

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### Wednesday, 27 September 2023

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

**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*

### **PUBLIC FINANCE AND AUDIT (AUDITOR-GENERAL ACCESS TO CABINET SUBMISSIONS) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 14 June 2023.)

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (10:32):** This bill has been sitting on the *Notice Paper* now for some time and, if ever there was a bill that not only the government had the opportunity to assess, but that has had a decent and thorough airing in the public domain, then this is it. This bill ought to be passed and passed today, and it is high time that that occurred. We have been saying that for months. As we stand here today it is not just us saying so, but in the words of a succinct, straight to the point and emphatic report of the Auditor-General himself tabled in this place yesterday, we hear loud and clear the reasons why this is necessary.

Against the background of the bill having sat on the *Notice Paper* for as long as it has, and the Auditor-General's Report having been tabled in the parliament yesterday, it was a most invidious position indeed that the Treasurer found himself in on radio this morning, being rolled out by this government yet again to defend the government's shocking record of secrecy when it comes to the release of such documents. As I stand here this morning, I tell the house that I call bullshit on this—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Heysen, be seated. There is a point of order from the member for West Torrens.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Sir, that is clearly unparliamentary language—

**The SPEAKER:** Very.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —and the member should apologise.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TEAGUE:** I withdraw. The steaming—

**The SPEAKER:** It has been withdrawn.

**Mr TEAGUE:** —bovine excrement that has come from the government in response to this bill, but more particularly in response to the calls made by the Auditor-General over a sustained period of time now leading up to the tabling of the report yesterday, is nothing short of shameful.

Let me just spell it through. It is the sort of thing that not only all members of this place but members of the public should be reading, and I call on the media in this regard to step up and perform its role. It could not be clearer that for the government to say that what has gone on since March 2022, in terms of government process with regard to these documents, is the same as what occurred in the previous government is nothing short of misleading and deceptive.

What has happened is the continuation of a policy, PCO47, which was instituted by the Marshall government on the basis that if the Auditor-General asks, the Auditor-General receives. What has happened since March 2022 is that when the Auditor-General asks, the Auditor-General does not receive. You only need to go to page 20 of the Auditor-General's Report tabled in the parliament.

The Auditor-General has spelled out in a short table the catalogue of requests the Auditor-General has made since March 2022: on 26 July 2022, six cabinet submissions; in August, four; in February 2023, two cabinet submissions; again in February, four more; April 2023, four more; 17 July 2023, 12 cabinet submissions. On each occasion the Auditor-General has been told no—boom boom, no response, no permission.

To go back to an understanding of the reality about this, because there is a bit of an interest out there in spin and in putting things into some sort of context that suits the government, this is spin of the highest order. We go back to 2016—again, read the Auditor-General's Report. In 2016, after decades—decades—of practice in which the Auditor-General would routinely seek the necessary documents in order to discharge the Auditor-General's audit functions, the Auditor-General would be provided with precisely what the Auditor-General asked for.

In 2016, and remember this was the former Weatherill-Rau government, the Deputy Premier came along to the Auditor-General and said, 'Sorry, from now on you won't be getting any more access to these documents according to the decades-long practice.' Guess who else was around the cabinet table at that time? We are drawing the connection through to what has been of longstanding practice. It is none other than the current Premier.

Peter Malinauskas, the current Premier, had been elected a year or so before, and he found himself sitting around that cabinet table that presumably delegated the Deputy Premier to go and see the Auditor-General and say, 'No, no. Now we are going to move the culture of secrecy into the Auditor-General's space, and you are not going to get these documents anymore.' The Auditor-General railed against that, and we had then a short period of time prior to the 2018 election where there was a reluctant cabinet policy where you sort of get something, maybe, if you ask for it.

The Auditor-General then raised that early in the days of the Marshall government. He said, 'Hey, this is a problem caused by what the Deputy Premier imposed on me in 2016.' The Marshall government said, 'Okay, fine. Let's adopt a new policy.' PCO47 comes along. The process then is: the Auditor-General asks, the Premier approves, the Auditor-General receives. That was applied from 2019 with universal response, but for—

*The Hon. S.C. Mullighan interjecting:*

**Mr TEAGUE:** It is on the face of the document; it is on the face of the Auditor-General's Report. It was complied with to the point where the Auditor-General was able to discharge his functions.

The government has come along now, since March 2022, and said, 'Hang on,' and tried to tell the Auditor-General how to suck eggs by saying, 'Oh, well, cabinet confidentiality is an underpinning principle of the Westminster system.' How very august, to go and tell the Auditor-General how to suck eggs on this front. As recently as April this year, the CE of DPC came along to the Auditor-General and said, 'Guess what? I know this is getting a bit tense, I know this is a bit dysfunctional and I know that it's a bit cute to just roll out these august principles, so I tell you what I will do: I will precis for you what we think you need to know. I will kind of precis for you.'

You find that on page 21 of the report. The CE of DPC was going to make written representations to the Auditor-General about cabinet decisions and processes in the context of the audit request. The Auditor-General belled the cat on that and said, 'No, I am an independent statutory officer. I have audit duties, whether I like it or not, and I am just telling you that won't cut it.'

There is a bit of back-and-forth, and the current government has to be well aware of this. There is a bit of back-and-forth post April 2023. Bear in mind that this private member's bill is sitting on the *Notice Paper* the entire time and the Auditor-General says at the bottom of page 21 of his report, at the end of that, after the Auditor-General has belled the cat on it: 'No further correspondence occurred on these requests.'

We see at the beginning of this report on page 9, and this should be just basic to government operation, the Auditor-General saying, 'Hey, I have these functions. I have to be able to obtain sufficient evidence that transactions have occurred'—he puts it in bold text, just to make it really clear—'properly and lawfully, and that is required of every audit'.

I am sorry, but while PCO47 operates properly, that is okay—that is the 2019 to 2022 version: 'Ask and you shall receive,'—but post 2022, when the new Malinauskas Labor government comes along, 'Ask and you shall receive' turns into zero response, secrecy, lack of transparency: 'You will not receive what you have asked for,' with the result that the Auditor-General cannot do his job.

In April 2023, you get the DPC chief saying, 'Yes, okay, I will give you this version that might work.' No, it does not cut it, and so the Auditor-General, whose term is soon to conclude, gives the parliament the benefit of that experience in a succinct report that spells out what he has not been able to do over the course of the Malinauskas Labor government.

The reason why we need now to legislate in circumstances where, as the Auditor-General says, for decades convention served its purpose, is that unless you pin this government down to ironclad rules you can expect from Malinauskas Labor that at every available turn they will choose secrecy over transparency. They will seek hiding away instead of telling the public what they deserve to know about the way that public money is spent. They have a record of it from early on and it extends right into this place when the government walked away from a time limit on responses to questions on notice. From day one in this place through to right now, yesterday the Auditor-General's Report, this bill must be passed today.

Time expired.

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (10:43):** I move:

That the debate be adjourned.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....23  
 Noes.....12  
 Majority .....11

AYES

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

NOES

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Cowdrey, M.J. (teller)
Hurn, A.M.	McBride, P.N.	Pederick, A.S.
Pisoni, D.G.	Pratt, P.K.	Tarzia, V.A.
Teague, J.B.	Telfer, S.J.	Whetstone, T.J.

PAIRS

Hildyard, K.A.	Speirs, D.J.	Piccolo, A.
Gardner, J.A.W.	Malinauskas, P.B.	Patterson, S.J.R.
Szakacs, J.K.	Marshall, S.S.	

Motion thus carried; debate adjourned.

**ELECTORAL (CONTROL OF CORFLUTES) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 17 May 2023.)

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (10:47):** I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....23  
Noes.....12  
Majority .....11

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Cowdrey, M.J.
Hurn, A.M.	McBride, P.N.	Pederick, A.S.
Pisoni, D.G.	Pratt, P.K.	Tarzia, V.A.
Teague, J.B. (teller)	Telfer, S.J.	Whetstone, T.J.

**PAIRS**

Hildyard, K.A.	Speirs, D.J.	Piccolo, A.
Gardner, J.A.W.	Malinauskas, P.B.	Patterson, S.J.R.
Szakacs, J.K.	Marshall, S.S.	

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

**ELECTORAL (TELEPHONE VOTING) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 16 November 2022.)

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (10:53):** I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....23  
Noes.....12  
Majority .....11

AYES

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

NOES

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Cowdrey, M.J.
Hurn, A.M.	McBride, P.N.	Pederick, A.S.
Pisoni, D.G. (teller)	Pratt, P.K.	Tarzia, V.A.
Teague, J.B.	Telfer, S.J.	Whetstone, T.J.

PAIRS

Hildyard, K.A.	Speirs, D.J.	Piccolo, A.
Gardner, J.A.W.	Malinauskas, P.B.	Patterson, S.J.R.
Szakacs, J.K.	Marshall, S.S.	

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (MINISTERIAL DIARIES) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 2 November 2022.)

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (10:57):** I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....	23
Noes .....	12
Majority .....	11

AYES

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

NOES

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Cowdrey, M.J.
Hurn, A.M.	McBride, P.N.	Pederick, A.S.
Pisoni, D.G.	Pratt, P.K.	Tarzia, V.A.
Teague, J.B. (teller)	Telfer, S.J.	Whetstone, T.J.

## PAIRS

Hildyard, K.A.  
Gardner, J.A.W.  
Szakacs, J.K.

Speirs, D.J.  
Malinauskas, P.B.  
Marshall, S.S.

Piccolo, A.  
Patterson, S.J.R.

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

**NEW WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL (RELOCATION OF SA POLICE FACILITIES)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 September 2023.)

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (11:02):** I rise to speak a little bit about what is entitled the new Women's and Children's Hospital bill, but really the subject matter is the relocation of South Australia Police facilities. This process goes from one debacle to another. We hear constantly from connections within the South Australian police force about their concerns about the way they are being treated by this government under the guise of health care, with little to no respect for the needs and the wants of the South Australian police force.

They have a situation where they have been in a location for over 100 years, the Thebarton barracks site, serving the people of South Australia duly, respectfully and efficiently, and are now told, 'No, you are now having to locate yourself some 10 kilometres out of the CBD'—where the police greys do the vast majority of their work—'because it's going to suit our political narrative and it's going to suit the process that we're looking to follow. We don't want to try to look at the Parklands because we might be worried about what it might mean for the member for Adelaide's chances of re-election'. Constantly, the South Australian police have been going through a process of uncertainty because of what this government has put them through—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Elder! The member for Flinders has the call.

**Mr TELFER:** —with one site location after another. The uncertainty continues to grow, and even yesterday we hear that this process continues on.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for West Torrens is called to order. The member for Flinders has the call.

**Mr TELFER:** We hear from the police commissioner, who is a professional man who does not let too much on, that there are concerns within the police force about the operational impacts of what the location at Gepps Cross might mean. There are also personal individual concerns from police officers who are significantly reconsidering their positions in the mounted force if they are to be relocated to Gepps Cross. The way that this government has treated these police officers is shameful. To get to the point where individual police officers are reconsidering their position because of the attitude of this government is, I think, really disgraceful.

We see that the location for the police greys constantly gets bounced around. Firstly, it was going to be in the Parklands site, then it was going to move to Adelaide Airport—that was going to be the location. What happened then? We did not get much direction, unfortunately, from any answers to that, just some rhetoric around a wave pool. We asked the question of the police commissioner: what was the justification for a move away from the Adelaide Airport? There were concerns raised about PFAS, but was there any testing done on those sites? No, there was not.

So this move for SAPOL, once again from the government, now goes all the way up to Gepps Cross, a site where we hear it would take up to 50 minutes to mobilise the police greys into the CBD

for urgent emergency responses. It is something that I worry is going to mean there will be a bigger risk for the community and lesser outcomes for community safety, and for me that is not acceptable.

To have the government ignoring the calls of police to have a site closer to the CBD—they are not asking for much. Have a look at perhaps some of the 14 sites. What are the 14 sites? We do not know. We have not had that transparency from this government. They are saying, 'Trust us. This is the location.'

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr TELFER:** They are saying, 'We don't want to take into consideration what the police are saying to us,' which is a site within three to five kilometres. We do not know what the government has actually considered.

*The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for West Torrens!

**Mr TELFER:** We do not know if there were brownfield sites that were written off because, once again, there may be a political impact on their decision.

*Mr Whetstone interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Chaffey!

**Mr TELFER:** So it is a location 10 kilometres outside the CBD where all the work would happen, at a cost of what we are hearing at the moment is \$90 million for the site at Gepps Cross. That does not take into account any of the additional costs, the additional operational costs—the additional costs that would be required because there will need to be a staging area constructed. Because it is so far out of town, there needs to be a staging area constructed to bring the police greys into the CBD to have them ready to go. We do not know what the cost of that staging area is going to be.

The location where it is going to be put—the site behind the Courts Administration office—has now been described as a temporary location because it is going to be needed by the courts in the future. So it is a temporary location for a problem, once again because of the worry about what the political impact might be.

The people of South Australia are starting to have their eyes wide open to the motivations of this government, and they are starting to realise that accountability means nothing to this government when it comes to this process. Questions are being asked about process and about who is making the decisions around this. Questions were being asked of the police minister, who you think you would be in charge. But, no, we hear that the Treasurer has been requested by the Premier to take control of this project because it is out of control. It is out of control, so the Treasurer has been asked to come and get his hands on it to try to get it under control.

This is not even starting to talk about the other units that need to have a location. Fifteen business units need to be relocated from Thebarton barracks. We hear where there is going to be a location for a few of them, sure. We still have no insight into where the Police Historical Society are going to be relocated, something that is essential for the long-term preservation of the over 100-year history of our South Australian police force. Where are they going to be located? Once again, the government is saying, 'Trust us. We've got it all in hand.'

Where is the police band going to be located? We hear from the Treasurer: 'Trust us in what's going to be.' Where is the road safety course going to be? 'No, trust us. It's alright. It's all in hand.' Unfortunately, the transparency of this is like a bucket of mud thrown in the air. The government have been so secretive in their way of going about it that not even SAPOL know what is happening.

Yesterday, we heard reports, which suddenly the government tried to shut down, of South Australia Police representatives going to look at a site at Morphettville, yet we get reassurances from the Treasurer that this project is all in hand and is happening at Gepps Cross. It is too bad for the operations of South Australia Police and what the impacts are going to be—too bad for them.

More than half of the officers within the police mounted division come from the southern suburbs and the Adelaide Hills. The conversation that I am having with them is that the relocation to Gepps Cross is making them reconsider their positions. They are going to have to commute from their southern suburbs homes or the Adelaide Hills, where the vast majority of them are from, up to a location at Gepps Cross, then have to work their horses into a horse float, drive back into the CBD and at the end of the day do the exact reverse. The amount of wasted time, wasted effort, wasted resources is all because the government think, well, it is out of sight, out of mind, 10 kilometres out of the city at Gepps Cross.

The way that this project has been handled has been shambolic. I am amazed that the government has let this roll on to this point, because if you are hearing directly from the people who are tasked with keeping our state safe, that they have significant community safety concerns about this location, why are you not listening? Why is the minister not listening? Why is the Treasurer, who is now seemingly in charge of this project, not listening, when SAPOL themselves are saying this is a significant concern not just for community safety but also for personal individual outcomes for our police officers?

We see that the attrition rate for police officers is at an all-time high. Over 5 per cent of police officers are leaving the force every single year. We have a gap of over 200 officers from where we are supposed to be. We have officers on medical leave, we have a situation where we are significant numbers down on where we need to be and what are we doing? We are putting more restrictions, more roadblocks, more hurdles in the way of our police officers.

We get platitudes from the police minister when any questions are asked about this, treating it like a joke. Community safety, for me, is not a joke. We need to make sure that the decision that is made about the relocation of SA Police facilities is done in a strategically smart way and in a way that actually ensures there is a long-term solution for community safety here in South Australia—not short term, not a temporary location—something that is going to be sustainable so that we know that the people who are tasked with keeping us safe, people who do an amazing job on the beat in the South Australia Police force, are listened to, they are heard, and the actions from the government reflect that.

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

That the debate be adjourned.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....23  
Noes.....13  
Majority .....10

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Bell, T.S.
Cowdrey, M.J.	Hurn, A.M.	McBride, P.N.
Pederick, A.S.	Pisoni, D.G. (teller)	Pratt, P.K.
Tarzia, V.A.	Teague, J.B.	Telfer, S.J.
Whetstone, T.J.		



## PAIRS

Hildyard, K.A.  
Gardner, J.A.W.  
Szakacs, J.K.

Speirs, D.J.  
Piccolo, A.  
Marshall, S.S.

Malinauskas, P.B.  
Patterson, S.J.R.

Motion thus carried; debate adjourned.

**PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE (ADELAIDE PARK LANDS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 13 September 2023.)

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (11:15):** I take this opportunity to speak on the bill, reflecting on the debate that has been going on about the Parklands for, I suspect, as long as the Parklands. In the very early period, we know that there were elements of the Parklands that were divided into lots. Lot Fourteen, the former site of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, was chosen to be the site for the premier hospital site in the City of Adelaide. We have the University of Adelaide campuses and other cultural institutions directly north of North Terrace, which is technically the boundary for the CBD and the start of the Parklands. Of course, they are public assets, assets that are used by the public.

In 2018, it was such a good outcome when the Marshall government was elected and decided to turn that former Royal Adelaide Hospital site into a science, technology and innovation site—Lot Fourteen—which is the largest in the country. We know that the plan from those opposite was to turn that into a building site, a development site for developers. It would still be a housing estate to this day if there were not that change of government in 2018 and that vision driven by former Premier Steven Marshall to deliver that.

Reflecting on my time in this place and my interest in politics over many years, there has always been a debate about what type of use there should be for the Parklands. When I joined the Adelaide Park Lands Preservation Association as a then resident of Prospect in I think 1988, quite some time ago, there was an ongoing debate about what the Parklands should look like. There were those who believed the Parklands were there for leisure, whether that leisure be organised leisure through sporting clubs having access through the manicured gardens and fields or whether it be natural bushland. There were always these two factions within that group—certainly when I joined there were those two factions—but they had one thing in common and that was that it is not a place for concrete and fences.

What this bill does is put an extra safeguard in place. We know that there are still elements of the Parklands—there is a section of land directly adjacent to the railway line that is a car park and a rubbish dump. Any of us leaving the Parliament House car park heading west and then north to North Adelaide after entering from under the car park will see the car park west of the Morphett Street Bridge. It is an eyesore and has been like that for many decades, certainly as long as I can remember. It has been there for a very long time.

I have always had concern, which is growing now because of changes to land use on Greenhill Road, about what really does look to be neglect of the Parklands south of an imaginary line, if you like, halfway between South Terrace and Greenhill Road. There are beautiful, manicured gardens and Park 21, which is a community project. It is a re-creation of what was originally there before settlement. That has been a very successful project, although not publicised enough.

I believe it would be in the interests of Adelaide for it to be much better known. I could see it even being a tourist attraction, particularly for ecotourists who are very interested in its history and nature and the different plants there are in different parts of the world. One of the things we learn when we visit social media is that there are a lot of people out there collectively in the world who are

very interested in very small areas of interest, such as natural flora and fauna and who will travel the world to see something that is unique—and there is something very unique about Park 21.

Of course, then we have a couple of kilometres of Parklands immediately east of that that just look neglected. Fortunately, the SCAP last week rejected the Australian Education Union's proposal for a monstrosity of 224-odd apartments with not enough car parks, bike parks or recreational area. That was 30 per cent higher than the approval process or the guidelines that were recommended over the six-year planning review by the former Weatherill government by the then planning minister Mr Rau. It just broke so many boxes. There were 10 grounds for refusal for that particular project.

I do congratulate SCAP on the time and interest they took in this particular project. It is a new type of development that has never been done before in South Australia. Even the interstate examples that members were asked to look at in their consideration of the project had not been completed, and some of them had not even been started. The point I am making, though, is that people in Parkside, north Unley and Wayville are not opposed to change and development; they just want development happening within the approved plan, and that was not the case with the AEU building.

Of course, as more of these developments are approved within the plan, we will need more accessible open public space and the Parklands are right across the road. They need to be inviting. They need to be Parklands that people can take their children to and use for recreation and not be concerned about overgrown grass or hazards from fallen branches or weeds that are popping up through the unmanicured Parklands.

I think it is time the state government and the City of Adelaide look beyond that imaginary line halfway between South Terrace and Greenhill Road and pay some attention to the southern part of the southern Parklands or, if you like, those Parklands that abut Greenhill Road. They will become a valuable asset for the government's desire to see more higher density housing on Greenhill Road.

Of course, if people do not have private open space, they need quality public open space. That is why it is important that we not only protect the Parklands that are so unique to South Australia—the city in a park, rather than the park in a city—but ensure that those Parklands are inviting to use.

What a great selling point it is for people who are moving into apartments to know that there are manicured Parklands just across the road. We see it right across the Parklands. We see the Parklands alongside Port Road, the Parklands that run through North Adelaide all beautifully manicured. The Parklands along South Terrace are beautifully manicured, including the Japanese gardens. I would like to see more of that in the South Parklands, those that abut Greenhill Road, so we can continue to enjoy the beauty of the Adelaide Parklands.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

**Mr ODENWALDER:** I draw your attention to the state of the house, sir.

**The SPEAKER:** Attention has been drawn to the state of the house. Before I order that the bells be rung, I will ask the Clerk to make a careful count and I will also perform a count myself. Quorum present.

#### *Motions*

### **STATE CENTRE OF FOOTBALL**

Private Members Business, Notices of Motion, No. 3: Hon. V.A. Tarzia to move:

That this house—

- (a) notes the completion of the State Centre of Football at Gepps Cross which serves as the Young Matilda's training camp in the lead-up to the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup;
- (b) commends the former Liberal government for investing in state-of-the-art facilities for women's sport; and
- (c) acknowledges this \$26 million investment formed part of an over \$400 million investment into sport from the former Liberal government across South Australia.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (11:28):** I move:

That this notice of motion be withdrawn.

Motion carried; notice of motion withdrawn.

