market.

Mr PATTERSON: By including emissions reduction objectives into the National Energy Retail Law, what advice do you have around any impact on the electricity or gas bills of end customers, whether be they households or businesses, in terms of reduction, increase or staying the same?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: As long as the Liberal Party stop their vendetta against gas, where they have banned gas in the South-East of this state, I do not think there will be—

Mr Patterson interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Same answer. I do not think it will have any impact on the retail pricing. The principles in place have not changed. I suppose the equivalent is, if we took safety out or took quality out or took price out, would it have an impact on emissions? When you put all these things together as a whole, as a package, it gives the operator and the market bodies an opportunity to say, 'Well, when you are making your investment into the National Electricity Market, you take into consideration the quality of the power you are delivering, the price that you are delivering, the security of the supply of the power, and emissions.' All those things work in conjunction to deliver the lowest possible price we have. It washes through the whole system, so I do not think it will have an impact.

I will say this: I think the abandonment of a carbon price has actually increased prices in Australia rather than decrease them because it has given no investment certainty to the transition. What we have now without a carbon price is disorderly exits from the market, no incentivisation to the market for firming capacity, and that has led to a lot of government interventions into the market that have added costs. For example, the Perrottet government's massive intervention in the New South Wales system may well add cost. It may save money; it may add cost. We will see.

The market method of applying a price to carbon, having an emissions scheme, is much more efficient, but we cannot have nice things, so we are doing this through basically the Angus Taylor approach, which is direct action. What we are doing here through the market body's work is that all the jurisdictions have got together in saying, 'Well, it's about time.' As one of the principles, having a look at all the market bodies, emissions should be considered, and they should.

Mr PATTERSON: In regard to national gas laws, which is different from electricity, what advice have you received in terms of including emissions reductions into national gas laws, in terms of how much wholesale gas prices may reduce, increase or stay the same?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I do not think it changes my answer to the previous questions. I refer the member to my previous answer. This is a high-level change, so I do not think it will make a direct impact on either fuel sources.

Clause passed.

Clause 4.

Mr PATTERSON: In the consultation paper, it was outlined that by placing emissions reductions into the objectives of the National Electricity Law, each of the objectives in there (price, quality, safety and reliability, security of system supply and then, equally, reliability, safety and security of the national electricity system) and then also by this change achieving targets set by participating jurisdictions, as per the amendment (I will not read it all). Your second reading speech seemed to allude to that. To help any sort of future judges who may look at this very entertaining discussion we have—to confirm that each of those will be treated equally, so price is treated just as equally as safety is treated just as equally as reliability is treated just as equally as reductions, emissions; they are each discretely looked at, not just the whole price, reliability, reductions equal to emissions targets.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: That is certainly our intent, and I would refer anyone, any judge looking at this, to my second reading remarks for the intent of the legislation and what it is that the energy ministers wanted to change. I love all my children equally, and all those principles are as important, and one shall not be taken into consideration over another. It should be taken into consideration as a whole, as a package.

Mr PATTERSON: Further moving along that path, in its submission the Australian Energy Council made the point that by including emissions reductions into the objectives of the National Electricity Law it increases the chance of litigation. They stated:

There are, in Australia, numerous, well-funded organisations which frequently challenge decisions by regulators on the basis that the decisions do not have sufficient regard to climate change and other environmental risks. The challenges, although mostly unsuccessful, create considerable delay and expense for energy projects, at a time when the energy transition can ill-afford further delays and even higher expenses.

They broached a number of solutions. As a solution to this risk, they proposed that one of those measures could be potentially removing the right to challenge decisions of regulators on the basis of an alleged failure to have regard to emissions targets. My question is: how does this bill take into account the litigation risks, and how will the risk of litigation be minimised by the participating energy market bodies so as not to have expenses and delays from court action ultimately impact on customers' energy bills?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: All like bodies are already subject to judicial review. They deal with these risks every day. It is a free country. The courts are entitled to hear grievances, and they do, and the market bodies should prepare themselves for it. I do not know what motivates people to take judicial review but for whatever reason, if these market bodies are subject to it—and they should be—this would be no different. I am not sure that this minimises the litigation risk. If anything, it is status quo.