#### **WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY**

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (11:28):** On behalf of the member for Elder, I move:

That this house—

- (a) notes that 10 October 2023 is World Mental Health Day;
- (b) acknowledges the importance of raising awareness of mental health issues;
- (c) recognises the Malinauskas Labor government's commitment to supporting and improving mental health services, including providing an extra 120 mental health beds to ease pressures on our hospital system so that people can get the help they need;
- (d) commends the government for reversing the former Liberal government's decision to abolish the role of a full-time mental health commissioner in SA; and
- (e) encourages South Australians to look after each other and themselves and seek help if they are struggling.

I am very happy to move this motion on behalf of the member for Elder, who is very committed in relation to mental health and also serves, of course, as the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention. I think we all in this house recognise the importance of mental health, but we do need to recognise that there have been issues in terms of people being able to access the help they need when they have mental health conditions. That is why a very significant part of the investment we are making as a government is about providing additional mental health support, particularly for those people who have acute mental health needs, who need that higher level of assistance in our public hospital system.

We have not seen an increase for a long time in terms of the number of mental health beds that are available across our system, and so, because of that, we do see on a regular basis people who present to our emergency departments needing assistance, who are then classified and determined by the doctors in the emergency department and the psychiatrists as needing an acute mental health admission, but there is nowhere for them to go because those mental health beds are full. There is no other ability for them to get that acute treatment and therefore they get stuck in the emergency department.

That is obviously an awful outcome for them. For anybody to be stuck in an emergency department for 24 hours, 48 hours, sometimes longer, would be an awfully bad outcome, let alone if you were somebody suffering a mental health condition. It is an awful outcome for those people not being able to get that help, but it is also a broader worse outcome for the rest of the health system in terms of it meaning that that access block stops the next person who needs assistance coming in from the waiting room, the ambulance ramp, etc., and so that is why we are investing right across the board.

We listened to the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists before the last election, as well as the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, who both put forward very compelling cases that what we needed was additional mental health wards with a focus on rehabilitation, and there are a number of reasons for that. One is the capacity that we talked about. The other element, of course, is that, because of the pressure on those services that we have, there is a pressure that we face in terms of having to turn over patients within them relatively quickly.

But for many patients, having the ability to be in a rehabilitation ward for a longer period of care will actually enable them to get that and not have to be discharged before we have seen the full effect of the treatment they have been receiving. That is why we are investing in three new 24-bed mental health wards: one at Modbury Hospital, one at The QEH and one at Noarlunga Hospital. That is a real generational increase in terms of that capacity across the board.

In addition to that, of course, we are also investing elsewhere in the system. We are increasing the number of mental health beds that will be provided at the Women's and Children's Hospital, and I will speak a bit further about the impact that we are seeing on kids in particular. We are increasing the number of beds that are available at Flinders Medical Centre as part of our \$400 million redevelopment there. We made the announcement last week about the expansion that is happening at the Margaret Tobin Centre, including additional psychiatric intensive care beds that are desperately needed across the system as well.

You, sir, I know are very familiar with the fact that we are building a new Mount Barker hospital. Part of the commitment there is to have the first mental health ward and facilities that will be available for inpatient care in the Adelaide Hills, which has been very strongly welcomed by the community, which will mean less pressure on people having to come to the city. In addition, I know the member for Mount Gambier is very familiar with the fact that we are increasing mental health beds in his community at the Mount Gambier hospital as well and providing that additional support. But that is not the extent of what we are doing and needs to be done, because we know that there are a lot of other needs in terms of mental health care.

One of those, as I mentioned earlier, is in relation to children. We are seeing impacts in terms of kids' mental health right across the board at a concerning level. I think COVID is not the only cause, but COVID issues have certainly exacerbated that over the past couple of years. We are taking a number of measures. One is that the new Women's and Children's Hospital will have additional mental health beds.

Secondly, in the current hospital we have employed additional specialist nurses for mental health services at the Women's and Children's Hospital to help provide additional care and help manage what we are seeing in very escalating numbers of kids who require mental health presentations at the emergency department. We are also putting in place additional resources in terms of extra psychologists and extra psychiatrists for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which is very much needed because there are many kids who need that additional level of support who have been unable to access it.

Importantly, we are also putting resources into our schools. The Minister for Education is a very big supporter of additional wellbeing measures in our schools, and we now have 100 extra staff—mental health and learning support staff—who are going through our schools. They are being hired at the moment; a number of them are in place already. That will help provide a real preventative end of the system to make sure that people can get the care and the initial support and, hopefully, do not have to confront those other elements of the system as well.

In addition to this, for adults we are also putting in place additional funding for community mental health services. That is likely to have a particular focus on regional areas, where people face even greater challenges in terms of being able to access community mental health services. That is being worked through at the moment.

We are also putting in place additional resources that particularly help people when they are leaving hospital to get ongoing support in a Hospital in the Home model. This has been a model that has operated in the central Adelaide region for some time, but we are expanding it so that these beds—20 additional bed equivalents—through Hospital in the Home services will be available in the northern suburbs and the southern suburbs to help ease a lot of that pressure that we see in terms of those services.

So right across the board we are putting in place additional services. At the same time, we have been increasing the funding going to our NGO providers as well. We obviously have more work that needs to happen there, and we are particularly also working with the federal government in relation to issues that we see in terms of NDIS. There is also more work, of course, that needs to happen in relation to the mental health workforce, in a similar way that needs to happen across other areas of our health workforce as well.

We also need to put in place some of the systems that help the system, and the state more broadly, in terms of increasing the focus on mental health. One of those is the mental health commissioner, which the member for Elder rightly raises through this motion. We saw that the mental health commissioner full-time position was abolished. We are now restoring a full-time mental health

commissioner with dedicated staffing support. We have appointed an excellent, internationally renowned mental health expert who will be starting very shortly and has been very well received by people across the board.

In addition to that, the other key thing we need to do in relation to mental health is listen to people with lived experience of mental health. We are fortunate in South Australia that an organisation started up over the past few years—not because of the government but because of some exceptional leadership in the lived experience space—which is the Lived Experience Leadership and Action Network (LELAN).

We have committed to providing ongoing funding to LELAN to make sure that they can provide that service as a peak body representing people with lived experience and so that in the design of these services and the design of the work that we are doing as a government, but also more broadly across the system, the voice of lived experience can be heard very loudly. We know that is critical to making sure that we can address the needs that we see.

I would like to also acknowledge the work that the member for Elder and the other members of the Suicide Prevention Council are doing. I thank John Dawkins, who was the first Premier's advocate who led the work for this to be legislated. We are now a real leader internationally in terms of having the Suicide Prevention Act here in South Australia. The member for Elder, in her work as the Premier's advocate, has also been visiting people right across the state, and the Suicide Prevention Council has been doing excellent work, and I know just last week visited the member for Chaffey's electorate which, I understand from the member for Chaffey, was very well received by members of his electorate as well in focusing on these issues.

I endorse the motion that has been moved by the member for Elder. I hope that this is a day in coming weeks that can be celebrated and commemorated across our community in South Australia and that it can increase the focus of what we need to do in relation to taking action on mental health. There is a lot happening, there is a lot that is going to be coming soon and we know that this is an area where more and more needs to be done.

In closing, I should mention the other element I did not touch on, that is, the work we are doing with the federal government in relation to additional services to be provided to the community as well. There are additional Head to Health services being rolled out. This is going to be very welcome for people to be able to access that support in the community, as well, for those services. This is something that we have seen obviously in the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre in the city.

We are now seeing a similar service operating in the Salisbury area, another community drop-in clinic is now operating in Port Pirie, as well, and we are about to see additional Head to Health services operating, including a combination of state and federal government assistance into that program. I note that that includes two specialist services, one in relation to children, particularly focusing on children who are too young for the current headspace model. We know that, sadly, there are a number of young kids who do need that mental health assistance, so having that additional Head to Health centre focused on young kids is going to be really important.

The other service is in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a focused mental health service that will be dedicated to them. I received an update from the department and the Chief Psychiatrist in relation to those matters just yesterday. We are hoping that over coming months we will be going through the tender process for those initiatives. They are going to be at key population groups where we know that more needs to happen and more support needs to be provided. I endorse the motion to the house.

**Ms PRATT (Frome) (11:42):** I seek to amend the motion introduced by the member for Elder as follows:

Delete paragraph (d) and insert in lieu thereof:

- (d) commends the former Liberal government for establishing the highly valued Urgent Mental Health Care Centre.

While I thank the member for introducing this motion that affords us all the opportunity to address the importance of raising awareness of mental health issues, it must not be an occasion where we gloss over the challenges to life-saving treatment and where we allow the government to pat itself

on the back for a job well done. In seeking to amend the motion, it is an opportunity, hopefully, for there to be some recognition of bipartisan amendment, allowing us to recognise efforts that were made on both sides of the chamber in the past four years. This work on investment in mental health services will never be done, and sadly there is still much to do.

The mental health journey extends from birth to death and the entry points to experiencing mental distress are infinite and require a system that is nimble, tailored and kind. Sadly, what we currently have is a system that is in freefall. It is difficult to navigate and it is failing rural people. We know that because just this month SA Health responded to a review of rural mental health services in South Australia that was triggered by a coronial inquiry into the tragic suicide of a young man from the Riverland.

What it highlights is that services in regional SA are inadequate, to say the least. This report was completed back in May this year, but it took the department another four months to determine a response, which parliament has only just received. The review is a damning read. The number one recommendation stemming from the review of the coronial inquiry into a rural suicide was:

The state government should consider allocating responsibility for rural health and mental health within its Ministry portfolios.

SA Health agreed in principle only that the second recommendation be supported:

...a 10-year rural mental health service plan and workforce strategy should be developed, supported by a funded implementation plan with...progress reporting to parliament.

On page 50 of that same report into rural mental health services, which was triggered by a coronial inquiry, it states that, when it comes to the number of psychiatrists per capita, internationally Adelaide might be on par with countries like Norway and France, but if you live in South Australia you are much worse off than Mongolia. This review pays special mention to the parents of Theo, Jack and Poppy Papageorgiou, who have continued to advocate for answers and accountability from the system in the name of their son, Theo, who tragically took his life.

I have an opportunity as we address the very important motion that the member for Elder has brought to the chamber, where we recognise that on 10 October we will mark World Mental Health Day. Of course, we want to raise awareness, but in doing so I have an obligation as the shadow minister to raise awareness of the lack of services, particularly across South Australia. The government now has form for sitting on reports and research that really are better released so that the service sector can meet the needs of South Australians.

The example I refer to now is the unmet needs report, which was commissioned by the former minister, Stephen Wade, of the other place. We know that report was completed sometime back in February, but it took many months for it to be released. I would argue that delay was reckless by the government and seemingly a strategy to avoid any fiscal or budget responsibility because we saw through estimates the minister conceding that no additional funding was added to the mental health portfolio for this financial year. I would certainly argue that is a missed opportunity.

I hope the member for Elder in her important advocacy work has not been sent in by the government to do their dirty work rewriting history because they certainly have a reputation for closing down sites and reducing beds. When we look at a historical time line of mental health services across South Australia, it is just a litany of missed opportunities and deliberate downsizing. I can sadly point to sites across the city, including Glenside, which was closed on the government's watch; the closure of the Repat, which I am sure we all remember; and, most recently, the permanent closure of the Southern Intermediate Care Centre at Noarlunga.

Of course, the minister on his feed is going to be talking about investment in the tertiary clinical inpatient beds in hospitals, and we welcome that investment, but South Australia is so far behind when it comes to the beds we require for identified needs. When we talk about psychosocial services, 20,000 South Australians are estimated as needing access to these services, so there is much more to be done. If the workplace culture at James Nash House is anything to go by, minister, the sector is certainly still in trouble. They felt so bullied and undervalued that they were compelled to write to the Premier, begging for intervention.

The Liberal legacy, when we look at this time line, is from 2018 to 2022 under the careful watch and guardianship of the former minister, Stephen Wade: the opening of Northgate House, the opening of the Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the statewide Borderline Personality Disorder Collaborative services opened on Greenhill Road. We saw short-stay mental health beds allocated to the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Neuro-Behavioural Unit at the Repat—which the Labor government were destined to close—and of course, the jewel in the crown, the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre, which is loved and lauded by everyone who works there and, happily for those who are in distress and are needing that service, they are finding compassion and support.

The minister referred to John Dawkins, whose very thorough and compassionate advocacy delivered to this parliament, to the state, the nation-leading Suicide Prevention Act. The Liberal government continued with that advocacy to deliver a much-needed suicide register. Managing COVID was a challenge, but through that time the Marshall Liberal government understood the importance of wellbeing and supporting a community to develop resilience. We saw Wellbeing SA established and the Open Your World campaign. The establishment of that agency was certainly an earnest commitment to prioritise prevention in South Australia.

I give special recognition to leaders within Wellbeing SA, Ms Lyn Dean and Professor Katina D'Onise; they are due recognition in this chamber, and the other side seem to be silent. Their combined wisdom and strategic insight certainly have been the driving force behind Wellbeing SA's commendable accomplishments, and their personal and professional departure from Wellbeing SA is our loss. The list of achievements under Ms Dean's guidance is extensive, but certainly through her leadership in Wellbeing SA and COVID-19 management, the Open Your World initiative would sit at the top of that list. When it comes to the Suicide Register, I recognise the work that Professor D'Onise implements in safeguarding that vital data. To capture suicides is essential but very sombre work.

I thank and acknowledge the extraordinary people who volunteered to join a suicide prevention network around our state. There are about 50 or so, and I am certain the member for Elder will touch on her work involved with them. It is a proud association that the former Liberal government had as well, and I am proudly associated with the Wellbeing Trailblazers SPN situated in the Clare Valley for the Mid North.

The Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention has most recently visited the electorate of Chaffey for, I think, a statewide convention, and I thank her for her endeavours in supporting the SPNs, but I implore her to keep pushing into regional South Australia because that is where we need to see investment and support the most. Our farming families and communities are facing pressures when it comes to cost of living, a hot summer coming, and wine, wheat and wool prices in freefall.

While I would argue that this has been a useful conversation, I think there is much to do. Where sunshine is the best disinfectant, when it comes to mental health this Labor government has blocked out the sun.

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (11:53):** I rise on the motion introduced by the member for Elder and commend her efforts regarding her advocacy for mental health within South Australia and her electorate. Mental health is such a complex topic, as the stigma behind it, especially for men's mental health, is so prevalent, despite almost everyone being affected in one way or another. Recognising World Mental Health Day opens the door for future conversations on mental health by reducing its stigma and encouraging every day to be a day when somebody can talk and raise awareness about mental health.

Living in a regional area, as we have just heard, it can be intimidating to share and speak freely about mental health, which is why I would like to draw attention to the hardworking individual in my electorate, Luke Thompson, who has taken upon himself to create a podcast, *Let's Talk*, designed to break the stigma around mental health. As written in *The Border Watch*, our local paper, Luke said, and I quote:

I thought there was a gap and I always wanted to start a podcast after I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety but didn't know how to go about it.

I have always been very open about my diagnosis and people started messaging and coming up to me, telling me how they battle with [their own] mental health.

This [podcast] is about getting people to open up and normalising mental health.

We go through this and it is normal, mental health is not a taboo subject anymore.

Luke's podcast has encouraged local regional people to speak and learn different ways to manage their mental health battles without feeling like it is an unwinnable war. His initiative to destigmatise mental health, especially regional men's mental health, is highly commendable and should be shared further outside Mount Gambier and the greater Limestone Coast region.

Recently, we saw the unveiling of concept plans for the proposed upgrade to the mental health unit at the Mount Gambier and districts hospital. This will include six short-stay beds and two specialist community drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds, as mentioned by the health minister a minute ago. As a regional hospital, these types of commitments are vital for adequate country living and community health.

Without the additional mental health beds, our hospital will be exceeding capacity, unable to support those struggling with mental health in time of urgent need; restricting the care of someone else in need of medical attention as standard beds are being used for mental health beds; or forcing unnecessary and expensive travel to metropolitan health facilities as there is no assistance locally. It is an important issue and, although there are still challenges with availability and funding for the Mount Gambier and districts hospital, every mental health bed is one step closer to better regional health.

On a slightly more lighthearted note, I would like to reiterate my praise for Adam Todd, Adam Richards, Jesse Plunkett, Celeste Raymond, Shane Raymond, Matt Roscow, Luke Thomson and Aaron Davis who, I mentioned earlier this year, established a Switch the Headspace Match for Mental Health. This football match was designed to do two things: raise awareness and funds to reduce the stigma around mental health and to educate the wider South-East community on mental health, aiming to encourage those who may not have traditionally sought mental health support and give them the ability to reach out.

The footy match, which featured ex-AFL stars Dane Swan, Leon Davis, Shane Mumford, Jordan Murdoch, Brodie Murdoch, Winis Imbi and myself—

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr BELL:** —I am kidding. But I did play for a small bit to a crowd of over 3,000 people and the game raised over \$30,000 for the Limestone Coast Headspace.

This initiative, as amazing as it is, sadly started due to the increasing suicide rate of young people in our township. Those young boys knew that if what they needed to do to save a friend's life was to destigmatise and talk about the challenges and effects of mental health, then that was what they would do. Their advocacy for talking about mental health and reiterating that it is not weak to speak or to get mental health support is highly admirable and brave. I am sure it has helped more people than they will ever know. Therefore, I commend the motion to the house and thank the member for Elder for bringing this important topic to parliament.

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (11:58):** I rise to commend the motion in its amended form to the house, and I will have a bit to say about that in a moment. I commend the member for Frome for really bringing to the fore the catalogue of actions taken by the former Liberal government and, in particular—as the member for Frome has described it, 'the jewel in the crown'—the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre, the subject of the amendment. It was indeed a significant achievement.

To address the government's paragraph (d), I acknowledge the government has taken a step to appoint a full-time mental health commissioner in SA, but let's be really clear: this is important. This is not a matter of being unnecessarily partisan. In my view, it is counterproductive if not disingenuous to link the establishment of the full-time mental health commissioner in terms of abolishing something and replacing it with a full-time role.

Let's be clear: when John Mannion was appointed by the former Liberal government as a commissioner—John Mannion is a man I know well and respect; he is a man of my community and



he brought with him the years of experience as executive director of Breakthrough to that role—he joined co-commissioners Heather Nowak and David Kelly. That is well known. So we go from a model that in the experience of those years has led now to the recent appointment of a single commissioner, and if that is a step in the right direction, well, shoulders to the wheel.

But let's be clear about the fact that in the course of the former government there were multiple mental health commissioners, and I might just say in that regard, in connection with a rationale that was stated at the time, that the role of a mental health commissioner is to work with the community on a strong focus on early intervention and prevention as well as building resilience and mental wellbeing, and that includes continuing to facilitate partnerships across all levels of government and community.

There is a virtue in an approach that says multiple commissioners who are continuing their work—in John Mannion's case through his important work with Breakthrough, which continues, and I commend and thank John Mannion and all those involved at Breakthrough—is virtuous. But you had multiple commissioners. If there is an approach that says, 'Okay, we will be better off having a single full time,' let's see that working out, but, goodness, there is no need for engaging in the kind of partisan rhetoric that is associated with abolishing a role and replacing it with another. We can do better than that.

If I just pause there for a moment, we are here addressing private members' motions in the parliament. This is parliament's work, and parliament ought to have respect for the subject matter, and it ought to have respect for the process, but parliament ought to have self-respect about this. It is one thing for government to engage in messaging, spin and media pronouncement and so on, but it is another thing for parliament to go about the work that it does, analysing and interrogating matters that then parliament is considering putting its name to.

I might come back to that a bit over the journey as well. It is very important in this context that parliament demonstrates self-respect in the debate it is having and no less than on this very important subject matter. I am far from an authority on this particularly complex and difficult area. I was honoured briefly to serve in the last government as chair of the government's issues group on suicide prevention and in that role through several months in 2020 was engaged with the council and with John Dawkins in his role as the Premier's advocate.

That was an opportunity to work with the chief executives of the departments and together to work on how to improve on this difficult area, with a particular focus on the public sector and working closely with the Premier's Council as one of its working groups. One of those areas—and it perhaps goes to paragraph (e) of the motion, which is uncontroversial and not the subject of amendment—was in working towards reducing and removing the stigma that is associated with mental health, particularly with suicide and with the opportunity to seek help.

That, like other areas of social and community policy, is one that is complex. It does not come with easy answers and we know that the experience in the community does not lead us in a straight line towards knowing how to solve it. There is a stigma, there is a mystery, and we have to work towards being able to advocate more openly and we have to work towards being accountable for reducing incidences of self-harm and those terrible occasions where people take their lives.

Harking back to that short period in that role, I might just highlight in this regard one of the more outstanding of such community networks, being the Strathalbyn suicide prevention network, one of lots of networks around the state. The member for Frome has highlighted the need for action in our regions. Strathalbyn, being one such region close to the metro and perhaps touched by some of the issues that might be identified in metropolitan Adelaide but also very much in the character of the struggles that affect those in regional and rural areas of the state, really led the way in terms of being closely connected to community, having a mixture of those with what we describe as lived experience, those family members who have lived through the horrors of what it is to have a family member take their life, through to clinicians and those associated with the Strathalbyn hospital and healthcare services in the area.

It is really an exemplary example of what such a network can do to build its way into the ordinary day-to-day life of people in the local area. The boundaries have changed and Strath is now in the safe and capable hands of the member for Hammond, who continues that work and is very

familiar with the work of that community over a long stretch, and so I am sure we join together in commending their work. I do for those reasons commend the motion as it has been amended by the member for Frome.

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (12:08):** I rise to speak about a subject matter which is close to my heart. Obviously, those of us who have connection with community are all well aware of the challenges that we are facing as a society and as small communities with mental health and the way that we manage it, especially in regional areas. In my electorate, we have communities that are spread far and wide, and it is sad to admit that the supports that are in place for our regional communities in particular are absolutely inadequate for the need that we are facing at the moment for mental health supports.

I know that the tyranny of distance in South Australia can be a hindrance for so many different service deliveries and I, for one, anytime I get on my feet here, am trying to represent the needs of those communities in essential areas such as health care. Mental health care, in particular, is one that is especially pertinent. The rate of suicide in regional areas is higher, and campaigns have been run previously—as has been mentioned already—to try to remove the stigma from mental health challenges in regional areas amongst farmers and amongst community members and get people to realise that it is only by having supports in place that you can help yourself, through your connections, to get through some of the more challenging times.

As I said, it is especially pertinent within our farming community. We know the pressures farmers face with the way they need to balance business, family, the constantly changing seasons and the uncertainty that brings those businesses, as well as the generational expectations people can feel upon their shoulders. In regional communities, we have seen the rate of suicide amongst farmers at a really worrying level, and that is why I want to highlight the need for supports to be in place in regional communities, in particular, and my electorate of Flinders especially.

I know there have been moves in the right direction, but those moves often get stifled. There was an announcement a number of years ago about the opening of mental health beds in Port Lincoln. It was made with much fanfare at the time—off the top of my head I think it was the Weatherill government that made that announcement—and it was a step in the right direction but, unfortunately, my understanding is that those mental health beds have never been staffed, there have never actually been the supports in place in Port Lincoln.

For people in Port Lincoln, which is some seven or eight hours' drive away from Adelaide, and people who are farther flung out in the Far West who are 10, 11, 12 or however many hours away from Adelaide, that is their source of mental health support. That is really worrying, and it is a subject we should not shy away from when making decisions around resourcing mental health supports across our state, especially in regional areas.

I want to highlight—as I have done already in this place—the good work that has been done. I recognise that the member for Elder, in her capacity as the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention, has visited my area a number of times, and I also want to highlight the great work that Mentally Fit EP does as an organisation under the umbrella of West Coast Youth and Community Support.

Mentally Fit EP was established in 2014 to try to change the narrative and negative communication around mental illness on Eyre Peninsula and to really advance the skills in our community in mental health to try to support others going through the challenges I have mentioned that are being faced. The organisation was set up by two women, in particular, who had a passion for mental health, Jo Clark and Kirsty Traeger, under the umbrella of West Coast Youth and Community Support.

Kirsty was someone I knew from Cummins from when we were young and was someone who had herself experienced mental health challenges firsthand. This drove her to help others in our community with similar experiences. In 2015, Kirsty travelled to Adelaide to accept the South Australian Event of the Year for the Port Lincoln 2015 Mental Health Week activities. Unfortunately, she tragically passed away in a car crash.

That really left a hole, and created uncertainty in that organisation, but I commend the amazing and passionate volunteers and community members who took that vision and really expanded it across Eyre Peninsula and who continue to try to remove the barriers for people searching for health and support for their mental health challenges. They run a number of fantastic events to enable and upskill people within our community to help provide the supports, and those people searching for that support within our community know that is a source of knowledge and empowerment for them.

I want to highlight the great work that West Coast Youth and Community Support are doing because mental health is not discriminatory. It happens across all ages. It happens across different categories of people. Whether you are rich or poor, whether you are a man or a woman, whether you are young or old it does not matter: mental health challenges can hit each and every one of us. West Coast Youth and Community Support are doing great work on southern Eyre Peninsula in particular but expanding out to the whole of my electorate. This is the time when I always encourage government decision-makers, people with their hands on the purse strings of government at whatever level, to really make sure they are investing appropriately in these sort of supports.

I want to also highlight the great work that Beacon of Hope suicide prevention in Tumby Bay in particular—my home town—are doing. Once again, it was born out of grief, out of the loss of someone close. The people who are involved in these networks bring passion to trying to highlight that there are opportunities for support, that there are ways to get through mental health challenges, and it is through community that this is most effectively done. The team are continuing to run events, provide support and even simple things like having available a drop-in capacity or someone who can be a shoulder to lean on and a help through some dark times.

I think it is really important and, as we would all reiterate in this place, if you as an individual—and we all know because we experience it ourselves—are going through those times, you need to reach out to your support networks, which will be available. They are harder to access in regional areas and that is why it is so important that that investment continues to happen.

I also highlight the great work that has been done in Ceduna by the Ceduna Youth Hub, a place that I visited only a short period of time ago. It is working with children of all ages to provide that community that support. As I said, mental health challenges do not discriminate by age and especially affect young people who are searching for direction in life, for meaning in life, for support in life. These sorts of essential services that the Ceduna Youth Hub provide get kids through some of the more challenging times. Peter and the team do amazing work. In my visit there, it was a real blessing to see that some of the people who are now working in that space at the Ceduna Youth Hub were the very young people who looked for support and help 10 years before.

This is what regional communities bring to the table. The thing that really does hit home for me in regional communities is that we all have connections to different individuals. We all have a story to share, whether it is firsthand, second-hand or it happened to people we know of who are struggling with their mental health in regional areas or, sadly, people who have succumbed to that and taken their own life. The close-knit nature of regional communities means that the support within those communities really needs to be robust, and I commend the people I have mentioned already, the organisations that do great work within my community and the many that I know do great work right across regional South Australia.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:18):** I, too, would like to make a contribution on World Mental Health Day and just reinforce some of the circumstances, situations and the challenges that everyday people face, particularly in the regions. As has been stated, those who live on the land, those who live off the land, particularly face strain and stressors that are exacerbated by the challenges of being a primary producer. Some of the challenges of living in a regional setting include the tyranny of distance, which does create a barrier, as does being somewhat isolated—isolated away from mainstream health support, whether it is mental health support or some of the suicide prevention initiatives that we have in society.

I think it has been very well documented that supporting one in five South Australians affected by mental health illness should be a priority of any government of any persuasion. This includes making sure that 45 per cent of South Australians who experience a diagnosable mental

health illness throughout their life will better understand what it means to them and the needs that they would like to see addressed, particularly in a regional setting.

We know that suicide is the leading cause of death of South Australians between the ages of 15 and 44. As a local MP in a regional setting, I too have very proudly made initiatives not only as a local member, but a friend and I started up a men's shed. It was not the traditional men's shed that we all enjoy today, but it was a gathering of farmers, particularly men, who were going through a really rough period. That was back in the early 2000s, when we were going through drought and we were going through a downturn in commodity prices, not only in the wine industry but in a lot of the horticulture commodities.

That initiative has been running for over 30 years and it is still running today. We meet whenever I can, and when I am in the region I will get along on a Wednesday night to Bluey's. It is a men-only event and it gives an opportunity for men to have a conversation sitting around a roundtable. There is no music and we all take it in turns to cook, but we also show an initiative of starting that conversation. Many of these conversations are about exposing if someone is going through a tough time. It is about that conversation and it is about making sure that those visitors, whether they are new or ongoing, understand that they are not alone and that there are many who are in a similar situation.

As I have said, with these health issues—whether it is mental health, whether it is the conversation around suicide prevention—it has been well documented how much more magnified they are in the regions. Metropolitan Adelaide access to psychiatrists is comparable with the Scandinavian countries, but our regions are definitely at a disadvantage. I met with the Chief Psychiatrist only a couple of days ago, and the member for Elder graciously came up with her Suicide Prevention Council. I think it was a great initiative to come up to the Riverland and understand the challenges that that region is currently facing.

I also want to pay tribute to a couple of groups of women: Val and Judy, who gave an overview of what was happening in the Riverland. Val has been a long-time advocate of suicide prevention as well as the formation of the CORES Program. What we saw was that Val has had the initiative to come together and secure local government funding, and now the federal government has put some money towards trainers and community engagement officers. That has been a great initiative. I have been along to a number of community engagement meetings and it really does expose the vulnerability of people who are isolated in faraway places, living on a farm.

In some way, shape or form those people pull the blinds down and do not have an understanding of the support that is out there. Whether it is a medical professional or whether it is a neighbour or whether it is a good community citizen, those support mechanisms are there. I was very happy as a former primary industries minister to reinstate the FaB Scout mentoring program. That is about community people with some level of profile or understanding being able to knock on a door of the house knowing that that family member or that family is struggling, whether it is financially, whether it is their mental health, or whether it is social or marital issues that they are dealing with.

They sit down around the kitchen table and have that conversation and that understanding of just how severe the situation is and then comforting that person and saying that going to get help is okay and that having a conversation is okay. Many of these initiatives around that conversation really do help. We do not know just what some of those conversations have meant to a number of people. Has it saved a life? Has it saved an attempted suicide or a successful suicide? We know that men disproportionately lose their life through suicide because they just seem to be able to get it done, though that is not the right turn of phrase.

Sadly, I have been called to constituents' homes and I have been called to friends' homes where there are people who have attempted to take their life and who are not prepared to go and get medical help. I am a person without a uniform and without the baggage they deem would be intrusive, and I have sat down with people to get them talking and get them through that really tough phase.

I must mention the FaB Scout mentoring, particularly in the Riverland. Robin Caine, Brent Fletcher and John Chase are three outstanding community people who in many, many ways have had those conversations that will bring people out of an environment, where they are much more vulnerable, to gaining medical and professional help.

Some of the other initiatives I have attended over a long period of time include the Chew the Fat campaign. It has been a very, very successful gathering of farming men who come to a common shed in a district. They normally put on a few beers and have a pig on a spit, and they have motivational speakers there. I have listened to many motivational speakers. Derrick McManus is one many would be familiar with here in South Australia—a former police officer shot multiple times through a siege—and the story he tells is very touching. There are many more I could talk about, but I will not go into the detail because I know that I will forget names and the situations of some of them.

I must say that up in the Riverland we are currently going through some very uncertain times. We have the pressure on commodity prices, particularly in the wine industry, we have issues with some of the biosecurity challenges and we have the uncertainty with what the water reform packages will mean to regional communities. While I have the Deputy Premier here, I think it is pertinent that I do mention that a lot of governments make decisions in the city and do not have a clear understanding. I have lived it: I have been through water reform as an irrigator and I have seen what buybacks can do. I want to ensure that every available opportunity is dealt with, particularly in relation to people's mental health.

In closing, I want to make sure that any form of government of any persuasion does all it can to better support mental health and mental health support services and to acknowledge the great work our volunteers in regional settings do here in South Australia.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:28):** I rise to speak to this motion and the amended motion on World Mental Health Day. Mental health obviously affects everyone throughout the community to varying degrees. As has been indicated already today, there are many challenges, and there are many challenges at the moment right across the farming sectors of our state. We have had four or five pretty good years in agriculture. That does not mean there have not been challenging times with some of the seasons, but they have been pretty handy seasons generally—pretty handy incomes from sheep, cattle and cropping.

It has not been universal. There are certainly plenty of challenges in the irrigation sectors, with uncertainty about the future of water, with the flooding recently and the future of areas along the River Murray in South Australia, especially on the lower end, with what will be the management of those flood plain swamps into the future. It certainly can have, and does have, a debilitating impact on people.

I am hearing stories firsthand already, where we are seeing the sheep prices that are cascading because of what I believe are poor decisions about the banning, or the potential banning, of the live sheep trade out of Western Australia. It has a direct impact on stock prices not just here in South Australia but right across the Eastern States as well. Because of that, more and more stock is being trucked to South Australia, some to feedlots and some to abattoirs.

What people need to understand is that the live sheep price always put a floor in the market for those wethers that were heading, generally, to the Middle East. When you take a market completely out of an equation it kills the market, literally. It has had quite a debilitating effect. People getting sheep processed are getting charged now for getting rid of the skins, at about \$2.50 a head. People do not think that is much, but it adds up to be a fair bit if you are sending, depending on the truck size, 400, 600 or 800 sheep on a load to be processed.

We have certainly seen that beef prices have come down as well. It is just the vagaries of the market. Some people have been caught—it was just the way the market fared—buying pregnancy tests at a higher price for in-calf heifers or young cows. The next thing, in a very short space of time, almost overnight, was that those prices had halved, and they have been left in a real situation where, instead of unloading that stock and trying to make some money, they have to find some feed, whether that is agistment or on another property.

There is also word getting through now that people have geared up—and that is fine. Machinery is very dear, very expensive, in farming. Harvesters now cost north of \$1 million; a lot of tractors are knocking that \$1 million mark; air seeders would be way up there, up around \$600,000 or \$700,000; and boom sprayers are around the same mark. I am probably a little bit off on the price, but it is an expensive game. It is an expensive game.

The issue is that, all of a sudden, there has been a serious drop in market prices for sheep and cattle, and that is having an effect. I am already hearing of properties that have been put on the market, family properties that have been held in families, sometimes for generations, because all of a sudden there is this major impact on the bottom line. It is tough, and we give our support to those farmers. They need all the support they can get.

Certainly, mental health is one of those things that affects people right across the board, including our youth. I acknowledge the work of Headspace in Murray Bridge and right across the state, helping our youth and giving them options to get together, whether it is just simple stuff like getting together and forming a band or just having somewhere to go and meet instead of sitting at home being on the infernal phone and getting trolled. Sadly, some kids, as we have seen in the past, have taken their lives because of what they have seen on social media. It is a terrible thing, some of the bullying that goes on. My heart goes out when you hear of those terrible circumstances and the terrible result, not just for the child, obviously, but for the families involved.

Right across my electorate—and the boundaries have changed many times in my five terms; I am in my fifth term now—suicide prevention networks right across the community are doing their best to get their message out to assist people so that they can make the right decisions moving forward. I know another group, Silent Ripples, in Murray Bridge every year has a memorial on the banks of the river, opposite the Bridgeport Hotel, remembering those who sadly have lost their lives to suicide and thinking about the families left behind.

I have also been pleased to be involved in Ski for Life. I do not think they have had an event for a little while now, but seven or eight times at least, probably more, I have been at the launch of that in Murray Bridge early in the morning. It is quite a few hundred kilometres to do the loop right through to Renmark. Some people ski the whole way, but usually it is teams skiing up the river. That is all about promoting suicide prevention and good mental health. They get quite a few teams there with the speedboats and support crews. It is a great way to get people together to get that message across.

Another thing I want to bring up today as the shadow minister for veterans affairs is veteran suicide. This happens far, far too often for the men and women who have served our country and, for a range of reasons, cannot get the answers they want. I note that the federal inquiry into veteran suicide is ongoing and has recently been in Adelaide. We need to do all we can for those men and women who signed up as recruits, sometimes at a fairly young age, to serve their country and were prepared from that moment to lay down their lives. No greater thing can someone give to their country. The fact is that they are prepared to do that.

Sadly, some have lost their lives in battle, but then so many more lose their lives when they come home. We see people coming home from the challenges of places like, in more recent times, Rwanda and Afghanistan and from the wars in Iraq. There are also people who have served in Timor and other places. This came after we saw the troops coming home from Vietnam, who were not welcomed home. A lot of them still struggle today. The more support we can give to people who have given their all and are prepared to give everything to those of us who are not serving in the military, the better. Whether it is home or overseas, it does not matter—it is vital service to our country wherever it is. I salute them all.

We need to make sure we keep getting the supports throughout the community. In the last little bit of time I have left, I want to acknowledge MATES in Construction as well, because the construction industry is another area where too many suicides take place. I acknowledge the work of MATES in Construction, where they have their toolbox meetings and those kinds of things to talk to tradies to just help them along and give them that good advice.

I would have missed a whole range of organisations, but I want to acknowledge everyone in their work to get the right outcome on World Mental Health Day. I thank everyone involved. I urge people, if they are in trouble, just to talk to someone. There are plenty of people prepared to listen. I support the amended motion.

**The Hon. D.G. PISONI (Unley) (12:38):** I rise to support the amended motion, because this really is beyond politics. I think we need to send a very strong message collectively in this place that finally those who make decisions recognise the importance of working together in this matter. Having

a brother who has been a prominent player in the union movement and in the Labor Party for as long as I have been in the Liberal Party, we both want the same thing: we both want the best outcomes in our education system, the best outcomes in our health system and the best job opportunities. The politics is how you achieve that—that is the politics. That is why you hear different policies from different sides of politics. The Liberal Party will have a different suite of policies to achieve that aim of the best schools, for example, and the Labor Party will have a different set of policies. Most of those are ideologically driven.

When it comes to mental health, support and care I think there is probably very little difference in the way we think we can achieve that. We know how important it is for people to be resilient. We have never been in such a changing world. There is the impact of social media on young people. If you were having a difficult period at school as a teenager, at least you had your weekends and after school free from that extra stress. Now, of course, with social media it can be 24/7. It does not matter if you ban mobile phones in school because most of the activity happens outside school hours.

Never before have we seen such an intense period of stress on our young people. We must ensure they have the resilience and the determination to see through another day. As my kids were growing up, I would say to them, 'Today might be a pretty shitty day for you, but just remember, tomorrow will be better.' 'Tomorrow will be better' is a very strong message for people who are feeling down. It is only a temporary feeling and obviously it is important to work with that person so they can understand that there is a way out for them that will see them back enjoying life and enjoying their time.

Dealing with depression is a very difficult period for any family and it is easy to dismiss somebody who is suffering from depression as just being a grumpy person or someone who is not pragmatic enough or somebody who is too lazy. It is important that we understand that non-social behaviour by someone close to us could have a much deeper root.

It is so pleasing that we are seeing major sporting codes, particularly some that are considered to be very masculine, now openly talking about someone who might be taking time off to manage their mental health, because we simply cannot have a situation where it is not spoken about, where people are discounted on their worth because they might be suffering from mental health or suffering from depression or suffering from stress.

There is a saying we tend to hear when in a job like ours or in business or some other jobs such as health care, where you might be continually drawn to matters of concern and matters that you worry about, and that is, 'Don't worry about it because if you can do something about it, fix it. If you can't do anything about it, there is no point in worrying about it because you are simply not going to be able to change it.' If you have analysed it, you can see you are not going to be able to change it, so do not worry about it because there is nothing you can do. It is just a waste of your energy. Put your energy towards fixing the problem that you are worried about. Then, of course, if you are doing that, there is no need to worry about it because you are taking the action that is required in order to do that.

Staff taking phone calls in our electoral offices witness mental health issues and come into contact with people with mental health issues on a regular basis. I do think that additional training for electoral staff in dealing with such matters would be of value. It does not necessarily need to be an accredited training course. I think it needs to be the sharing of experience on how you deal with such a matter. We do know that sometimes people can start quite young in their working careers working for a member of parliament, whether it be in the Legislative Council or the House of Assembly or whether it be in a regional electorate or in a metropolitan electorate, and those matters come through the electorate office.

I can remember that probably close on 10 years ago I had a gentleman from public housing in Parkside who came to see me because he had aliens contacting him and he wanted me to stop it. Of course, I was very sympathetic and understanding. I made some inquiries about what advice I could be giving to this person. He was known to the authorities.

Unfortunately, although he was known to the authorities, a few months later there was a report of a house fire in Parkside. This particular gentleman, who was well into his seventies, had

resorted to removing the aliens by blowing up himself and his house in Parkside. As someone who was involved in that process, it was quite shocking to experience it and to see the full impact of somebody with mental health issues who was not able to be dealt with. It is very difficult to know where to start without any training on how you deal with such a matter.

Recently, somebody who was driving a taxi for a living made a similar claim that their conversations were being interrupted by somebody in the Department for Transport. He was not able to tell me how they were being interrupted, but when he was in the taxi he kept hearing the voice of this person from the Department for Transport. I made some inquiries and was pleased to know that people were aware of his situation. He was no longer driving a taxi for safety reasons for passengers, I believe, but again it is another situation where shared experiences or direct experiences may very well help people to be of assistance to people in those sorts of positions, whether they be neighbours, family, members of parliament or staff members of members of parliament.

We tend to be the first point of call when people do not know what else to do and often it is a call of stress or a call of lack of empowerment to deal with the situation that they are in. We do know how difficult it is to refer that person to help. Firstly, there is finding that help—finding someone available who might have an appointment open—and, secondly, there is whether they have the money to seek the help or whether they have the time to wait for the public health system to help them with their issue.

I support the amended motion because it is a very strong message to the people of South Australia that this parliament is united in supporting them in their times of challenge. I urge the house to support the amended motion.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (12:48):** I have a few words of support for the original motion, and it is an important motion. A number of people from regional South Australia, a number of members, have indicated sometimes the paucity of services in regional communities. It is a real challenge at times getting health professionals to sometimes visit regional communities, never mind being resident in a regional community. I am not sure if there is one psychiatrist at the moment that is a resident of a regional community. Over the years, there have been very few in number. It is very hard to get them outside of the metropolitan area.

I remember a time in Whyalla before we had a mental health unit at the hospital. Lyn Breuer was the member and it was the Rann government, but before that, I remember the tragic images—and it was usually the police going out to a house—of someone with a mental health condition being put in the back of a paddy wagon, being driven either all the way to Adelaide or part way to Adelaide and then being transferred into another paddy wagon. It is an appalling thing to happen.

The police are often on the frontline of very challenging situations, and sometimes that does involve people with various mental illnesses. But, in saying that, we know that people with mental illnesses are less likely to offend than the general population, so I am not here to stigmatise. I am just here to say that, historically, some of this used to happen in what was, at the time, the largest regional community.

As I said, there was then a dedicated mental health facility. It is in the new part of the hospital in Whyalla, with six beds. It is not a secure facility but it does make a difference to what can be done in a regional community. But there is no resident psychiatrist there—there was one, but there is not at the moment. That is a real issue when it comes to regional communities' access to those services.

There are a range of organisations in our communities that do incredibly good work. In Whyalla, there is the Whyalla Suicide Prevention Network, a network that had a tragic loss of their chair, Kimberley Pursche, in a car crash just outside of Whyalla. She was a real driving force behind that organisation in Whyalla, and they did a lot of good work. In my broader electorate, I have the APY lands. When you look at the youth suicide rate for Aboriginal kids, it is through the roof and something that we need to seriously address and address all the complexity around it. It is tragic to see any young person take their life at a young age.

Some of the members have referred to the veterans and some of the challenges that they face. It always staggers me when it comes to priorities. Different governments have different priorities, but when I saw half a billion being spent federally on expanding the War Memorial when



there was a desperate need for more effective services, more efficient services, more timely services for our veterans, I thought, 'What on earth is going on here with the priorities that we have?' I would rather see the investment going into people who need it than buildings and what looked like to me a bit of a vanity project at the time. That was a serious misallocation of resources.