Mr PATTERSON: To further go down that path, will the legal imperative to satisfy the emissions reduction objective contribute to other objectives within the national electricity objectives not being efficiently met?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Every project is different. Every project will have a different principle that is more relevant to it than others, but the economic efficiency framework governs the assessment of this and it means that all are taken into equal consideration. So I do not think it changes.

As I said earlier, the market bodies are subject to judicial review. They do what they have to do to minimise a judicial review and that risk. Nothing changes. It will be the status quo. They will add this to their framework and they will still work to minimise the risk of judicial review. But judicial review is there for a reason: courts are an independent, third arm of government and they are entitled to hear grievances. That is the nature of a democracy.

Mr McBRIDE: I have a question in regard to where it talks about, under (i), reducing Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. My question to the minister is in regard to carbon credits. One of the things I have been made aware of as an agricultural producer is that carbon credits around Australia are going to be plentiful, and there is going to be an opportunity for landowners to not only capture credits but to also lift production.

The reason I come back to these emissions and this subparagraph (i) about reducing greenhouse gas emissions by this piece of legislation is: is there any relationship for generators to purchase credits up and above an emissions level? In other words, if you set a level at 20 per cent, 30 per cent or 50 per cent, does it matter that you might have more credits that could take you over those emission levels where you actually could lock down carbon into permanent-type market structures that would allow generators to produce more carbon than the legislation is proposing?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: This is not an energy intensity scheme. There is no carbon baseline here. This is not a carbon price. This is a high-level framework where investments and activity in the NEM will have a consideration around carbon emissions. What I think the honourable member would be talking about, if it was relevant, is if we were introducing an energy intensity scheme or a carbon price or a carbon pollution reduction scheme or some sort of baseline and credit scheme, then that question would have merit.

Mr McBRIDE: I understand. Thank you to the minister for explaining that. For my further clarification, my straight-out question then is: is it correct that these emission levels have no correlation to a carbon market, for example?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: There will be no trading of carbon credits as a result of this scheme. This scheme does not create an emission credit which can be traded or has a value. They might place a value on it internally for their assessments, as they do on safety, on price, on reliability for their internal BCR work they do, or their business case work but, in terms of a tradeable commodity in the sense of a carbon market, no, is the advice I have.

Mr McBRIDE: Thank you very much for the explanation. As I am learning through this process, I am probably not as well advised as the shadow minister. If there are generators at the end of the year—and I imagine you are measuring these emissions—and we know that our electricity grid is backed up by diesel, it could be backed up by gas, and they have to turn on the gas and diesel to generate more electricity, but your emissions levels have already peaked out, does that generator have the ability to go into the market and purchase carbon, for example?

Do they have leniency from a piece of legislation or a government to say, 'To keep the lights on, we were aiming for 30 per cent reduction, but we are only going to get 25 per cent this year,' because there were not as many sunlight hours, for example, or there was not as much wind over the 365 days in the year and, 'We did not produce all the power we needed to, so we needed to back up even greater quantities of power by fossil fuel generation'? What happens in this example?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Nothing. That is not what this is governing. There is no carbon trading mechanism in place. This is a decision-making framework. This is not a market. It is for new investments. It is for decisions within the electricity market. It is not about setting a price on carbon. There is a fundamental misunderstanding. We are not creating a carbon market through this legislation.

I would like there to be a carbon market, do not get me wrong; I support a price on carbon. I would be happy for it to be plastered on posters and put around my electorate: I support a price on carbon. I think it is the fastest and most efficient market mechanism we have to decarbonise. Unfortunately, because of some political parties—well, two—we cannot have a carbon price. This is not about introducing a carbon price. This is about the market bodies taking into account emissions, along with a whole range of other factors at a higher level.

Clause passed.

Clause 5.