It is welcome that there are going to be 120 extra mental health beds rolled out in our public hospital system because they are really needed. The fact that there has been that absence of beds and the professionals to go with them is one of the contributing factors to ramping in this state. But we should never lose sight of the fact that, here in South Australia, we need to be doing more in regional communities where there are massive gaps in the services available.

I have a daughter who works in this area. Sinead is a psychologist and at the moment she still lives in Whyalla—how long that is going to continue, I do not know—and works for Headspace. It was one of those things where you look at the sorts of incentives that are available for professionals to live in communities. Headspace funded her to become a registered psychologist after she graduated on the basis that she would commit to working for Headspace for some years after that. We need to be providing incentives to get people into regional communities, but it does go broader than that because it is often not just money; there are perceptions around lifestyle, there are people with partners and a whole raft of other factors that come into play.

We should not forget GPs in this argument because as primary health providers they are often the ones who see people initially in the city and in regional communities. We know that in country areas, and in some areas in the city, we are really struggling when it comes to GP services. There are long waiting lists and sometimes it is not even possible to get in to see a GP in country areas. That is primarily a federal issue but there is a whole raft of other complicating factors around GP services, so it was good to see the current federal government inject \$3.5 billion into addressing the collapse in bulk-billing.

I think any of us who live in a country community servicing a regional community know that we have to do far more when it comes to mental health services in the country. Some of these communities have incredibly strong needs. The member for Unley mentioned public housing and some of the issues there. I know in my community, and in some metropolitan communities as well, a place like Whyalla, because of the history of industrial policy, probably has on a per capita basis more old Housing Trust houses still in public hands than in other places.

What that tends to do then, because it is now all category 1, is concentrate issues in communities without the services to meet the needs of people with mental health needs and, indeed, other needs. So there needs to be a real rethink on what we do in that area, given in some ways there will be unintended consequences because of housing done for industrial policy reasons having this long-run legacy when it came to a shift in policy, concentrating people who are designated as category 1. Disproportionately some of those people have complex needs, so it is not good to concentrate people like that in regional communities with a deficit when it comes to services. I might conclude there so Ms Clancy can talk quickly.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown):** Thank you for that brief contribution, member for Giles. If the member for Elder speaks—although not the original mover, it was moved in her place—she closes the debate.

**Ms CLANCY (Elder) (12:58):** I want to thank my wonderful adviser for helping to prepare a fantastic speech that, unfortunately, none of you will get to hear. The reason why none of you will get to hear it is that so many people in this chamber are passionate about mental health, so that is a really good thing. I really appreciate everyone's contributions, and I am also very grateful that you all have such great connections with your local suicide prevention network and with the work that is happening on the ground.

On Sunday and Monday this week, I was in the Riverland for my second visit as the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention. I was there on our inaugural Suicide Prevention Council regional trip. All our other meetings have been held in the city and we thought it was really important for us to go out and have a chat with people in our regions, who we know are often more greatly affected by mental challenges and suicide.

I was really pleased to bring the council there and for them to be able to hear from all these incredible people doing such great work. There is this guy called John Gladigau—and I know the member for Chaffey is well aware of him—who is a grain producer, a grain farmer. He wrote and starred in a play, a musical, that is all about country people and mental health and puts it into language that people in regional communities can really relate to. It was really great for everyone else on the Suicide Prevention Council to hear from him as well. I feel like the Acting Speaker is about to tell me to stop.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown):** You may seek leave if you wish.

**Ms CLANCY:** That's okay. I just want to thank everyone very much for their contributions, and thank you to all the people doing great work in this space, especially our Suicide Prevention Networks.

The house divided on the amendment:

Ayes .....12  
Noes.....22  
Majority .....10

#### AYES

Basham, D.K.B.  
Hurn, A.M.  
Pisoni, D.G. (teller)  
Teague, J.B.

Batty, J.A.  
McBride, P.N.  
Pratt, P.K.  
Telfer, S.J.

Cowdrey, M.J.  
Pederick, A.S.  
Tarzia, V.A.  
Whetstone, T.J.

#### NOES

Andrews, S.E.  
Champion, N.D.  
Cook, N.F.  
Hughes, E.J.  
Michaels, A.  
Pearce, R.K.  
Stinson, J.M.  
Wortley, D.J.

Bettison, Z.L.  
Clancy, N.P.  
Fulbrook, J.P.  
Hutchesson, C.L.  
Mullighan, S.C.  
Picton, C.J.  
Szakacs, J.K.

Bignell, L.W.K.  
Close, S.E.  
Hood, L.P.  
Koutsantonis, A.  
Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)  
Savvas, O.M.  
Thompson, E.L.

#### PAIRS

Speirs, D.J.  
Malinauskas, P.B.  
Marshall, S.S.

Hildyard, K.A.  
Patterson, S.J.R.  
Piccolo, A.

Gardner, J.A.W.  
Boyer, B.I.

Amendment negated; motion carried.

*Sitting suspended from 13:06 to 14:00.*

#### *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 Premier (Hon. P.B. Malinauskas)—

Government Boards and Committees Information, South Australian—  
Annual Report 2022-23

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

Employment Tribunal, South Australian—Annual Report 2022-23  
Equal Opportunity SA—Annual Report 2022-23  
Legal Practitioners Education and Admission Council—Annual Report 2022-23  
Terrorism (Preventative Detention) Act 2005—Annual Report 2022-23

*Parliamentary Committees*

**LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (14:01):** I bring up the 30<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation

Report received.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO URINARY TRACT INFECTION TREATMENT**

**Ms STINSON (Badcoe) (14:01):** I bring up the final report of the committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report received.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I see in the gallery students from Golden Grove High School, year 9. Welcome to parliament. It is a pleasure to have you with us as guests of the member for King.

*Question Time*

**FEDERAL VOICE TO PARLIAMENT REFERENDUM**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:02):** My question is to the Premier. Has the Premier's attitude towards the Voice referendum changed over the past three months and, if so, why? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Point of order.

**The SPEAKER:** There is a point of order from the Leader of Government Business.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Standing order 97: the question assumes a level of facts in the question and I ask the member to rephrase the question.

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! There is a point of order to the point of order. I will hear the member for Morialta.

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** The question was: has the Premier's attitude changed? It doesn't presume any facts.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER:** As the Government Whip helpfully claims, it presumes that he has an attitude and, if that is the standard to which the government thinks anyone should be held—that a minister has an attitude towards a matter of public policy—then that is nonsensical.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! It's a matter of very fine judgement. Different or reasonable people might come to different conclusions about the use of the language. It may be that there is a more

neutral way of expressing the same point—for example, what is the Premier's view, or if the Premier—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, indeed. However, I am going to—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Indeed, 'Does the Premier have a view?' The Leader of the Opposition is creative enough, and an experienced legislator, that I am sure he will come to a form of words that will be acceptable to all.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Does the Premier stand by his comments from June? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** In June, the Premier stated in parliament, 'I will do everything I can as Premier of this state to advocate for a yes vote to our national parliament.' In contrast, last week *The Advertiser* reported that the Premier, and I quote:

...is vowing the...the federal Voice to Parliament [campaign] won't disrupt his 'day job'...

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The question is in order, and the Premier has the call.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:04):** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I say that with a moment of pause. Nothing will disrupt me or anyone from the government on executing our day job. Our day job, of course, particularly in respect of myself, is a diverse range of responsibilities, and I do consider one of those responsibilities to be to publicly advocate for a change to the constitution that I think makes Australia a fairer place.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** This is a view that I and my team have had for some time. I am very proud to remind the Leader of the Opposition that the very first policy that we announced as a Labor opposition under my leadership was to initiate a Voice to Parliament and honour the Uluru Statement from the Heart—the very first policy that we committed ourselves to.

The Leader of the Opposition asks if anyone has changed their position, and I think that is a reasonable question. Is there anyone in this parliament who has changed their position on a Voice to Parliament? As it turns out, there are a whole range of people in this parliament who have changed their position with respect to a Voice to Parliament because in the lead-up to the election—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier has the call.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** In the lead-up to the election, the then Marshall government had a position not only to support a Voice to Parliament but to legislate one themselves.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Of course, they never got around to it—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morialta!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —which was par for the course for almost every position they had on almost every single issue. They never got around to legislating the Voice.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morialta is warned.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** We committed to it, and we did it within 12 months of forming office because when we say we are going to do something, we do it, particularly when it is something—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Badcoe!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —that is core to our beliefs. On 30 August, only a few weeks ago, I was very proud to be with the Prime Minister of our nation in the northern suburbs of Adelaide to launch the yes campaign for the change to our constitution to establish the Voice to Parliament. I spoke at this event only a few weeks ago with the Prime Minister. I have had the opportunity to be able to do a few different campaign events in and around that. We will maintain our effort on this side of the chamber to advocate for the change.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** It is important for the Australian community, including South Australians, to understand the proposition that is before them. It is very simple: it is whether or not we establish a non-binding advisory committee to advise the Commonwealth of Australia on matters that pertain to the interests of Aboriginal people.

I for one have a pretty simple view, which is that Aboriginal people are entitled to a Voice on matters that pertain to their interests, which is why we have legislated for the Voice to Parliament in South Australia. We look forward to that being up and running next year. No-one on this side of the house has changed their position, but I note that almost everyone on the opposite side of the house has.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

#### FLINDERS RANGES SACRED SITES

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Did the minister's department provide approvals that led to the destruction of sacred sites in the Flinders Ranges and, if so, why? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS:** *The Advertiser* reported last week:

Flinders Ranges traditional owners say they are victims of 'cultural genocide' after unauthorised earthworks destroyed sacred...sites metres from one of South Australia's most prized national parks.

Adnyamathanha woman Beverley Patterson said, 'When I saw it, I cried.'

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:09):** I appreciate the opportunity to talk about that incident in the chamber. As people may have noticed if they have followed the media stories about this, there is a fence line between Beltana pastoral lease and that that has now become the Nilpena Ediacara National Park.

That fence line, for about 26 kilometres, is an existing fence line that is in a state of disrepair and the National Parks/Department for Environment and Water have agreed to share the cost of upgrading that with the pastoral leaseholder at Beltana. There is also an additional approximately two kilometres that is at present unfenced that it was agreed ought also to be fenced in order to secure the cattle on the Beltana property.

There appears to have been, and without wanting to reach a definitive conclusion, with the best charity, a misunderstanding between the department and the pastoralist who employed the

contractor over what had been approved for to proceed and what still needed to wait for advice from the Adnyamathanha about whether there was any Aboriginal heritage that required attention to be paid before making a decision on action. The existing fence, as I understand it, is agreed able to be upgraded. It's the two kilometres that is yet to be cleared and graded for fencing that was not approved by the Adnyamathanha.

Because there is an uncertainty about the degree to which there was a communication misunderstanding and also a lack of clarity, from my perspective, about the order of events of seeking and granting approval and who ought to do that and who is legally responsible, the department has determined to have an independent review and is in the process of working with Crown solicitors at present to refine the terms of reference for that review and who will undertake it so that we are able to get to the bottom of the way in which this has occurred not only because it's important that we understand what has occurred in this particular instance but, should it be that it's a communication challenge or a process challenge, we need to make sure that we are learning from it in order to not allow such an error to occur.

The department has nonetheless, and had previously prior to the clearance in those two kilometres, asked for advice from the Adnyamathanha about cultural heritage and either has or will be shortly going to the site with Adnyamathanha elders in order to determine what the cultural values are in order to then make decisions about what occurs from now on.

#### **FLINDERS RANGES SACRED SITES**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:12):** Supplementary question to the Deputy Premier: can the Deputy Premier advise who will undertake the independent review, if that has been decided?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:12):** I know that the department has identified someone that they would like to use but, rather than giving that information now as we are still working through with Crown solicitors, as I understand it, on the nature of the review, I will await formal clarification about the terms of reference and the person to undertake the review before that will be made public.

#### **FLINDERS RANGES SACRED SITES**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. When was the Deputy Premier advised of the destruction of the sacred sites?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:13):** I will have to go back and therefore take on notice the exact dates, but I was informed that there had been clearance associated with creating the fence. There was some lack of clarity about who had employed the contractor and the conditions under which that had been approved, and then subsequently some more information became available. But, as I say, what's important is that we have now reached a point where we need to undertake an independent review.

#### **FLINDERS RANGES SACRED SITES**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:13):** My question is again to the Deputy Premier. Did the Deputy Premier's department consult with native title holders and ensure that appropriate permissions were sought and obtained before undertaking works in the Flinders Ranges and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:14):** I think I canvassed that in my original answer. As I understand it, the permission was sought by the department not as the people employing the contractor—because that was the pastoralist—but as the organisation that has a strong relationship with the native title holders; that was sought prior to the activity that occurred.

**FLINDERS RANGES SACRED SITES**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:14):** My question is again to the Deputy Premier. Has the Deputy Premier met with the traditional owners who have raised these concerns, or spoken to them, since the complaints were made public?

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:14):** No, I am yet to speak to them.

**SUPER SA**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:14):** My question is to the Treasurer. Did the Treasurer ask Kevin Foley to resign as chair of Super SA and, if so, why?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:14):** I asked whether Kevin Foley would be interested in chairing Super SA because it had been a period of significant change in the organisation. Members would recall dealing with a bill which did, really, two things in the last parliament. It opened up a choice of fund for members of Super SA's superannuation schemes, which is a massive change for the organisation, more than 200,000 members for the first time being able to potentially withdraw their superannuation entitlements and place them in other funds.

More to the point, and something that I had spoken about quite significantly in this place, the other significant change was for the first time Super SA in a limited way competing out in the private marketplace against other retail and industry super funds for people who had been Super SA clients but had moved to other employment to be able to move their superannuation from those other retail and industry funds back into Super SA.

I was grateful that Kevin Foley would take on that role. As all of us would recognise, he is very, very experienced, not only as a minister and member of parliament but for his superintendence in these roles. He made it clear to me over a period of time that the role was certainly more than he was anticipating. It was, as it has turned out, a period of change in the executive leadership of the organisation. He didn't want to continue committing the time and the effort to that role anymore and he offered me his resignation.

**SUPER SA**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:16):** My question is again to the Treasurer. Did the Treasurer meet with Kevin Foley in May of this year? If so, why, and what was discussed? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr COWDREY:** FOI documents obtained by the opposition show that the Treasurer met with Kevin Foley on 15 May this year, soon before his departure—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr COWDREY:** —as chair of Super SA after months in the role.

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:17):** If the member for Colton has a—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —document which we have released to him under FOI, which is an excerpt from my diary showing that I met with Kevin Foley in May, why on earth would he ask me a question in this place if I met with him in May?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It's remarkable. Maybe the question should have been why did I meet with Kevin Foley in May, not did I meet with him.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Morialta! Member for Colton!

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** No, it's not very clever at all.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Badcoe!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** Hence the second row. It's not very clever at all. Why did I meet with the chair of Super SA? The same reason as I meet with the chair of Funds SA, the same reason I meet with the chair of the Lifetime Support Authority, the same reason I make a point of meeting regularly with the chairs of all of the public entities that report to me—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —and that is to talk about the operations of the organisations that they superintend.

**An honourable member:** Was he going to be in it?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

#### SUPER SA

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:18):** My question is to the Treasurer again. Did the Treasurer meet with Ms Dascia Bennett, former Chief Executive of Super SA, to discuss Mr Foley's departure?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:18):** I met with Kevin Foley, as my previous answer alluded to, and also I met on a regular basis with Das Bennett, the former Chief Executive of Super SA, on regular occasions to talk about Super SA, as I have just made clear, as I do with all of the people who are in charge of the organisations. They report to me, and my recollection is that when the decision was made that Das Bennett was no longer continuing in the role of chief executive of the organisation and that a process would be entered into to replace her as chief executive after the end of her contract, that is the point in time that Mr Foley said to me that he didn't want to continue on as chair.

I can't stand here and say that I had a specific meeting with Das Bennett about the performance of the chair of the board, because I don't believe that that's what's happened. What's happened is we made it—

**An honourable member:** It's a coincidence.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It is no coincidence that as Treasurer I meet regularly with the chief executive and the chair of the organisations that report to me. It is a specific undertaking that I make a point of on a regular basis.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** It's the same with the Essential Services Commission. It's the same with the department itself. I am very clearly and particularly articulating why I have had these meetings.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!



## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (14:20):** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house on the steps the Malinauskas government is undertaking to address housing supply?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:20):** I thank the member for Newland for her question. The member for Newland lives in a great part of our state where we have seen examples of land release leading to the creation of new communities, but just as importantly new homes that are accessible to first-home buyers. She represents a great community that has had heritage at its heart but is also going through a process of renewal in its own right.

More housing, more affordable housing for the people of South Australia, is something that we have been working very hard to achieve ever since coming to office. In fact, there is not a lever at our disposal that we are not willing to pull to make a difference to the supply of housing. There is an urgent crisis as a result of a lack of actions from governments prior. Whether it be in public housing, whether it be in land release, whether it be in tax reform, this government is doing each of them, each measure that we can deploy to have a positive impact on the market.

On Sunday, I was very pleased to be with the Minister for Planning to be able to announce yet another measure that this government is taking in respect of land and housing supply, and that is to acquire the West End Brewery site at Thebarton. Government is purchasing this land through Renewal SA in order to be able to master plan the site in a coordinated way to maximise the benefit for the South Australia community. This is to ensure that we see more housing supply on the market as expeditiously as possible in a way that reflects modern practice for a highly strategic site close to Parklands, close to train, close to tram, close to bus services and close to our CBD.

Key workers deserve access to this opportunity, and also we need more South Australians having access to affordable housing, of which there will be no less than 20 per cent of the 1,000 homes that will be on this site. This is a government taking active steps to acknowledge the crisis that exists within housing at the moment. What was the response from the Leader of the Opposition in respect of this significant government initiative? Well, he decided to jump in the media and make a contribution, which I think was telling. He said: 'It's the sort of socialist intervention that you'd expect from an eastern European communist country. We want away from that sort of stuff.'

*Members interjecting:*

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Cheltenham is warned. Order! The Premier has the call.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** These are alarmist, strong words. This is something—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Hammond!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —that the Leader of the Opposition must feel very strongly about. He must feel so aggrieved by the concept of a government purchasing land on the open market in order for it to sit within the responsibility of Renewal SA for a future housing development. He is clearly very affronted by such a proposition, except that got me thinking, 'Were there examples of the former government when they decided to purchase private land for the purposes of new development through Renewal SA?'

It turned out the Stalinist Rob Lucas decided to do exactly that on more than one occasion, so the Leader of the Opposition, who was the cabinet secretary in the life of the former government, must have been very senior in the politburo when that one was passed through the former cabinet at the Le Cornu site at Forestville. So there is yet another example of massive ideological inconsistency on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier's time has expired.

**SUPER SA**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:24):** My question is again to the Treasurer. Has the Treasurer consulted with the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment in relation to any Super SA board member?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:24):** Not that I recall, no, but I will take it on notice and if I can update that advice I will come back.

**SUPER SA**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:25):** My question is again to the Treasurer. Has the Treasurer received any complaints to his office relating to any Super SA board member?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:25):** I would have to check but, off the top of my head, not that I recall.

**NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR TUNNEL**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (14:25):** My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Did the minister meet Spanish company Acciona as a potential bidder or as an actual bidder? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Yesterday the minister claimed that he met with Spanish company Acciona in February this year, and I quote, 'on the basis that I wanted to make sure that I could see works that they were doing in other jurisdictions because they were potential bidders' and he went on. However, documents reveal that this meeting was held during a time period which was also the time period of stage 2.2 of a request for proposals phase for Majors Road, for which Acciona was actively bidding and was ultimately a successful bidder.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:26):** Thankfully, it wasn't at my house at a party, which I know members opposite were very fond of doing with Acciona. The former Premier met with Acciona at his house. He used to have regular parties at his house and he would invite industry leaders to his house.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Elder!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I'm not sure if his press secretary was there. Were you there when Acciona were there? You were there, okay. Who paid for the food and beverages? We will find out.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** As I said yesterday, before embarking on my trip to Spain and Italy I sought probity advice about all my meetings with either potential or current bidders. It's fair to say that the minister is not made aware of who is actually bidding in projects for the very reason my young friend raises.

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I see his older friend asking a few questions in the background there. It is important to remember this: ministers rely on the advice of their agencies. I do not conduct the actual tenders. They are conducted by the independent public sector. They are conducted by my agency. Before I met with any of the potential or actual bidders, I sought probity advice about what I could or could not say, and I followed it to a letter.

If my young friend has an accusation to make, I encourage him, under the cloak of parliamentary privilege, to make it. I am more than happy to make sure that all my meetings are

above board and, of course, they all have been. What I have never done, ever, in my 26 years in parliament, is invite any active contractor to my house for a private party, not once—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, member for Morialta!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —especially a contractor involved in a contract that is nearly a billion dollars, to my house for a private engagement: not once.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Morialta is warned.

*The Hon. A. Koutsantonis interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for West Torrens is warned. The member for Flinders has the call.

### POLICE MOUNTED OPERATIONS UNIT

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:28):** My question is to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. Did a SAPOL project team tour Morphettville yesterday and, if so, why?

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:29):** I won't raise a point of order regarding an assertion of facts, but there was certainly no tour. What I can absolutely confirm is that there is no further news or advice today on any further additional sites than there was yesterday, and that is that the police Mounted Operations Unit has been confirmed at a site at Gepps Cross. That work is progressing—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister has the call.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** I might be able to give those opposite some advice. If they just took a little bit of a drive outside of their very flash—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morialta!

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** —accommodation they are staying at while they are in the city for parliament.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morialta, you are warned for a final time. The minister has the call.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** As I was saying, those opposite would probably benefit from—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** They have certainly taken advice to listen to morning radio; certainly change the dial and make sure they don't go anywhere—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for West Torrens.

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS:** —and have their morning coffee some 10 minutes after the 8 o'clock news. But they would do well to jump in their car, drive 15 minutes north of the city to Gepps Cross and see the works that have already started on the Gepps Cross site. In a couple of weeks' time, they will be able to go out there again and see additional major works occurring. This isn't some revelation. This is common sense, and I would invite any member opposite to take that 15-minute drive out north, jump in their car and have a look.

### COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

**Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (14:30):** My question is to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs. How is the Malinauskas Labor government supporting languages in our community?

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (14:31):** Can I thank the member for Torrens for her question. She has one of the most diverse electorates in South Australia. On coming to government, we committed \$16 million in additional funding to multicultural affairs, and \$4 million of that went to community language schools.

I had the great honour of speaking at the National Community Language Conference. It is the first time it has been in Adelaide in 11 years. Can I say the feedback was absolutely fantastic—people feeling like they were listened to for the first time in a very long time.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, please be seated. Member for Morialta, you leave me no choice—137A, the remainder of question time.

*The honourable member for Morialta having withdrawn from the chamber:*

**The SPEAKER:** The minister has the call.

**The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON:** It's more than talk: it's action. That is why \$4 million over four years is going to make a difference to our community language schools. There are 99 fully accredited community language schools in our state, teaching 47 different languages, and 8,000 students are enrolled. First and foremost, can I just take the time to thank the volunteers for these community language schools. They give up enormous amounts of time to make sure their language is passed on to their children and their grandchildren—the culture and traditions that can go on for future community leaders.

Of course, we talk about year 2. It's just shy of \$1.1 million that we are giving to community language schools. There is a focus on premises, personnel and pathways. I am particularly pleased that we have been able to move and access TAFE locations for community language hubs. We are starting out with both Salisbury and Regency TAFE, and I thank the Minister for Education for his support.

Each campus is going to be initially supporting 200 students from four schools. That started last month. What we often see is primary schools being used for community language schools, which is fantastic, but by having a hub environment we can particularly support those upcoming schools and those very new schools to support each other.

In year 2, infrastructure funding will also be rolling out for \$500,000, going to assist individual schools, particularly those schools that own their own premises. Eight multicultural organisations received this funding. Of course, I was really pleased last year when the challenge of only being able to use government schools for community languages has been moved on. Government, Catholic and independent schools can host these community language schools. They have funding if they host them on their campus.

The other thing that the community language schools are working on is a brand-new digital language hub. The hub will be a resources bank of electronic teaching material resources in Arabic, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Greek and Farsi. These languages account for 59 per cent of community language schools.

One of the other challenges they have is a bit of a dropout rate of kids between 14 and 17, as they get older. One of the key things this funding will be going on is how to keep and retain those students as they get older, particularly using not only the opportunity to go on to SACE but those in-language radio sessions, podcasts, things like that, which is what we are hearing from many others.

This is something that I heard a lot of in opposition and I am so pleased that we have been able to put a multicultural lens following on the support of education over many, many decades. We have a great diverse community. People are here from 200 different countries. What we have often seen is people had to suppress their ethnic backgrounds. Now we want people to feel equally

important, for Australia to be respectful of their culture and their history. They are our great storytellers. They are going to be our great business leaders, selling our products and services to the world.

#### **POLICE MOUNTED OPERATIONS UNIT**

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:35):** My question is to the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services. Is a site at Morphettville being considered as a location for relocating any police units and, if so, what units? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** Police Association President, Mark Carroll, told ABC radio this morning, 'We are trying to still find something that is a better location than Gepps Cross and I applaud SAPOL for continuing down that path and if the site is actually for sale and usable, then that should be looked at as well.'

**The Hon. J.K. SZAKACS (Cheltenham—Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services) (14:35):** I have the highest of respect for all trade union leaders, something that I would never accuse those opposite of ever muttering. As much respect as I have for the President of PASA, he doesn't speak for the government when he says 'we'. 'We' may actually be somebody else.

The member surmised in asking the question the actual answer and that is that there is nothing for sale at Morphettville. There is no explanation that's occurring at Morphettville. There is nothing to update the house on. As I said in my previous answer, I am not sure if the member was listening, but the Mounted Operations Unit and the Dog Operations Unit, both of which provide wonderful service to our community, will be very soon equipped with brand-new, state-of-the-art, fit-for-purpose facilities at Gepps Cross.

#### **POLICE MOUNTED OPERATIONS UNIT**

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:37):** Supplementary: did the works at Gepps Cross referred to by the minister go through the appropriate planning and procurement processes before works started?

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:37):** Yes, we have appointed a managing contractor, Watpac, who is managing those works and there are specific work packages that will comprise the construction necessary and a lot of those work packages are out to tender at the moment, while the early site preparations have already commenced.

#### **RIVER MURRAY LEVEES**

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:37):** My question is to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. Has the government developed a comprehensive plan for the management of River Murray levees moving forward? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr PEDERICK:** It has been eight months since the River Murray flood and landowners are getting very anxious that the government hasn't formulated a plan.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:38):** It's interesting to characterise it as eight months since the flood. In many ways the flood clean-up is still occurring and the impact of the floods—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order, Member for Hammond! Deputy Premier, please be seated. Member for Hammond, your interjections have commenced immediately after you have asked the question,

so I have in hand standing order 137 and I will not hesitate to use it. We are going to turn to the Deputy Premier and you might have your answer.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** Since the peak of the flood and during the time while we have still been working on dewatering areas—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Chaffey is warned. The Deputy Premier has the call.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** During the period in which dewatering has been occurring and the immediate works on the levees, particularly those in the Lower Murray, the agricultural levees, which required stabilisation in order to facilitate the dewatering, during the time that has been occurring there has been a working group led by DPC, which is the recovery agency, working on what the longer-term plan will be. That working group has also, of course, comprised PIRSA and DEW, both of which are agencies that are intimately involved in the management of the river and also the need to ensure ongoing primary production in the area. They have worked on a proposal, which is under consideration by the government.

### RURAL PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

**Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:39):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Is the government increasing the psychiatry workforce in rural South Australia. With your leave, and that of the house, sir, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Ms PRATT:** On page 50 of the review of rural mental health services, it concludes that, when it comes to the number of psychiatrists per capita, and I quote:

Internationally Adelaide is on par with countries such as France and Norway, while rural South Australia is worse off than Mongolia.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:40):** Certainly, the government is committed to increasing the psychiatry workforce right across South Australia and also in regional areas. The difficulty, of course, is obtaining, training and qualifying the workforce necessary. That is why, in fact, one of our election commitments was to undertake workforce planning in relation to the psychiatry workforce because we know that that is under pressure right across the state. We are working with The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists in relation to that workforce planning. That work is underway.

One of the inhibitors to training more psychiatrists in South Australia has been a bottleneck issue through child psychiatry because people have had to do rotations through child psychiatry and that area has been under such pressure that it has limited the ability of expanding training places for psychiatry. A double benefit of one of our investments that we are making in relation to expanding the child psychiatry workforce through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is that hopefully that will help to address one of those bottlenecks and enable more doctors to be trained in psychiatry as well, but certainly we welcome the report and its recommendations.

SA Health and the Chief Psychiatrist, Dr John Brayley, have already outlined a number of those areas that are being worked on already. There is much more work to do in terms of work with our local health networks in how we can work with psychiatrists to make sure we can attract them to regional locations across South Australia and ultimately improve people's access to care.

### RURAL PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

**Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:42):** Supplementary: what steps then will the minister take to develop a rural mental health service plan in relation to that review?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:42):** I already outlined that we are doing a plan in relation to the psychiatry workforce in South Australia. That was one of our election commitments. That work is underway and it will not only pay benefits in terms of metropolitan areas but regional areas as well and then we are following up each of the recommendations.

There has already been a SA Health response that has been put out to the findings of that review. There are a number of matters of that review connected to the psychiatry workforce that would need to form part of consideration in relation to industrial arrangements. One of the factors that the review and the reviewers themselves in my discussions with them have raised is around private practice arrangements. Obviously, there is an industrial agreement that is connected to those. That would, obviously, have to feature as part of any negotiations in relation to a new enterprise agreement with the Salaried Medical Officers Association, but there are other elements we can work on in the meantime and we certainly are doing so.

### ADELAIDE HILLS HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (14:43):** My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister advise the house about upgrades to health services in the Adelaide Hills and is the minister aware of any opposition to these upgrades?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:43):** I thank the member for Playford and I thank you, Speaker, as well and note your very significant interest in this area. As only you, sir, know too well, the population in the Mount Barker region is going up and up and up and is expected to double from where it was in 2006 to 2036. But over that rapid population growth that we have seen over the previous decades in Mount Barker, the number of hospital beds that has been in Mount Barker has not changed. The number of hospital beds has been the same at 34, even when the population was a small percentage of what it is today, let alone the growth that is to come.

So we very clearly made the decision before the election, implementing now, that we actually needed to address these long-term challenges in terms of people's access to health care in the Adelaide Hills. I know that this has been an issue, sir, for your constituents for some time, that with the population growth there hadn't been the infrastructure investments to meet those long-term challenges, and that is why we believed that this was absolutely needed.

I am very delighted that the work on the new Mount Barker hospital is progressing. Just last Tuesday, we had the Consumer and Community Reference Group, and over 50 people have registered to be part of that consultation process, who are consulting with the community about the plans for that hospital to make sure that it is met in the long term.

The member for Playford asked me if there is any opposition to this. Certainly, I haven't encountered any from the Adelaide Hills community, where people are very thankful for it, but sadly there is some opposition from within this chamber to all this. I just could not believe it. Sadly, there was a member of this house who went to a public meeting in his own electorate in the past couple of weeks and maybe thought it was Chatham House rules, that no-one would notice what was being said; however, it was being streamed and we have been able to obtain the vision.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** The master tactician, minister, was the member for Finnis. The member for Finnis—

**The Hon. A. Koutsantonis:** The man we fear.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** —the man we fear—in his opening remarks at this public forum said:

All of a sudden we see, you know, Mount Barker, for example, purely a political decision that's been made to build a hospital—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** They agree—  
in a very quick response rather than actually the long-term planning.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members, it might surprise you to know that I am very keen to hear the answer.

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON:** The member for Finniss goes on to say, 'Hopefully, it doesn't go wrong, but when you make decisions like that they can go wrong.' Here we have the member for Finniss, and in fact he was not the sole member of the opposition at this forum. The member for Schubert and the member for Frome were there as well; they did not get up to object to such scandalous talk about the new Mount Barker hospital.

I would challenge them to go to Mount Barker, sir, to go to your community and say that they believe that this was not in terms of long-term planning for the Adelaide Hills, to say that this was just a political decision and to say that decisions like this can go wrong. As you know, sir, people in Mount Barker have been calling for this long-term investment for many decades and are thankful that it's finally happening, and it's disgraceful that it is opposed by those opposite, and presumably it would be under risk if they were to win the next election.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Heysen is seeking the call.

**Mr TEAGUE:** Standing order 98: clearly the minister is debating the question. He may be hell-bent on attempting to impress the Chair, but it won't do him any good in accordance with the standing orders. He is in breach of the standing orders by attempting to debate the matter and—

**The SPEAKER:** What is the—

**Mr TEAGUE:** —he ought to be brought back into line with the standing orders.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Heysen, what is the point of order? Is it 98? The contribution has concluded and, let me tell you, he is impressing me a good deal more than you—a good deal more than you.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will not entertain spurious points of order. Once a contribution has concluded—I am on my feet and the chamber will be silent. The time for a point of order, as we all well know, is during the contribution, not as a speech or contribution sometime afterwards. Is there a member to the left seeking the call? Member for Morphett.

#### HYDROGEN POWER PLANT

**Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (14:48):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Will the government's hydrogen power station lower energy bills for South Australian households? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr PATTERSON:** ESCOSA recently confirmed that energy bills have increased a further \$169 for households and \$647 for small businesses.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:49):** The national energy crisis that is occurring in our country right now is a problem that's occurring in Queensland, it's occurring in New South Wales, it's occurring in Victoria—it's occurring across the country and, indeed, it's occurring across the world.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Morphett! Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Like most Collingwood players, he is used to having the umpires on his side, but unfortunately this time he can't have the umpires—

*Mr Patterson interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morphett is called to order and warned.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I am not denying that power prices have increased, but again I ask the opposition to point to a single policy of this government that has contributed—



**Mr Patterson:** There are none.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morphet is warned.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Other than the one you just asked me about? My young friend really needs to know when to interject and when to remain silent rather than to remove all doubt about what everyone thinks. Yes, power prices have increased. Why have they increased? I know members opposite hate to hear this: there is an international energy crunch that is occurring. That international energy crunch that is occurring has increased coal and gas prices across the world.

Members opposite laugh about war on continental Europe and its implications internationally, but what they may not have noticed is that this is occurring around the country. In an unprecedented level of government intervention, the Treasurer and the federal Treasurer of both the state and commonwealth governments have intervened to put in place the largest ever piece of cost-of-living relief on energy bills in the history of South Australia, in the history of this state: \$500 off eligible people's bills. It is a dramatic amount of money for people to save.

We have always said that our hydrogen energy plan was always about lowering wholesale power prices and being able to firm power for industrial users. Will it have a downward effect on prices? Of course it will because one of the problems we have—and I have made this point to the parliament previously—is that one of the reasons power prices are high across the country and across the world where there are integrated renewables and thermal energy is the gap. The gap is the problem. Renewables push prices lower. Everyone knows it. It is indisputable, it is science, it is physics, it is economics, it is unchangeable. What is changing—

*Ms Stinson interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Thank you very much for the interjection from my friend the member for Badcoe. The difference here is that, of course, that gap is being met by thermal energy, and thermal energy is attempting to recover its costs over shorter and shorter periods of time. That is why prices are high. That is why the commonwealth government is doing everything it can to invest in its capacity incentive scheme to make sure we can have long-range batteries that can store power to try to bridge that gap and lower prices. Members opposite had four years to impact energy policy, and all they did—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Chaffey, member for Hammond, member for Morphet! Order! Member for West Torrens, you seem to be encouraging interjections.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** All they did was privatise our backup reserves—their one policy.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Florey! Member for Hammond!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** They privatised our backup reserves. Every time we build infrastructure, they sell it.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

#### KEOLIS DOWNER

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (14:53):** My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Does the minister consider a \$36 million mobilisation fee to be a cost to the taxpayer? With the leave, sir, of yourself and the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On 2 April 2023, the ABC revealed that while the government insisted it would not pay termination costs it would pay up to \$36 million on what the minister defined as a 'mobilisation cost' in relation to the Keolis Downer contract.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:53):** I don't really understand the question. I think what my friend is asking is: do I justify the cost of undoing a privatisation that should never have been implemented after a promise was broken in the 2018 election? Yes, I do think that there are going to be costs of bringing back our trains and trams to the public hands, and those costs are absolutely justifiable because privatisation does not work. It doesn't work. It's a failure. Ask commuters whether they think privatisation works.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Hartley!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Ask the commuters, Mr Speaker, that you spoke of today. You spoke today, sir, on our bus system—although it's not relevant to this question—about whether or not privatisation works. Yes, are there costs for undoing a privatisation?

**Mr Cowdrey:** Says the man that sold lands titles, what else—Lotteries.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton, order! The minister has the call.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton! The minister has the call.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Thank you very much, sir. Essential services belong within the government's control. This side of the parliament believes that—

**Mr Cowdrey:** In selling things.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —public transport is an essential service. Third-party insurance is not an essential service.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Very, very different.

**Mr Cowdrey:** 'When we do it—okay'.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Colton is warned. The minister has the call.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** And, importantly, it's always important—

**Mr Cowdrey:** And when Tom says it's okay, privatisation is okay.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** When we make our promises, we keep them. We keep our promises.

**An honourable member:** What about buses?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** My friend interjects, 'What about buses?' Yes, they are essential public transport as well.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** We are conducting an investigation as we speak about whether we should investigate and undo that privatisation and bring that back into public hands. That investigation is taking longer, and the reason it's taking longer than trains and trams—as we said it would at the last election—is because this privatisation is a legacy privatisation. Again, after having promised no privatisations, members came in and they privatised our bus service. After promising—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —to never privatise it ever, ever, they privatised it.

*Mr Whetstone interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Chaffey!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** After promising to never privatise our trains and trams—

*The Hon. D.G. Pisoni interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Unley!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —after saying that they had no privatisation plans—

*Mr Cowdrey interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Colton!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —what did they do? They privatised our trams and trains. So, yes, there is a cost for bringing our trams and trains—

**Mr TEAGUE:** Point of order, sir.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Minister, please be seated. There is a point of order from the member for Heysen under 134.

**Mr TEAGUE:** It's standing order 98A, about 2½ minutes in, as I read the screen: the minister shouldn't be debating—

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, and on this occasion, member for Heysen, not only succinct but also some force in the submission to me.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The minister will come to the question.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Even a clock is right twice a day, sir.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Even a clock is right twice a day. So, yes, there are costs for undoing a privatisation. Those costs are justifiable; we stand by them. I am not sure about the exact nature of the question. I will go back and check *Hansard* and try to get my friend an appropriate answer between the next sitting of the parliament.

#### KEOLIS DOWNER

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (14:57):** My question again is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the minister advise how much Keolis Downer's new maintenance contract from 2025 to 2035 will cost?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:57):** I don't have those details here with me, as you would imagine, but I will try to get my friend an answer as quickly as I can.

#### KEOLIS DOWNER

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (14:57):** My question again is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Can the minister confirm to the house that passengers will experience no changes to services during the transition back into government control? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On 2 April 2023, *The Advertiser* quoted the minister as stating that 'passengers would experience no changes during the transition of operations'.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:57):** I got that wrong. There will be changes: it will be a better service. Do you know why? It will be public—a public service for the public. What will be better about it? It will have complete control of our passenger transport fleet on rail. That means we can integrate it. I can have better conversations with the Minister for Education about when exactly schoolchildren need to use our rail service, I can have better conversations with the tourism minister about events and I can have better conversations with the police minister about how we conduct public safety on our rail and tram events. The state can coordinate this.

One of the most important aspects of our economy is moving labour to where they need to work, and the public transport system is essential. The more control state governments have over that the better the results, not only for our people but for our economy. One example of that is a policy we took to the last election about giving people free public transport if they are on the Seniors Card.

**The Hon. V.A. Tarzia:** This has gone down under you.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** No, they have not gone down.

*The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** No, my young friend again misunderstands the nature of his objections—

*The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —and his complaints about public services. What he has consistently said—and I will help him here—is that we have not yet rebounded to pre-COVID numbers. That is true, but we have increased each and every year from COVID. So he has to get his arguments right. We're going up, not going down. We're going up. We still haven't reached where we were. The decline, just for the benefit of members opposite, was when there was a certain other government in charge, when we saw a dramatic decrease in public transport patronage. What we have seen are increases, but we have not, unfortunately, reached those pre-COVID numbers.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Hartley!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I tell my friend: I look forward to our trams and trains being back in public hands. I look forward to our train drivers proudly wearing the piping shrike again. I look forward to the train drivers and tram drivers once again being public servants. I look forward to the public again getting the full access of a public service run in the public interest for the public good and all the profits of that service going back into public hands for the public good, as opposed to what members did when they privatised this service for the benefit of foreign shareholders.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Hartley.

#### KEOLIS DOWNER

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (15:00):** My question again is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Did the minister receive any advice from the Department for Infrastructure and Transport advising him that Keolis Downer had failed to provide an adequate or acceptable level of service? If so, what was that advice?

*The Hon. P.B. Malinauskas interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The Premier is called to order. The minister has the call.

*Mr Whetstone interjecting:*

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

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:01):** I received advice from a higher source: the people of South Australia. The people of South Australia outrank the Department for Infrastructure and Transport. They outrank all of us. They are our bosses. We work for them, and they were unequivocal in their expectation that we return these privatised services to public hands. They demand that we do it. They don't just ask for it; they demand it. They were robbed when this was privatised out from under them without their permission.

No-one at the 2018 election thought that our trams and trains were at risk of privatisation. Why? Because both Jay Weatherill and the former Premier, the current member for Dunstan, promised at the 2018 election that there would be no privatisations. They were robbed; they were robbed. So the answer to my young friend's question—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —is that I answer to a higher authority, and that higher authority—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Colton!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —is the people of South Australia, who want this service back in public hands. However, if there is an alternative view—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Chaffey!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —the alternative view that this should remain in private hands and it should be privatised again after it is brought back into public hands, then say so. Have the courage of your convictions to get up and say that the private sector can do it better. Get up and tell people that you will be privatising our trains and trams again. Get up and say it! Have the courage to do it. Have the courage to lead. Vince, get up and lead!

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

#### *Parliamentary Procedure*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Colton, I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Samoda Silva, a guest of the member for Hurtle Vale. Welcome to parliament.

#### *Grievance Debate*

#### **AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

**Mr COWDREY (Colton) (15:03):** Amongst the spin, the words from this government over the last couple of days, what we have seen is a report tabled in this parliament yesterday that has laid bare the claims that have been put by the Premier time and time again in terms of the Auditor-General's access to cabinet documents in South Australia. What we know unequivocally is that that access has changed. That is now abundantly clear. The Auditor-General has set that out in his report to this parliament yesterday, making it as crystal clear as can be that the arrangements have most certainly changed.

What is more galling is the fact that instead of accepting the Auditor-General's advice the Labor Party has doubled down. The Premier has doubled down. His defence, of course, is the fact that cabinet confidence is sanctimonious. It is higher than anything in the land. But let's go back and take a step down the road from which we got here.

The Labor Party, as a matter of convention, had been providing cabinet submissions, cabinet documents, to the Auditor-General as a matter of course without any problems until we hit the time of 2016 when, as was pointed out earlier today, the then Deputy Premier, John Rau, took issue with providing these documents. Instead, in the dying years of that then Weatherill government, but for a small patch right at the end, decided that no more. The access was cut off. There was no more access to cabinet submissions for the Auditor-General to undertake his lawful duties to this very parliament.

Where we sat through the term of the Liberal government was that a Premier's Circular was put in place to again allow and facilitate the Auditor-General's access to these documents that he requires—PC047. As was pointed out again this morning, when the Auditor-General asked for a document it was provided to him to undertake his duties. We have an election. Things change. No more. No more access. Cut off. Thirty-two submissions the Auditor-General has asked for since the change of government and zero of those have been provided to him.