Mr PATTERSON: In terms of the regulations that will be put in place for the national electricity objective, of course you have regulations and sitting above them, alongside them, you

have power system and operation requirements that even legislators have to make sure they do not get in the way of to make sure that the actual physics of the electrical system works. What sort of regulations are proposed to address this? It talks in relation to a matter of achievement of targets. Is that referring to the next clause, clause 6, or is it referring to the overall changes in this bill?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: My advice is this clause is only giving us a regulation-making power. There are no regulations yet contemplated. If that is incorrect, between the houses I will get you an appropriate answer, but that is the advice I have, or my understanding of it.

Clause passed.

Clause 6.

Mr PATTERSON: In regard to targets that are set either by the federal government or state governments, there is this talk around whether it is a target that is in legislation or policies. For example, in South Australia, as I mentioned before, currently in our legislation and the Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act, we have an emissions reduction target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the state by at least 60 per cent to an amount that is equal to or less than 40 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050.

It also talks about increasing renewable energy, electricity use and generation by at least 20 per cent by 2014. That is what is in legislation and then there are targets that are policy based that have gone above that—for example, net zero emissions by 2050 or renewable energy targets to achieve 100 per cent net renewable energy generation by the year 2030. How are the targets going to be decided upon, that this is the target that the market bodies would have to look at to make their decisions on in terms of considering emissions reductions as an objective?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: As the act reads, jurisdictions will nominate a target and that is the target that should be considered as part of the framework through the decision-making process that the market bodies have to take. Every jurisdiction will put up its framework—its targets—as you have set up and that is the decision-making framework around which market bodies must operate within that jurisdiction.

Mr PATTERSON: Just for the absence of doubt, the target that the AEMC has on its ledger cannot then be challenged in court litigation by saying, 'That target is different from what is in the legislation in a particular jurisdiction'?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It does not need to be legislated. If there is a legislated target, it would necessarily be on the list. If there is no legislated target, the minister can nominate a target. We have a legislative target. I could be incorrect about that. Yes, we do have a legislative target for greenhouse gas emissions. That is our target.

Mr PATTERSON: In regard to cross jurisdictions, you might have the case where one jurisdiction has a particular target, a neighbouring jurisdiction has a target and you have the federal government with their target. How does this work with decision-making bodies, especially making sure that, when they make their decisions—we talked before about judicial review—they properly take into account price when taking into account submissions on reductions in a particular jurisdiction with crossed targets?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: That is just what market bodies do. Australia is a very large continent that basically has six very unique state jurisdictions and two territories and there are reliability standards that are different. Market bodies take those into account across jurisdictions. There can be different targets within the same jurisdiction for different types of industries. I am relaxed about this because this is what they do now. There is not a unifying price on carbon that governs carbon emissions.

I will say this again: what should be in place is a baseline. This is the baseline of how much your carbon emissions can be where you are paying that price. Below that, you get a credit, and above that, you pay a penalty, and then you have a market. That is how you reduce carbon emissions: you incentivise new investment into renewable resources and dispatchable renewables and you get the evolution of a functioning market without government interventions. We cannot have that because Tony Abbott did not like it, so now we have this system where we are going jurisdiction

by jurisdiction and election by election. To get this framework up, we are given the discretion for jurisdictions to have different targets.

In a perfect world, say, in a federation where we had a national parliament and a national cabinet that could agree that climate change is actually real, that the science is irrefutable, that the polar ice caps are melting, that global temperatures are warming, that there is greater impact on our climate, that events are becoming more extreme and more pronounced and that it is getting hotter and hotter because we are releasing carbon into the atmosphere, perhaps pretty please it would be nice for the commonwealth government to introduce a form of baseline and use tax policy appropriately. We had that and it was abolished and there is no plan to return to it.

Other jurisdictions have gone down this path and their transition is going a lot smoother than ours because they used the most efficient market method to decarbonise. With all due respect and affection to the shadow minister, it is because of his political party that Australia has chosen the most expensive path possible known to humanity to decarbonise through massive government interventions because a carbon price, according to the commonwealth Liberal and National parties, is socialism, so we cannot have it.

We are not going to have it, so now we go through this rigmarole where we have individual states having their individual targets that are informing decision-making, rather than being fixed targets that have penalties in place informing decision-making. It is a slower method of doing it, but at least it is something.