What does he request these documents for? Well, any member in this house—backbench, side or otherwise—should know and understand the very things that this parliament ask him to look into and to sign off on, in order to understand that due and proper process has taken place, to understand that Treasurer's Instructions around financial authority have been undertaken appropriately. These are not small, insignificant things that the Auditor-General is tasked with delivering and assuring this parliament of having been done correctly.

Of those 32 submissions that the Auditor-General has requested since the change of government, he notes in his report that they are in regard to the two biggest infrastructure projects in our state's history: the north-south corridor project and the new Women's and Children's Hospital. A combined value of \$18 billion of public taxpayer money is going to be expended, yet we do not have confidence in this very parliament, nor do the people of South Australia, that due and proper process has been undertaken or that financial authority has been given appropriately. That is the legacy of this government. That is the legacy of this Premier. Is that the legacy that he wants: to ensure that an independent officer reporting to the parliament is impeded, is frustrated, from carrying out his duties requested of him by this very parliament?

It is absurd. It is absurd that we have got to this point where we are leaving question marks over the state's biggest projects simply through this epiphany that the Labor Party suddenly has, despite providing cabinet submissions to the Auditor-General previously and despite coming to a point in time that they did do that between 2017 and 2018. But, no, now that rides supreme. It cannot be done. This is just bogus, absolutely bogus. What is this Premier trying to hide? You have to ask yourself that question. But there is one thing for certain: this is scandalous and this parliament needs to stand up to this Premier.

### TEACHER RECRUITMENT

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (15:08):** I rise today to highlight a change in one of the Department for Education's policies that I hope will encourage more teachers to move from interstate to our regional areas. As we know, there is a chronic teacher shortage in South Australia. The state government and the education union are in the middle of protracted negotiations to improve the pay and conditions of our vitally important educators. We know that our teachers are working longer hours and dealing with more complex behavioural issues that can be extremely disruptive in the classroom and require more resources. No-one disputes that, and I am hopeful that a resolution can be reached soon.

We are told that if things do not improve, half of the state's teachers plan to leave in the next five years due to stress and poor working conditions. This would be a crisis, especially for those living in regional areas where schools already struggle to fill the gaps. I know that in my electorate there are a growing number of unqualified teachers who are being given special permissions to teach in regional areas just to fill vacancies. This is not good for students or these student teachers. These

young teachers are having to sink or swim. They do not have the mentors to help them deal with the behavioural issues of some students which takes them away from doing what they are, ironically, not quite trained to do, which is teach.

Late last year, my office was contacted by a teacher from Victoria, Ms Kelly Myers. She and her partner were planning to move to South Australia to work in our beautiful Limestone Coast region. Kelly has been a teacher in Victoria for around 18 years. She has taught at numerous schools and has a wealth of knowledge and experience. She obviously would be an asset to the teaching profession here in South Australia.

When Kelly began what she explained was a complicated and long process to register as a teacher in South Australia, she was told that her entitlements such as sick leave and annual leave which she had accrued while teaching in Victoria could not be transferred to the South Australian system. This was a huge blow to Kelly, who over time accrued more than 266 hours of sick leave, which equates to 35 days. She currently has about a week's annual leave that she would also lose if she moved to South Australia.

Kelly contacted my office for assistance and, understanding what a barrier to employment this was, I then committed to contact the education minister, the Hon. Blair Boyer, to highlight this inadequacy. In my letter I asked for a change in policy that would allow reciprocal arrangements between states which would enable all leave accrued by teachers to be transferable. I received a response from the minister, and I will read part of this letter:

I understand Ms Myers' concerns, and I expect all teachers transferring from interstate would share them. As such, I asked the department to reconsider this important matter.

I am pleased to advise that the Department is now implementing a change in policy that will allow interstate entitlements to be transferred to South Australia.

This is a huge win for teachers wishing to move to South Australia from other states. This is a change in policy that will allow teachers who may have accrued many thousands of hours—and therefore dollars—in sick leave or annual leave to move to South Australia and to not lose those hard-earned entitlements.

This gives an added incentive to come to our state and take up teaching positions, and we know there are many available. I am pleased that the education department has a range of additional incentives underway to attract and retain high-quality candidates, including the Country Incentive Zone Allowance for teachers who relocate. I look forward to this being taken up by teachers from other states.

High-quality teaching staff are imperative to a child's education. They inspire, motivate and influence. The impression a teacher leaves on an individual in the classroom can continue on to the next generation. I thank Kelly Myers for bringing this matter to my attention. I am so pleased and proud that my advocacy has brought about a change that will benefit our education system. I thank the current government for listening and for implementing this. I hope this change will play a small part in paving the way for increasing the number of teachers who choose to move and live in South Australia, especially in regional South Australia.

#### **FLINDERS ELECTORATE**

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:12):** Investment into our regional road network across South Australia is vital for the economic drive of our state. Roads are the physical connection, for those of us in regional areas who are part of productive regional businesses, to get our high-quality products to market. Having safe roads is incredibly important for keeping our regional community members safe which is, I think, especially pertinent in a year like this where we have seen an extremely distressing state road toll level.

In my electorate of Flinders we have seen the previous government put significant investment into the Lincoln Highway, the Tod Highway, the Eyre Highway, the Birdseye Highway—all of these have been very welcomed by the members of my community who use those roads so much. The kilometres which are covered in my area can often amaze those who only get to travel the short span of roads here in the city. We get used to having to deal with all sorts of road conditions.

The shoulder sealing and the repair work on those four highways I mentioned in particular have made sure that these roads are safer for all users, no matter what type of vehicle they are in.

Today, I want to bring the government's attention to the road condition of the Flinders Highway. The Flinders Highway traverses the West Coast from Ceduna to Streaky Bay to Elliston and down to Port Lincoln. If you have not been on that road, let me encourage you to do so. Take the time to travel to that incredible area. It is better than the Great Ocean Road. It is an unbelievably scenic and picturesque area of our state which is not visited by enough people.

Flinders Highway, which goes down the West Coast, is an incredibly important road which needs to have investment. It sees heavy vehicles, caravans, cars, freight movement all along that road, and that is why we need to see the government put money into it. If you travel along it, as I do quite often, there are areas where you can see significant drop-offs on the edge of the road, leading to a dangerously narrow road, which puts at risk the users of that road.

I am encouraging—in fact, even imploring—the government to invest in the Flinders Highway. A wider road is needed, especially in the area south of Elliston and the section between Streaky Bay and Ceduna. It is a dangerous situation that I fear is going to lead to a significant accident or put my community members at risk. This part of the state contributes so much to our state's economy, and that contribution should be reflected with increased levels of investment into our road network, especially along the Flinders Highway.

I want to take a couple of minutes today to speak about the life of an incredibly important man from my community who sadly lost his health battle a few weeks ago at age 56: Darryn 'DJ' Johnston. I give my deepest sympathy and love to his wife of over 30 years, Leanne; his children, Rachel, Morne, James, Caleb and Joshua; and grandkids, Ezra and Asa; as well as DJ's sisters, Leanne and Sue, their families and his father, Norm.

It was a few weeks ago that hundreds gathered from all across the community to commemorate this great man. They packed out the new Port Lincoln Baptist Church. The church was full, the back was full and it spilled out into the outside area. There were people from all across the community, from all walks of life, many of whom seemingly had no connection with each other but they all had a connection with DJ.

He spent many years working across Eyre Peninsula, including for agricultural company Elders. He was a regular at ram sales, a man who travelled across EP working in rural real estate. He loved his community, he loved his sport, he loved his football. He was the sort of man who knew everyone in the community. But, number one, he loved his family and he loved his God. He was a man of amazing faith, and that was brought out in the service to commemorate his life. To finish, the verse from 2 Timothy 4:7 came to mind:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.

We can certainly say that about Darryn 'DJ' Johnston.

### **ADELAIDE HILLS BUS SERVICES**

**The Hon. D.R. CREGAN (Kavel) (15:17):** For the second consecutive day, bus services between Mount Barker and Adelaide have been cancelled by the private operator. Many residents in my electorate commute daily to the city. Mount Barker will soon be the second largest population centre in the state, outside of Adelaide.

I am informed that there were not enough drivers to run these critical routes this morning or yesterday. This is a workforce and relief rostering issue that has been building for some time. It is entirely foreseeable. It could and should have been addressed by the private operator well before we came to the position where services out of Mount Barker were being cancelled for days at a time.

For the many residents who commute to the city, buses are the only public transport option. It is not realistic or acceptable to expect local commuters to plan an alternative form of transport at short notice. Many commuters were not aware of the service cancellations until they arrived at bus stops this morning.



The hard truth is that our bus drivers have been treated badly for years. Their pay and operating conditions are inadequate. This is not a union line—I am a centre or centre-right politician. However, we must acknowledge that pay and conditions are part of the problem we now face.

### ROTARY CLUBS

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:19):** I rise to talk about Rotary clubs in South Australia more broadly that have been established just shy of 100 years. They certainly have come a long way since their first gathering in Adelaide, with now 93 local clubs across district 9510—most of South Australia, Sunraysia, Alice Springs, Broken Hill and, of course, the Riverland.

In Chaffey—as I know and as all the people in the Riverland and Mallee know—volunteers are an important part of the fabric that makes up our regional communities. Rotary clubs in the Riverland are no exception, providing an invaluable service to our regional communities with many dedicated, passionate and proud volunteers contributing to our region. We have a proud and strong history of raising awareness of mental health issues, providing support and education to the local community.

They are a huge part of our local economy, but no dollar value can be put on their dedication and their contribution. In the Riverland, at Loxton the Rotary club president is Bert Haslam; in Waikerie, it is Robert Norman; in Renmark, it is Tom Copley; and in Berri it is Bruce Richardson OAM, who has been a proud Rotarian for many, many years.

Last Thursday, on 21 September, I attended the Waikerie Clifftop Walk opening. It was nothing short of an outstanding contribution of more than 30 years of tireless work by the Waikerie Rotary club, and I pay tribute to Graeme Thompson, Richard Hall and the team of Rotarians of Waikerie who have done outstanding work over a long period of time. The Clifftop is an outstanding walk that starts at the Waikerie ferry, passes the cliffs and silos and then goes along towards Holder Bend.

As well as the opening of the Clifftop Walk, on International Day of Peace the Rotary Club of Waikerie unveiled the first peace pole in the Riverland, with 150 guests attending. It was No. 68, and Rotary distributed 100 peace poles across South Australia in recognition of 100 years. Peace poles are a reminder of the importance of peace in our hearts, in our homes and in the community.

I say it is the best view in the country of a peace pole. The backdrop of that peace pole is the River Murray and, if we look south, we see two stunning former grain silos. One has been painted and decorated by local artist Gary Duncan with some of his signature artwork. We also see the outstanding artwork of a Regent parrot that is almost lifelike in a huge setting.

I had a photo opportunity with Murray. Murray is a steel sculpture sitting on a park bench. He is someone you can sit down and have a discussion with, have a conversation with. He does not talk much and he does not argue back, but you can say what you need to say. The name 'Murray' was brought about by public submission to a competition in the local community. It was an outstanding success.

Some of the other Chaffey Rotary events and projects in the Riverland include the Berri Rotary Club and the Riverland and Mallee Vocational Awards, which is the only one of its kind in regional Australia and also the largest vocational and training award, which is an outstanding achievement for the Riverland.

There are the Riverland and Mallee Citizen of the Year Awards, and every Riverland town is proud to announce their citizen of the year, their young citizen of the year and also the event of the year, and that is all underpinned by the Rotary organisation. The Pride of Workmanship Awards for individuals and small businesses is also an outstanding achievement. The End Polio Project has been ongoing for over 35 years, and the community volunteering, barbecues, working bees, op shops and fundraising are all there to raise money and to better the local communities in the Riverland.

Rotary opens up many opportunities and is vital to our regional communities. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those volunteers with Rotary for their service to our community. Their service to our community makes our community a better place to live.

## REGIONAL STUDENTS

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (15:24):** I rise to make a few comments and to also congratulate Minister Close on her efforts in supporting a young person in my electorate. As a previous schoolteacher, it is no surprise that for students who want to go on to further education, particularly in a capital city, parents are faced with ongoing costs and barriers and burdens that a lot of city kids and city parents do not have to face because, quite honestly, they still reside normally in their parents' premise, living close to home with support structures, friends and family.

Six weeks ago, I was contacted by local resident Rachel Beavis, whose daughter Mia is currently studying year 12. Mia wants to pursue higher education and is hoping to study a Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science. After speaking with representatives of the University of South Australia, she was informed that, if she was successful in being accepted into the course, the option to defer was not available.

For regional students, the decision to defer a course is not often a choice they can make. They need to defer. The financial pressure of sending your child away to a capital city to live and study often requires the students to take a 12-month break to work to save money, as well as then becoming eligible for the Independent Living Allowance from Centrelink. As Rachel wrote in her letter to me, and I quote:

We, like many others, will be required to pay approximately \$500 a week for living, plus day-to-day costs. With the increase in the cost of living and interest rate rises, it is now out of reach for many families who have children who need to go to university to reach their potential. It is like having another mortgage.

As I said, it is no secret that country kids face significant barriers in moving to Adelaide and the financial one is just one of those. We do not think about these barriers until we are faced with them ourselves, and I would like to thank Rachel for bringing this issue to my attention.

I forwarded her correspondence to Minister Close to explain the issue and highlight how country students are further disadvantaged if they are not able to defer their course. I am pleased to say that I received a response from Minister Close yesterday with the news that she had contacted the University of South Australia which has now advised that, as a result of us raising this issue, the program rules will be amended to allow students to defer their place in the Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science.

I would like to thank Minister Close and her team for her timely response and following up this matter and also the University of South Australia for recognising the extra needs of regional students. Whilst there are still many barriers to university for those who have to live away from home, this is a positive step and one that I was not aware of in terms of not being able to defer certain courses.

Finally, I would like to again thank Rachel Beavis for contacting me. It is directly as a result of her letter that all regional students now interested in studying medical radiation science will have the option to defer their studies should they require. I wish her daughter Mia all the best for her future studies and also all regional students who choose to move away from their support structures of family and friends to pursue higher education.

Once they complete their degree, I encourage all students to look at regional areas as their first foray into work life and employment because the benefits of working and living in regional areas are quite numerous. We need country kids returning to the country and supporting their communities long term. Once again, I want to thank the government, in particular Minister Close for her swift action, as well as the University of South Australia for really making this possible for Mia and her family.

### *Bills*

## HYDROGEN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY BILL

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 26 September 2023.)

**Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (15:30):** I will continue my remarks from yesterday. I mentioned at the outset that there has been a short turnaround from when this bill was introduced into parliament on the Thursday of the last sitting week and then coming before us again effectively the next sitting day, so I am still, in my role as the shadow minister for energy and mining, doing consultation.

I have had the opportunity at least to speak with some of the stakeholders: Livestock SA and Primary Producers SA. They represent a large segment of landowners and landholders, including those pastoral lessees. There has been some consultation, but I welcome the energy minister allowing the committee stage of the bill to be undertaken in the next sitting week, as we will definitely have some questions.

I will continue my comments, albeit with the short amount of consultation that we have had, and look to continue that going forward. Last time, we were talking through some of the concerns that had been raised with me that needed to be worked through and they will probably be raised in the committee stage.

Going through the bill, as with most bills in the early stages, there are objects of the act. Pastoral stakeholders endorse engagement with Aboriginal people as set out in the objects in clause 3(d). They are also looking to have an additional object being included in the act which would endorse and provide a similar regard and assurance that there will be engagement and benefit to the broader relevant rural and regional communities, encapsulating them as significant stakeholders.

Certainly they should be because a lot of these designated lands are in the regions mostly and may be in some of the state waters in South Australia, as I experience as we go past beautiful Glenelg. You might not say that is regional, but certainly most of the affected areas in the designated lands are rural and regional.

That would take into account the important role that the regions have played, especially pastoral lessees in the pastoral sector since the very early days of European settlement. They have been vital to the state's economy, making sure we are fed, making sure they more than carry their weight, and also allowing exports either interstate or overseas. That has a great economic impact and we want to see that continue and be put in a place of great importance as an object in the act.

Consultation is really important with these bills. As I said before, there is broad support for renewable energy. What we do not want to see is it put in the wrong place when there are opportunities to put it elsewhere. Social licence becomes very important. In one of the submissions the Australian Hydrogen Council made that point, saying that they consider that gaining social licence from the community is every bit as crucial as a licence gained under the legislative framework.

Consultation with stakeholders should be thorough and meaningful and consider impacts on stakeholders outside the immediate renewable energy area, the release area, but also those who may be impacted by the conduct of licence activities there. Of course, it sounds eminently sensible when you put it that way. Certainly for release areas that are proposed over the pastoral areas—that take in pastoral leases—looking to get pastoral land stakeholder consultation is very important. Livestock SA certainly raised these concerns as well. They said:

The fact that the requirement to consult with pastoral lessees is not explicit in the Bill is of great concern. In the Bill, the only stated consultation requirements for pastoral land is with the Minister responsible for the administration of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act...This is manifestly inadequate...

The current proposed approach essentially treats a pastoral lessee as if they have no substantial interest in the land.

You can see from that that some stakeholders are concerned that, when the consultation on these release areas first was spoken about, that land was referred to as 'government land' rather than 'pastoral land'. They interpreted that as the government seeing it as its land and not seeing them as really important and having a prime importance in terms of government decision-making because, as I said before, pastoral leases have really had an important role in the development of these areas in South Australia.

The fact is that previous state governments have been able to give certainty to pastoral leases. What that has meant is that they are a very stable and enduring form of tenure because of

that recognition. A good example is that when it comes to looking to transfer ownership of these, the results are that they are very liquid. It is easy to have a change of ownership. The values are quite negotiable and stable, which is important for pastoral properties. That comes from governments really being very careful and stable around how to treat pastoral leases. I will finish off by saying that another point made by the stakeholders was:

Consultation with the pastoral lessees should be mandatory and should occur before there is any proposed declaration.

Another important stakeholder in pastoral land is the Pastoral Board. Their role is to ensure that pastoral lands are competently managed and also protected for future generations as well, not overstocking them, not denuding the land but actually having that custodianship, which has held our state in great stead. Another point is that, rather than the minister having only to consult with the minister responsible for the pastoral act, the stakeholders consider there needs to be a reference in the legislation to the Pastoral Board. Livestock SA made the point:

It should be a requirement under the legislation for the Minister responsible for the Pastoral Act to consult with the Pastoral Board, before responding to any authorisation requests from the Minister responsible for the implementation of the [Hydrogen and Renewable Energy] Act.

That gives a bit of a flavour in terms of trying to get pastoralists to feel like they have a bigger say in what goes on in this act. Another area where it is important that stakeholders have a say is the access agreements, of course, once a release area has been declared and a licence given out to renewable energy companies, that these access agreements are able to be on a bit of an equal footing in terms of negotiation, both for the native title holders with the Indigenous land use agreement and for the pastoralists in terms of their access agreements as well.

A number of the stakeholders feel that there are ways to learn from what is done with other acts within the Department for Energy and Mining. They think that this act itself could draw on the framework that has been set up in the Mining Act, which would help to provide greater protection for the landowners. One of the recommendations from stakeholders was:

The provision of payment by a proponent for the reasonable costs of obtaining legal assistance...as well as the need for these payments to incorporate fees for professional advice, not just legal advice...

Out of the consultation that was done between the draft bill and the bill that landed, it seems that this has been recognised to some extent.

Another aspect of the Mining Act that is there to help landowners is the Landowner Information Service. It seems, in the briefing that I received, the government have indicated they will be expanding the Landowner Information Service to also cover these renewable energy projects. While it is early in its infancy—it has been in place for only two or maybe three years now—that at least gives comfort. There is potentially inequity between very substantial real estate interests of the pastoral land. When landowners' interests are compared with those of these massive companies coming in, some of them international and well resourced, there is a bit of asymmetry there, so the Landowner Information Service would help but so would potential compensation as well.

Similarly, it was pointed out that in the Mining Act there is a prescription of 'exempt land' that helps to provide restrictions on what mining activity can occur near homesteads, for example, near significant farm infrastructure, and it was pointed out that there does not seem to be an equivalent provision in this bill. One stakeholder said:

...there are no restrictions included in respect of 'exempt land'. The kind of operations proposed under the Bill are potentially just as likely as a mine to have an impact on a sensitive receiver, such as a house. The Bill should be amended to include provisions dealing with sensitive receivers and incorporate the notion of 'exempt land'.

There are not just impacts on built infrastructure that the pastoralists are concerned about; there are also impacts on biodiversity because many of these designated land areas contain fragile ecosystems, and pastoralists want to ensure that any release areas take this into account when they are considered.

There are certainly prime, very economic and productive parts of pastoral land, and maybe some that are more arid as well, so maybe not as productive. Really, with either of those there needs to be focus on what the priorities are. Do we prioritise food and fibre even though renewable energy

is prospective but, because of the vast areas involved, potentially that renewable energy could go elsewhere?

Equally, we do not want to see land denuded because at the moment there is a lot of effort put in by the pastoralists to produce the meat and wool. Of course, they do not want to be associated with bad farming practices with desolate land left behind. They actually have great stewardship of the land so that their brand can be not only very healthy but also you would say clean and green and has good environmental impact as well.

Going to this as well, the South Australian Nature Alliance has warned that in South Australia solar farms were the leading cause of native vegetation clearance between 2016 and 2018. When you look at carbon emissions, one of the sources of carbon emissions comes down to land use and land clearing. So there are some issues there, but certainly biodiversity is an element here.

One thing that is raised is around compensation. If there is a licence that goes ahead and results in a wind farm or hydrogen generation going onto pastoral land, what are the compensation measures? The bill allows for that in clause 79, making the point that it includes any damage caused to the land, any loss of productivity and any other relevant matters which will go into determining the compensation that is due. Stakeholders have flagged that 'any relevant matters' is potentially somewhat vague and may benefit from having a bit more detail provided on what that might actually countenance, as in fact has been done in similar interstate legislation.

Stakeholders have pointed out that such detail could consider the value of the subject land. It could also take into account the loss of commercial opportunity which the landowners presently have in their dealings with renewable energy generators; also, maintenance and repair of important access roads, stock routes, fences and other infrastructure; considering the relocation of dams, water points, fences and other infrastructure; the impact on remaining farming activities and on the land that is not being used, including what the productivity loss is and impact on the whole-of-farm operations, including what the stock impacts might be; and some biodiversity control matters as well.

It could also take into account in particular, bearing in mind where these lands are located, in the more arid areas of the state, the reduction in the availability of water at any level in the soil profile, whether it is groundwater or aquifers that are required for natural pasture or crop growth to help support design stocking rates as well. They are some of the thoughts around what compensation could consider.

Another one brought up was around carbon farming. In another bill before us there are matters there, but it has been pointed out that there are significant opportunities in pastoral land to look at changing grazing practices in these areas and in so doing allow the natural vegetation to come back and out of that have increased carbon captured, effectively, in this vegetation as well.

The amounts are significant. One point raised is that if there is an existing project the landowners are potentially growing this and getting carbon credits, and then if the wind farm comes on top of that and removes that vegetation there is a contract via the carbon credits contracted relationship to provide those. While they do not see this as a barrier to allowing wind farms on there, because they are not going to go everywhere where that vegetation has been able to grow back, certainly if the loss due to carbon credits can be considered in the compensation as well that may well help to again get this coexistence, where it is not having to choose one or the other but things can coexist as well.

I spoke earlier in the bill, of course, about how once the renewable energy proponents are provided with access to the designated land they will be required to pay a rent to the state government for the use of that land. Questions are asked about the value of that. It is expected that the framework for this proposed rent will be released via regulations once the bill has been progressed through parliament.

In terms of the pastoralists, there are certainly concerns that if the rent that the government charges is too high it will ultimately impact on any rent or compensation that is able to be paid to the pastoral lessee, to the native title holder. As it is at the moment, it would be negotiated under the access agreements of either of those two mentioned parties.

The only payment that is legislated for the pastoral lease at the moment is by compensation for loss of access to the land that the renewable energy project takes up and benefits which classify rental that could be paid to the pastoralists. The way it is explained is that the bill signs on that, so it does allow that, but of course the economics are that it is too much, there is less money the government takes, potentially the renewable energy company says there is only so much money we can put towards a rental, whether it is to one body or spread across the three, and so you can see that the more one has the less the other gets.

The Australian Hydrogen Council made the point in regard to this, saying the imposition of rent levied at market value prior to the industry reaching commercial sustainability will act as a disadvantage to investment, going on to say:

We consider that rental payments under REILs or HGLs should be a nominal amount to allow the industry to develop.

Subsequently, Livestock SA also said:

Any agreement must include those issues of free commercial negotiation which presently apply in relation to the development of renewable infrastructure.

They went on to say:

We propose that a definition of 'compensation' be included in Section 4—Interpretation, which is clear on its extension beyond the common understanding of recognition of loss, to include remuneration for the sale of the RE generated on their land.

As I said before, while the actual amount of rent is yet to be revealed in regulation, there certainly are valid concerns that, with the state's debt growing in the recent budget and projections that the interest that the state government is going to have to pay per year will rise from \$800 million per year up to \$1,600 million per year, the government will be desperately looking for any revenue it can get its hands on.

What we do know is that the government we have here is certainly introducing a new measure of getting income, getting revenue. Some stakeholders have even said you could call this a tax. It certainly was not in place before this government was elected, it certainly was not announced as a policy going into the election and it certainly flies in the face of the Premier's commitment to have no new taxes.

In addition, where this money seems to be going—it is generated in the regions, in these areas of designated land. It seems from the briefing I have had that this money will be going into general revenue rather than remaining directly in the regional community, which is what the current regime under the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act effectively would allow. Now, Livestock SA were alert to this, and they went on to say:

...a portion of the rents received from the renewable energy companies to support the ongoing protection, restoration and maintenance of the pastoral lands.

At the moment, the existing regime on pastoral land sees that revenue go into the Pastoral Land Management Fund to then be disbursed. In this bill that has now been broken. We know these significant renewable energy projects are going to place additional pressure on the actual pastoral land on which they are placed.

This will also require more oversight as well from the Pastoral Board to ensure that that land is maintained. Additionally, if there is an opportunity to ensure that money is raised in these pastoral lands that can help fund the maintenance and upgrades to public access roads and stock roads, which is desperately needed, that will certainly be supported by the pastoral sector. As I said, Livestock SA made the point:

We recommend the government thoroughly consult with the relevant regional communities to determine the expenditure of the revenue raised to ensure it aligns with their regional development objectives.

So they are some of the concerns in terms of the monetary side of things.

Another concern—and I spoke about it—is around one of those licences that can be granted: the special enterprise licence. Now they can be granted in relation to both the designated land, but also in relation to freehold lands, and this can be for hydrogen and renewable energy enterprises

that are of major significance to the economy of this state. Really, the threshold will come down to what constitutes 'major significance'.

You can understand by way of example in times of war the need for the government to compulsorily acquire land to gain access to pastoral land if it is to put in place defence establishments that will actually be there to ensure the defence of the nation. I do not think you would find too much opposition throughout the community to acquisition of land there or to repurposing of land. That is by way of example. I am not trying to make out that this is on a wartime footing.

Similarly, we have here in Adelaide at the moment the South Road upgrade that has resulted in compulsory land acquisitions. They are really hard things to do. In terms of what are the other options, there really is only a narrow corridor where this land can go, and so it is very hard to look for other spots, whereas when we talk through renewable energy installations, and looking at the vast amounts of land throughout the state where these could go, it would really have to be a very high bar, you could say, for something to go on a particular piece of freehold land.

You would have to explain why such renewable energy infrastructure or hydrogen generation infrastructure could not be located elsewhere, so, as I said, quite a high threshold. Would it be, say that the whole national electricity grid would collapse unless the infrastructure went on that exact location? Again, while it is hard that freehold land could be affected in this way, I do not think the broad community would have a problem with that. I think what we would want to watch out for is that it is not just for any sorts of renewable energy infrastructure just because an energy proponent could not come to an agreement with a freehold landowner.

The freehold landowners, especially, would need to be given reassurances that this will not effectively become a mechanism to enforce renewable energy projects wherever. That is good to hear and we can, of course, explore that in the committee stage. Stakeholders made the point that no criteria whatsoever are specified as to what constitutes major significance, so that is something we can explore in the committee stage as well.

The other aspects to the special enterprise licence are concerns that the minister can set guidelines, meaning there is little to no scrutiny regarding the rules in respect of a special enterprise. We can work our way through that and I am confident those concerns will be answered.

There are other questions around the bill. Early in the bill, clause 7 gives the minister the opportunity to explore for renewable energy resources, so there are questions around that. We understand how that affects Crown land or state waters, as they are quite controllable by the government, but what does that mean for pastoralists in terms of access to land? What does that mean for freehold landowners as well, when they go through this?

There has been a significant amount of work done to roll out renewable energy infrastructure throughout the state, principally on freehold land, but there has also been some significant work put in by renewable energy companies in some of the pastoral land areas. That has involved work with pastoralists, native title holders and renewable energy companies who have been able to reach agreement on some form of an access agreement, but perhaps they have not reached the stage of lodging a planning application. They have questions around whether they will have to start this work again when this bill is introduced, because it includes the concept of release areas and competitive tenders.

The Australian Hydrogen Council made the recommendation that the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill take into account agreements that have already been executed. This includes existing agreements with pastoral lessees and relevant parties relating to native title. In terms of existing projects in place, as I said, there are a significant number of these projects on freehold land at the moment.

As we transition through this bill, it seems the transition provisions state that, even though these are on freehold land, they will need to have licences attached to them, and that now comes with a fee. That fee is presumed to be on a cost-recovery basis but, nonetheless, it is a licence fee—a fee that they were not having to pay beforehand. Potentially, there is a grace period associated with this which will allow them time to apply for these licences. Of course, the renewable energy

companies are probably not wildly supportive of this because they are now paying a fee that they otherwise would not be, but it seems like they are accepting of this provision.

Another area that is worth bringing up is concern regarding adjoining land. If there is a proposed area directly adjoining another landowner, what could the potential effects of this be? It might be—as has sometimes been pointed out in the Mining Act as well—that the actual most significant impacts are not so much on the land where the project is, but they could well be on the adjoining landowner. An example of that is transmission lines. Where a project has to have transmission lines go through to connect it up to the grid, these transmission lines may potentially need to go through the land of an adjoining landowner.

That is a bit of a snapshot in the time I have had so far of some of the points that have been made around this bill. Ultimately, the pastoralists certainly understand and support the need for renewable energy, not only to help the state but also to help them as well. If it can work well and they can work cooperatively, it can be of benefit. As has been said, if they get access to some form of rent or benefit via payments for having these installations on their land, that helps droughtproof their property.

They are really concerned that they are being consulted adequately. They are being told that the way their concerns will be addressed is via regulations, so they are having to take this on trust in some way. Via the committee stage, we will try to allay those concerns and build up that trust and help ensure that they are consulted in the drafting of regulations that ultimately will be filed in parliament.

The industry have made the point that, if they do not feel that they have been consulted properly by way of the formulation of regulations and that they are not brought along with it, these regulations should not just be accepted. They should really look at the potential for parliament to scrutinise them properly and potentially disallow them if they are not living up to the statement and reassurances they have been given verbally.

We are still consulting with stakeholders to understand what concerns have been addressed and what concerns remain outstanding, and certainly this will lead to questions in the committee. As we are continuing to consult with stakeholders, we look forward to the passage of the bill through the remainder of the second reading debate and the committee stage.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. B.I. Boyer.

## **GAS (OTHER GASES) AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Introduction and First Reading*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:02):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Gas Act 1987. Read a first time.

### *Second Reading*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:03):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation and explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave granted.

The Government is amending South Australia's gas legislation to include hydrogen and other gases, consistent with changes that are proposed for the national gas regulatory framework [via the *Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Other Gases) Bill 2023*].

On 22 November 2019, Energy Ministers endorsed the National Hydrogen Strategy, which sets out government actions to support the development of Australia's hydrogen industry, including to review the application of gas regulatory arrangements to hydrogen.

At the national level, Energy Ministers have agreed that the national regulatory framework should be amended to apply to hydrogen and renewable gases, in addition to natural gas. The proposed amendments specify



that the national framework would now apply to 'covered gas', which initially includes natural gas, hydrogen, biomethane, synthetic methane and blends of these gases.

As part of the same Strategy, governments agreed jurisdictions would review their existing legislation to determine whether their respective legal frameworks can support the hydrogen industry.

Upstream activities, such as production and transmission of hydrogen, are or will be able to be regulated in South Australia by the *Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Act 2000* and the proposed Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Act.

Together with those arrangements and the proposed national amendments, this *Gas (Other Gases) Amendment Bill 2023* will help to ensure that gas regulatory arrangements can apply across the hydrogen industry supply chain in South Australia.

Downstream activities, such as distribution and end use by consumers in their installations and appliances, are regulated by the *Gas Act 1997*. The Bill would extend the application of the *Gas Act 1997* to the same gases that would be regulated by the national energy laws, once amended.

Currently, the Act is limited to regulating gas that consists of hydrocarbons or predominantly of hydrocarbons, such as natural gas and other forms of methane. While the current definition of 'gas' allows the Act to apply to some gas blends that contain a small component of hydrogen, it does not apply to hydrogen on its own or to gas blends composed of a high proportion of hydrogen. This precludes the application of the regulatory regime established by the Act, including the functions and powers of the Technical Regulator and the Essential Services Commission, to hydrogen and 'high level' hydrogen blends used in distribution and retail operations, infrastructure, installations, and appliances.

By referring to 'covered gas' as defined in the National Gas Law (NGL), the Bill enables coverage of the same group of gases that are to be regulated by the national energy laws, including if a new gas type is added to the national laws at a later date.

The Bill inserts a specific definition of 'gas' for the purposes of Part 5A, which regulates retailers operating in South Australia under the National Energy Retail Law (NERL). This is because, while the NERL will be able to apply to all 'covered gases' as defined in the NGL, some types of covered gas, including hydrogen, would only come in scope if prescribed in the National Energy Retail Regulations.

These definition changes will ensure the range of gases to which the *Gas Act 1997* applies is consistent and contemporaneous with those regulated by the national framework as the gas industry evolves for the energy transition.

I commend the Bill to members.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### Part 1—Preliminary

###### 1—Short title

###### 2—Commencement

These clauses are formal.

##### Part 2—Amendment of *Gas Act 1997*

###### 3—Amendment of section 4—Interpretation

The amendment to the definition of *gas* is consequential to proposed amendments to the *National Gas Law*.

###### 4—Insertion of section 59AA

New section 59AA is proposed to be inserted:

###### 59AA—Interpretation

This section inserts a definition of *gas* required in connection with proposed amendments to the *National Energy Retail Law*.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Patterson.

## STATUTES AMENDMENT (NATIONAL ENERGY LAWS) (OTHER GASES) BILL

### *Introduction and First Reading*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:04):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the National Gas (South Australia) Act 2008 and the National Energy Retail Law (South Australia) Act 2011. Read a first time.

*Second Reading*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (16:04):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I seek leave to have the second reading explanation and explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave granted.

The government is amending the national energy legislation to include hydrogen, biomethane and other gases within the national gas regulatory framework.

On 22 November 2019, energy ministers endorsed the National Hydrogen Strategy, which sets out government actions to support the development of Australia's hydrogen industry, including to review the application of gas regulatory arrangements to hydrogen. Acting on that review, energy ministers agreed on 20 August 2021 that the national gas regulatory framework should be amended to apply to hydrogen and renewable gases.

Following two rounds of public consultation and advice received from the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) and the Australian Energy Regulator (AER), proposed law amendments were agreed by energy ministers on 28 October 2022.

The Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Other Gases) Bill 2023 extends the application of the National Gas Law (NGL) and the National Energy Retail Law (NERL) to hydrogen, biomethane and other gases. These reforms are intended to address any regulatory barriers and ambiguities in relation to the treatment of hydrogen and other gases in the national gas regulatory framework. The reforms may support the development of a competitive and cost-efficient domestic hydrogen and renewable gas industry that promotes economic efficiency in the long-term interests of consumers by:

- encouraging competition in contestable parts of the industry;
- encouraging innovation and investment;
- facilitating informed and efficient decision-making by industry participants, market bodies and governments;
- allowing existing facilitated and regulated retail markets to function as intended; and
- ensuring that consumers in those jurisdictions that have adopted the NERL continue to benefit from the consumer protection measures they enjoy as users of natural gas.

The bill does not change how natural gas is regulated under the national regulatory framework. Rather, the bill provides for the national gas regulatory regime to apply to other gas types, in addition to natural gas. The bill refers to these gases collectively as 'covered gases'. The term 'covered gas' will replace most references to 'natural gas' throughout the NGL. Key concepts in the NGL, such as natural gas industry, and natural gas service, are redefined to operate in respect of covered gas. These changes will have the effect of applying the NGL to those gases falling within the scope of the new terms.

Covered gas is defined to mean a 'primary gas' or a 'gas blend'. The bill defines 'primary gas' to mean natural gas, hydrogen, biomethane and synthetic methane. Provision is made for other gases to be brought within the definition in the future, by prescribing in the National Gas Regulations, or by local regulation of a participating jurisdiction. Primary gases that have been blended together constitute a 'gas blend'. A new term to be introduced into the NGL by the bill is 'blend processing facility'. The bill defines a blend processing facility as a type of facility for either one or both:

- blending of one or more primary gases, with or without other substances, for injection into a pipeline; or
- separation of a gas blend withdrawn from a pipeline into constituent gases before re-injection into a pipeline as a primary gas or a gas blend.

Blend processing facilities are recognised as a potentially contestable activity and will be subject to a new, lighter-handed third-party access regime. The bill establishes a new third-party access regime for non-pipeline facilities, including blend processing facilities. New provisions in the NGL will require service providers and prospective users to negotiate in good faith, and service providers will be prohibited from preventing or hindering access to blend processing facilities. The National Gas Rules (NGR) will require blend processing service providers to publish standing terms and information on the prices paid by users. Vertically integrated service providers will also be prohibited from discriminating in favour of their own operations. This approach broadly follows the existing lighter-handed model that applies for third party access to natural gas pipelines.

If competition does not emerge and it becomes clear that such facilities are natural monopolies, the NGL will allow the NGR to implement a formal negotiation framework, an access dispute mechanism and equivalent ring fencing and associate contract arrangements to those that apply to pipelines.

The bill will replace the term 'natural gas industry facility' with the term 'covered gas industry facility.' A covered gas industry facility is defined as including blend processing facilities, compression service facilities, gas processing plants, liquefied natural gas facilities, pipelines, storage facilities, and user facilities. A covered gas industry facility may also be another facility of a type specified by the regulations.

The existing natural gas pipeline access regime will now apply to all transmission and distribution pipelines transporting a covered gas. Participating jurisdictions will have the power to exempt a pipeline transporting covered gases, other than those relating to natural gas or a natural gas equivalent, from the access regime if it satisfies the remote pipeline criteria.

The NGL's ring-fencing provisions will apply to covered gases. Minimum ring-fencing requirements will prohibit pipeline service providers from providing blend processing services; producing primary gases, processable gases or biogas; and purchasing or selling covered gas, processable gas or biogas, unless necessary for the safe and reliable operation of a pipeline, or to provide balancing services. Associates of the pipeline service provider will not have this prohibition.

In line with current restrictions, pipeline service providers that want to test or trial these activities or want to carry out these activities on a permanent basis, will need to set up or utilise a separate entity to do so. If they do this, then any contract the associate entity enters into with the service provider to use the pipeline will need to comply with the associate contract provisions in the NGL. These provisions are designed to prevent the pipeline service provider from foreclosing or otherwise impeding competition by favouring their associate. The regulator will be able to consider applications for exemptions to ring-fencing requirements, subject to certain conditions being met.

The regulatory sandbox provisions of the NGL will apply where a proposed trial project involves any covered gas. Market bodies will be empowered to exercise their functions and powers in relation to the covered gas industry and covered gas services and related facilities. The bill will also make consequential changes to Australian Energy Market Operator's (AEMO) recently gained east coast gas system reliability and supply adequacy functions, ensuring both reforms function as intended.

Transitional arrangements will allow certain covered gas pipelines (other than natural gas pipelines) to apply under the new greenfields incentives regime established by the recent gas pipelines access reforms. These transitional arrangements are available only to pipelines commissioned in the specified transition period of 1 November 2022 to the day on which these amendments commence, and the application must be made within 90 days of commencement. This arrangement recognises that the Statutes Amendment (National Energy Laws) (Gas Pipelines) Act 2022 had not yet commenced when energy ministers approved the amendments contained in this bill. This meant there was a regulatory gap preventing new or recent pipelines for gases other than natural gas from being able to lodge applications under the greenfield incentive framework until it had commenced.

The approach to extending the NERL differs from the approach for the NGL because the customer protection framework in the NERL assumes a relatively mature retail market, which may not be the case for all types of covered gas. The bill amends the NERL to recognise covered gas, as defined in the NGL, and to provide for the application of the NERL and rules to natural gas, natural gas equivalents (NGEs) and prescribed covered gases (PCGs). The consumer protection, retailer authorisations and exemptions and retailer of last resort (RoLR) elements of the NERL will apply to natural gas and NGEs (as one group) and, separately, to any PCGs.

An NGE is a covered gas that is suitable for use as natural gas and is supplied through an existing natural gas distribution pipeline (or an extension of an existing pipeline) or is prescribed by a local instrument. For instance, a gas blend that consists predominantly of natural gas, but contains a small volume of hydrogen, is suitable for use as natural gas and would be an NGE automatically where the existing distribution system is authorised to haul a covered gas after the commencement of these amendments. Alternatively, where the same blend is to be supplied through a new distribution system, that blend would need to be prescribed by a local instrument to be brought within scope of the NERL.

A PCG is a covered gas, other than natural gas, that is brought within scope of the NERL, where it is appropriate to do so, by the National Energy Retail Regulations. This arrangement allows for the NERL, the National Energy Retail Rules (NERR) and Procedures to be tailored to apply to the retail supply of the PCG in a fit for purpose manner. Participating jurisdictions will be able to exclude a PCG from the application of the NERL in their jurisdiction, should they wish.

The AEMC will also be accorded a new power to make rules relating to the transition of supply from natural gas to an NGE or a PCG. Transitional arrangements will extend existing natural gas retailer authorisations, exemptions and default RoLRs to operate also in respect of NGEs. Market bodies, including the AER and the AEMO, will be able to exercise their functions and powers in relation to covered gases, NGEs and PCGs, and the NGR and NERR will also be able to regulate these gases.

The extension of the national gas regulatory framework will not change the allocation of responsibilities between the national laws and those of participating jurisdictions. Jurisdictions will retain responsibility for licensing, safety and technical regulation and product certification. In those jurisdictions that have not adopted the NERL for natural gas, those jurisdictions will also remain responsible for consumer protections. Under the amended framework, participating jurisdictions will be responsible for deciding whether to:

- prescribe any additional gases to be primary gases for the purposes of the NGL in that jurisdiction;
- exempt a 'remote pipeline' transporting a covered gas (other than natural gas or an NGE) from the NGL, if the remote pipeline criteria are met; and
- exclude a prescribed covered gas from the application of the NERL in that jurisdiction.

Upon commencement, the South Australian minister will be empowered to make initial Rules necessary to support these amendments. The initial Rules were developed and recommended to energy ministers by the AEMC after several rounds of public consultation. Once initial rules have been made by the minister, no further rules will be capable of being made pursuant to relevant authority afforded by the Bill. In addition to these amendments to the NGL and the NERL, the bill contains a small number of amendments to the acts establishing those national energy laws. I commend the bill to members.

#### Explanation of Clauses

##### Part 1—Preliminary

###### 1—Short title

###### 2—Commencement

###### 3—Amendment provisions

These clauses are formal.

##### Part 2—Amendment of *National Gas (South Australia) Act 2008*

###### 4—Amendment of section 9—Interpretation of some expressions in *National Gas (South Australia) Law and National Gas (South Australia) Regulations*

This clause updates an obsolete reference.

###### 5—Amendment of section 17—Exemption from taxes

This amendment is consequential.