Mr McBRIDE: What will be the consequences for generators if targets are not met in South Australia?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: It is not the framework with which you should be looking at this legislation. We are not setting up a penalty regime. There is no penalty regime. The market bodies are looking at infrastructure investments within the grid, and one of the principles they will now take into account is the emissions intensity of that investment while still considering price, safety, reliability and the other principles.

This is not a cap and trade scheme. This is not a carbon price. This is not an energy intensity scheme. If it were, I would tell you and I would be proud of it. I would be sending out letters into the shadow minister's electorate saying, 'Hooray,' but we are not doing that. We are not imposing a carbon price. We are giving the market bodies a framework as a lens through which they view their decision-making process on all forms of infrastructure within the grid. That is the frame.

Mr McBRIDE: Thank you to the minister for explaining this to me because I am struggling with the concept of market forces and what this legislation then meets. He has added in his answers talk about previous years, previous federal governments and perhaps language used by those who are fighting climate change. Perhaps you would call them climate deniers, perhaps they are absolutely avoiding the closure and shutting down of renewable energy in the Australian economy over the last two decades. Maybe that is going to be one of the great failings of where we have landed today—because now we are restricted so heavily by options to work with market forces.

You mentioned the Abbott government fighting this way back in 2014; if they could foresee that we are now talking about these types of methods and strategies in 2023, maybe they would not have done what they did back in 2014. We cannot talk about a carbon trading scheme that might be more transparent, might be more obvious and perhaps even more affordable than we have now landed with. Who is to know?

This is not a mischievous question, but I need that clarity and understanding. I know that you are probably going to repeat your answers, and my apologies to the minister for that. I just think of the little town of Bordertown, where they do not have an electricity grid that meets the town's needs because it is only operating at 60 per cent because of its age and perhaps the growth in Bordertown. It has this dirty diesel generator that turns on most days of the year to provide power to the town of Bordertown because the electricity grid does not meet its needs.

We cannot have solar development in the town, because the power grid does not meet the town's needs, or that development of solar power. I am talking about a large solar investment that stands alone, not just rooftop solar or anything like that. We cannot have that. I wanted to have the

minister's clarity—that is a nice way to put it—that this type of process will not affect this sort of diesel generation of power and that we will not find ourselves having the lights out in Bordertown when they will not be able to start up that diesel generator.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I should explain to the member, who I think is probably one of the most astute members in the house, that these reforms relate to regulated assets. Project EnergyConnect is a regulated asset. When that was being built and it passed through its routine tests and it went through its decision-making process by the market bodies, the frame from which it was considered was on price, reliability, security of supply and quality of power. Emissions were not part of that scope.

The discrete scenario that the member talks about is no doubt a consequence of the failure of the privatisation of our transmission and distribution network by the previous Liberal Treasurer. If there were another consideration of investment to improve the quality, price, reliability, safety of that network, that would also take into account emissions. The regulated framework on the regulated assets is about making sure that carbon emissions are taken into account as well as the other factors, because it is a regulated asset. That is all.

If a private operator wants to put a diesel generator into the system, they can; if they want to put a renewable resource into the system, they can. I think we are at cross points of the intent of the legislation here. I am happy to offer the member a briefing because I know he has a vast interest in this matter and is a fierce advocate for his local community and really wants to get the best outcome for his people, but I do think there has been a misunderstanding here about what our intent is which I blame the shadow minister for.

Clause passed.

Clause 7 passed.

Progress reported; committee to sit again.

FORFEITURE BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 17:59 the house adjourned until Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 10:30.

*Answers to Questions***MICHELLE DEGARIS MEMORIAL KINDERGARTEN**

16 **The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** (7 February 2023). Given the opposition has been advised of a reduction of funding to the Michelle DeGaris Memorial Kindergarten in the electorate of MacKillop, will the government maintain funding at the kindergarten so they do not lose any staff?

The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills): I have been advised:

Preschool staffing is calculated using a formula based on confirmed enrolments from term 1 of the prior year. Michelle DeGaris Memorial Kindergarten maintained the same warranted staffing allocation in 2023 as they received in 2022.

Confirmed enrolments for term 1, 2023 did not require any subsequent adjustments to warranted staffing and therefore remained the same.