##### Part 3—Amendment of *National Gas Law*

###### 6—Amendment of section 2—Definitions

Various amendments are made to the definitions section for the purposes of the measure.

###### 7—Insertion of section 2A

New section 2A is proposed to be inserted:

###### 2A—Additives and impurities

The nature of a substance as a primary gas or a gas blend is not changed by the presence of an additive required for safety or an impurity.

###### 8—Amendment of section 8A—Nominated distributors

###### 9—Amendment of section 10—Things done by 1 service provider to be treated as being done by all of service provider group

###### 10—Amendment of section 12—Commissioning of a pipeline

These amendments are consequential.

###### 11—Insertion of section 14

New section 14 is proposed to be inserted:

###### 14—Local regulations may exempt pipeline

A pipeline or a proposed pipeline can be declared to be a remote pipeline by local regulation in specified circumstances. Other provisions relate to the effect of declaring a pipeline or a proposed pipeline to be a remote pipeline.

###### 12—Amendment of section 16—Form of regulation factors

###### 13—Amendment of section 23—National gas objective

These amendments are consequential.

###### 14—Amendment of section 24A—Innovative trial principles

This clause inserts an additional principle into the innovative trial principles set out in section 24A.

15—Amendment of section 27—Functions and powers of the AER

16—Amendment of section 28—Manner in which AER must perform or exercise AER economic regulatory functions or powers

17—Amendment of section 30I—Consumer reference group

These amendments are consequential.

18—Amendment of section 30U—Definitions

This amendment is technical.

19—Amendment of section 30W—Trial waiver

This amendment clarifies that section 30W does not prevent the granting of an exemption in accordance with a rule made under section 148A.

20—Amendment of section 54—Further provision about the information that may be described in a regulatory information instrument

This amendment is consequential.

21—Amendment of section 74—Subject matter for National Gas Rules

These amendments are consequential or technical.

22—Repeal of sections 83A and 83AA

Sections 83A and 83AA are deleted.

23—Amendment of section 83B—Standard market timetable

24—Amendment of section 83D—False or misleading statements

25—Amendment of section 91A—AEMO's statutory functions

26—Amendment of section 91AD—AEMO's east coast gas system reliability and supply adequacy functions

27—Amendment of section 91AF—AEMO's power of direction—east coast gas system reliability and supply adequacy

28—Amendment of section 91BA—AEMO's declared system functions

29—Amendment of section 91BC—AEMO's power of direction

30—Amendment of section 91BF—Interconnection with facilities

These amendments are consequential.

31—Amendment of section 91BI—Market participation

This clause amends section 91BI to include producers or blend processing service providers who inject covered gas into a declared transmission system or a declared distribution system as a class of person who participates in a declared wholesale gas market in a registrable capacity.

32—Amendment of section 91BP—Title to gas

This amendment extends the operation of section 91BP to cover declared distribution systems in addition to declared transmission systems.

33—Amendment of section 91BQ—Immunity

This clause amends section 91BQ to extend the grant of immunity from civil monetary liability to AEMO for a failure to accept gas for injection into, or to make gas available for withdrawal from, a declared distribution system.

34—Amendment of section 91BRB—AEMO's STTM functions

35—Amendment of section 91BRC—Market participation

36—Amendment of section 91BRF—Title to gas

37—Amendment of section 91BRG—Gas supplied to STTM hub must meet quality specifications specified in the Rules

38—Amendment of section 91BRK—AEMO's gas trading exchange functions

These amendments are consequential.

39—Amendment of section 91D—Object and content of gas statement of opportunities

This clause makes a consequential amendment and substitutes the outline of the information that the gas statement of opportunities must contain.

40—Amendment of section 91DA—AEMO's obligation in regard to gas statement of opportunities

41—Amendment of section 91DB—Information for the gas statement of opportunities

42—Amendment of section 91FEA—Obligation to give information to AEMO

These amendments are consequential.

43—Insertion of Chapter 2 Part 6 Division 6 Subdivision 5

New Subdivision 5 is proposed to be inserted into Chapter 2 Part 6 Division 6:

Subdivision 5—Declared wholesale gas market information

91FEJ—Information required to be given to AEMO

Provision is made in relation to persons giving AEMO information that relates to the operation and administration of the covered gas industry.

91FEK—Person cannot rely on duty of confidence to avoid compliance with obligation

This section provides that a person must not refuse to comply with the requirement in section 91FEJ on the ground of any duty of confidence.

91FEL—Giving AEMO false or misleading information

This section provides that a person must not give information to AEMO under this Subdivision that the person knows is false or misleading in a material particular.

91FEM—Immunity of persons giving information to AEMO

Provision is made in relation to immunity of persons giving information to AEMO under this Subdivision.

44—Amendment of section 91GG—Disclosure of protected information for safety, proper operation of the market etc

45—Amendment of section 91KA—Supply interruption or disconnection in compliance with AEMO's direction

46—Amendment of section 91KD—Disclosure of information for purpose of market trials

47—Amendment of section 91L—Retail gas markets

48—Amendment of section 91LA—Retail market participation

These amendments are consequential.

49—Amendment of section 137—Definitions

This amendment deletes and substitutes the definition of *related business* specific to Chapter 4 Part 2.

50—Amendment of section 147—Service provider must not enter into or give effect to associate contracts that have anti-competitive effect

This amendment is consequential.

51—Substitution of section 148A

Section 148A is substituted by sections 148AA and 148A:

148AA—Exemptions from section 147(c)

This section provides a list of circumstances in which an associate contract for an associate pipeline service is exempt from section 147(c).

148A—Exemptions from particular requirements

This section provides for the making of Rules to provide for exemptions from the requirements made by some sections of the *National Gas Law*. Other provisions relate to the imposition of conditions on such exemptions.

52—Insertion of Chapter 5A

New Chapter 5A is proposed to be inserted:

Chapter 5A—Third-party access obligations for non-pipeline facilities

Part 1—Information transparency

## 197—Definitions

Definitions are provided for the purposes of the Part.

## 198—Information and transparency requirements relating to facilities

This section enables the Rules to make provisions in respect of the collection, disclosure, verification, management, publication and provision of information relating to facilities.

## 199—Publication of information relating to facilities

A person required to publish information relating to a facility must do so in accordance with the Rules.

## Part 2—Access to certain facilities

## 200—Definitions

This section provides a definition of *relevant facility* for the purposes of the Part.

## 201—Preventing or hindering access to relevant facilities

The owner, operator or controller of a relevant facility, or an associate of such a person, is prohibited from engaging in conduct for the purpose of preventing or hindering the access of a person to a service provided by the facility. Other provisions clarify when a person will be taken to have engaged in conduct for a particular purpose.

## 202—Terms and conditions must not discriminate

The owner, operator or controller of a relevant facility is prohibited from setting discriminatory terms and conditions for the use of a service provided by means of the facility.

## 203—Duty to negotiate in good faith

This section requires good faith negotiations by users or prospective users and persons who own, operate or control a relevant facility when access to a service provided by means of the facility is sought. Other provisions relate to the making, and effect, of Rules in respect of such access requests and negotiations.

## 204—Rules about ring fencing

This section empowers the Rules to make provisions for matters relating to ring fencing the activities of a blend processing service provider or a person who owns, operates or controls a facility of a class prescribed by the Regulations.

## 53—Amendment of heading to Chapter 7

## 54—Amendment of section 217—AEMO to be Bulletin Board operator

## 55—Amendment of section 218—AEMO's obligation to maintain Bulletin Board

## 56—Amendment of section 219—AEMO's other functions as operator of Natural Gas Services Bulletin Board

## 57—Amendment of section 222—Fees for services provided

## 58—Amendment of section 223—Obligation to give information to AEMO

## 59—Amendment of section 226A—Provision of certain information to AER

## 60—Amendment of section 228—Nature of BB Procedures

## 61—Amendment of section 228I—Service requirements may be specified in the Rules

These amendments are consequential.

## 62—Insertion of section 294FD

New section 294FD is proposed to be inserted:

## 294FD—South Australian Minister to make initial Rules relating to other gases

The South Australian Minister is empowered to make initial Rules relating to implementing the other gas amendments. Certain requirements relating to the making of such Rules are imposed, including publication requirements.

## 63—Amendment of section 294G—South Australian Minister may make Rules on recommendation of MCE and Energy Security Board

## 64—Amendment of section 314A—Extension of trial Rule

These amendments are consequential.

65—Amendment of Schedule 1—Subject matter for the National Gas Rules

This clause makes consequential amendments and expands the list of subject matters for the National Gas Rules in Schedule 1 for the purposes of the measure.

66—Amendment of Schedule 3—Savings and transitionals

Savings and transitional provisions are inserted into Schedule 3 for the purposes of the measure.

Part 4—Amendment of *National Energy Retail Law (South Australia) Act 2011*

67—Amendment of section 2—Commencement

This clause updates an obsolete reference to the repealed *Acts Interpretation Act 1915*, replacing it with the equivalent reference under the *Legislation Interpretation Act 2021*.

68—Amendment of section 7—Exclusion of legislation of this jurisdiction

69—Amendment of section 14—Exclusion of legislation of this jurisdiction

These clauses update obsolete references.

70—Amendment of section 41—Transitional regulation-making power

This clause amends section 41 to provide power to make regulations relating to the operation or effect of the *National Energy Retail Law (South Australia)* on account of, or in connection with, the commencement of the measure.

Part 5—Amendment of *National Energy Retail Law*

71—Amendment of section 2—Interpretation

Certain definitions are inserted or amended for the purposes of the measure.

72—Insertion of section 2A

New section 2A is proposed to be inserted:

2A—Natural gas equivalent

This section provides a definition of *natural gas equivalent*.

73—Insertion of section 3A

New section 3A is proposed to be inserted:

3A—Application to prescribed covered gas

This section provides that the National Regulations may modify the way that the *National Energy Retail Law*, the National Regulations and the Rules apply to a prescribed covered gas.

74—Amendment of section 10—Ministers of participating jurisdictions

This amendment is consequential.

75—Amendment of section 11—Local area retailers

This amendment sets out that a nomination of a retailer as a local area retailer may relate to electricity, natural gas and natural gas equivalents, or 1 or more types of prescribed covered gas.

76—Amendment of section 13A—Innovative trial principles

This clause inserts an additional principle into the innovative trial principles set out in section 13A.

77—Amendment of section 16—Application of Law and Rules to energy

This amendment applies the *National Energy Retail Law* and the Rules to the sale and supply of electricity, natural gas, natural gas equivalents and prescribed covered gas, to retailers (to the extent that they sell electricity, natural gas, natural gas equivalents or prescribed covered gas) and to distributors (to the extent that they supply electricity, natural gas, natural gas equivalents or prescribed covered gas).

78—Amendment of section 88—Requirement for authorisation or exemption

This amendment is consequential.

79—Amendment of section 94—Notice of decision to grant application

This amendment requires the AER to give a successful applicant for a retailer authorisation a notice stating that they are authorised to sell electricity or gas and, if the applicant is authorised to sell gas, stating the types of gas they are authorised to sell.



## 80—Amendment of section 99—Variation of retailer authorisation

This amendment clarifies that the AER may not amend a retailer authorisation to change the type or types of gas a retailer is authorised to sell except on application by the retailer.

## 81—Amendment of section 137—RoLR notice—direction for gas

This clause amends section 137 to enable the AER to, in specified circumstances, include in a RoLR notice a direction requiring a blend processing service provider to make available to a designated RoLR the capacity in its blend processing facility that, immediately before the transfer date, was available to the failed retailer. Other amendments relate to the terms and conditions for access to the blend processing facility by the designated RoLR.

## 82—Amendment of section 144—RoLR Procedures

This amendment provides that procedures made by AEMO under section 144 may apply separately to electricity, natural gas and natural gas equivalents, or 1 or more types of prescribed covered gas.

## 83—Amendment of section 237—Subject matters of Rules

This amendment allows the Rules to make provision for or in relation to the transition from the sale or supply of natural gas to the sale or supply of a natural gas equivalent or a prescribed covered gas.

## 84—Amendment of section 238—South Australian Minister to make initial National Energy Retail Rules

## 85—Amendment of section 238AA—South Australian Minister to make initial Rules relating to regulatory sandboxing

## 86—Amendment of section 238A—South Australian Minister may make initial Rules related to consumer protections and smart meters

## 87—Amendment of section 238AB—South Australian Minister may make initial Rules relating to stand-alone power systems

These amendments are consequential.

## 88—Insertion of section 238AD

New section 238AD is proposed to be inserted:

## 238AD—South Australian Minister to make initial Rules relating to other gases

The South Australian Minister is empowered to make initial Rules relating to implementing the other gas amendments. Certain requirements relating to the making of such Rules are imposed, including publication requirements.

## 89—Amendment of section 238B—South Australian Minister may make Rules on recommendation of MCE and Energy Security Board

This amendment is consequential.

## 90—Amendment of Schedule 1—Savings and transitionals

Savings and transitional provisions are inserted into Schedule 1 for the purposes of the measure.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Patterson.

**HYDROGEN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY BILL***Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (16:05):** I am pleased to rise and have the opportunity to make some comments regarding the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill. I must say that I enjoyed spending some time in the chamber yesterday and this afternoon listening to contributions from other members of this place around what is, of course, an incredibly exciting area of not just technology but public policy as well and one that I have followed with great interest.

I thought perhaps it would be an opportunity for me here today to make some comments around not only the significance of the bill that is before this place but also the significance of hydrogen as an alternative fuel and the enormous potential upside for our state in my capacity as the Minister for Training and Skills.

A number of members, including the member for Newland, have focused their comments in this debate around workforce needs, training needs, and it is certainly something we have been

focused on in our first 18 months in government, that is, what we can do as a state government to help incentivise our public both for-profit and not-for-profit training providers to offer the qualifications needed to build the workforce that will be required for this very large election commitment the Malinauskas Labor government has made.

As is often the case in this portfolio for which I am responsible to the house, we try to maximise the number of South Australians who can access the enormous job opportunities that will present themselves as part of a shift to hydrogen in South Australia, in terms of both domestic use and export potential, which is something else that a number of members who have contributed to this debate have spoken about.

We have an aspiration in South Australia of moving to 100 per cent renewable generation by 2030, which is a pretty incredible thing to say, but the gains this state has made over the last couple of decades, in terms of growing its generation and use of renewable energy, are something we are rightfully proud of and something we speak about proudly on the international stage, just not the national stage.

When I speak to family and friends interstate and we talk about issues around renewable energy and I talk to them about the amount of renewable energy produced in South Australia and the targets we have already set over the last few years and met and exceeded, the reaction from those people interstate is really something to behold. It is something that all jurisdictions have been talking about for a long time now. We have not been just talking the talk in South Australia; we have been walking the walk for a long time.

I was pleased and proud to be a member of the then Malinauskas opposition that made such bold election commitments in a number of areas, I must say. I am the beneficiary of those in terms of the minister who gets to deliver upon them in the education, training and skills portfolios. The commitment around hydrogen that was made really is incredibly significant. As I said, I am proud to be a member of a team that made such bold election commitments in areas that are not just important for our state but are part of a global shift to decarbonise as well.

I have been fortunate enough to hear the Premier speak on a number of occasions around hydrogen. I am not sure if there is anyone better, although I must say that the members for West Torrens and Port Adelaide are also very adept at explaining. The Premier does a very good job publicly of breaking down how a hydrogen plant would work, how energy is produced using it and how it can be stored and exported. It is a very technical thing, I must say.

I remember thinking when we had these discussions when still in opposition that, although this is an incredible election commitment and something that absolutely a future Labor government should do, it would be difficult explaining it on phones, at doors, at street-corner meetings and in shopping centres because it is incredibly technical and it is a new and emerging technology, which makes that conversation all the more difficult.

Most recently, I saw the Premier speak about it at the country cabinet community forum that we had in Mount Barker, which had the biggest turnout I have ever seen at a country cabinet—600 people, I think. I have been attending them in different capacities since 2011 and I have never seen a crowd like that. The Premier gave a pretty impassioned speech and a very good explanation to a very large and diverse crowd about why hydrogen was important and why we are so well placed in South Australia to access it.

There is a very important part of that speech that the Premier gives that talks about South Australian history, in terms of how Eastern States—Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria—have had the upper hand in terms of access to traditional fossil fuels buried in the ground and how they used those to build their economies over centuries.

We did not have those in South Australia to the same extent, so did not have the same natural advantages here, but we are at a place in history and a time in history now where, with an abundance of wind, for instance, and sun and available land area, we have natural advantages over and above some of those Eastern States and an opportunity now to capitalise on that and to put ourselves ahead to set us up for generations to come, just like those governments in Queensland,

New South Wales and Victoria in years gone by did with the investments they made in traditional fossil fuels.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, it is an exciting time to be talking about these things. Of course, we were leading the way with the giant battery in Hornsdale. The conversations then were akin to the ones we are having now around explaining to the public why hydrogen is so important and some of the fundamental conversations around how hydrogen energy is created, how it is captured and how it is transported. It reminds me of some of the conversations we had when we were talking about the Hornsdale battery.

Of course, the world has changed a lot since then. We know that the pace of change has increased, particularly in terms of technology. The growth in the capacity of batteries in all applications has been exponential, but it did not feel like that when we first announced our ambition to have the world's biggest battery a number of years ago.

I remember some of the conversations I had at the time and they were met with, I would not say derision, but a bit of disbelief around whether or not this was serious policy, whether or not this could be achieved and whether or not it was really practical that a relatively small state like South Australia could actually create the world's biggest battery and that it could actually make a really genuine and significant difference in our energy network.

You know what? Here we are. It is no longer the biggest battery in the world, of course, because we were early adopters and all those other jurisdictions hopped on it as well and created their own big batteries and are using those, but it has been a really important part of the energy network in South Australia. It is something again that we should be proud of because we took a stand on something which at the time was not without controversy. There was an emerging technology, one that I think particularly older members of our community struggled to get their heads around because it was new, it was different, and in some respects that is a bit akin to where we are now with the conversation around hydrogen.

I guess what I will say in terms of this bill is that we should look back to the time around the conversations we had as a state with the introduction of the Hornsdale Power Reserve, or the big battery, and some of that scepticism which, as some time has elapsed since then and now, shows was misplaced. It was a very wise investment that has played a very significant role in the South Australian context, and we should keep that front of mind when having discussions around why we should be investing in areas like hydrogen.

There are also the comments the Premier has made around this being a moment in time, with Australia but also the world moving to decarbonise, moving to make significant and ambitious targets around how much renewable energy will be generated and used in their jurisdictions, that we not only acknowledge the natural advantage we have here but we also acknowledge that if we do not act now we run the very real risk of missing the opportunity we have as a state to lead the way.

We know that one of the big challenges in terms of the hydrogen election commitment made by this government is its delivery. It is an issue that we face in a whole range of sectors right across Australia at the moment. In fact, I joined the federal Minister for Skills and Training, the Hon. Brendan O'Connor, just yesterday at Urrbrae TAFE, where we talked to the media around this government's commitment for new fee-free TAFE places.

Minister O'Connor made the comment (and I am paraphrasing) that the list of professions in short supply not so long ago, and I think it was within Minister O'Connor's time as minister, has grown from something like 153 listed as officially in high demand and short supply to something like 280 in the space of 12 or 18 months. That just goes to show the magnitude of the task we have in front of us in terms of growing the pipeline of skilled workers for all those industries that are crying out for them—of course, hydrogen is one, electrotechnology—and making sure that we have that steady supply of the qualifications and workers who will be needed to deliver on that commitment in Whyalla.

I thought I might take the opportunity here today to talk about some of the things we are doing to try to make sure that we do build that workforce. One of the things fresh in my mind, because I spoke about it at the awards just last week, is around a commitment we have made in conjunction with PEER—one of the very well-respected, not-for-profit industry training providers in

South Australia—and supporting them with a mobile van, essentially, that will go out to provide training in different areas in the electrotechnology space.

PEER are one of the biggest if not the biggest TAFE trainers of sparkies in South Australia. They do an incredibly good job and we have supported them to do that because we know, particularly in the context of hydrogen and where the plant is going to be built, that we want to make sure wherever it is possible to build a local workforce, instead of running the risk, which we have seen in the minerals and resources sector, of a fly-in fly-out workforce, which of course is a great opportunity for those workers to fly in to a mine site and earn a very good wage and then fly out again but does not necessarily flow on to the local community in which the mine is located.

Of course, that is front of mind for us as a government in terms of the hydrogen commitment in Whyalla to do whatever we can to make sure people looking for work, whether they are entering the workforce for the first time or looking at a career change, have the opportunity to access the qualifications that they need to get one of the jobs in areas like hydrogen as a way of boosting employment in that local community as well.

I would hark back to what I mentioned a few moments ago in terms of fee-free TAFE positions. Within the first 12 months of the Malinauskas state government coming to power and within what I think would have been about seven months of the federal Labor government coming to power, I joined Minister O'Connor at the Tonsley innovation precinct, and we announced a one-year National Skills Agreement because we knew that the pressure was on already in terms of doing what we could as a state government to deliver more skilled workers for all those industries in short supply.

Rather than waiting to negotiate a five-year agreement, straight off the bat we announced a one-year agreement that included twelve and a half thousand fee-free positions in South Australia. Ten and a half thousand of those were for TAFE SA and 2,000 were for other training providers, not-for-profit and for-profit. I think it was one of the biggest cohorts of those fee-free places given to providers other than TAFE in South Australia.

We made a conscious decision to do that because we knew that, being a smaller state in terms of population, if we were to truly make inroads into the skills crisis that we have nationally, it would take all the different parts of our skills and training sector pulling together. For that reason, we made sure that we included some other providers in that initial twelve and a half thousand. I can tell you that, within the space of 12 months, all twelve and a half thousand basically were accessed, which is fantastic news.

Yesterday, I joined Minister O'Connor to announce that there will be 15,000 more places across the next three years in a lot of priority areas. Of course, electrotechnology is one of those priority areas as well. We know, in the context of what I said just before around making sure that local jobseekers and regional jobseekers actually have access to jobs that are being created in those regions by projects like the Malinauskas Labor government's hydrogen plant, they need to actually get the qualifications they need to access one of those jobs.

We also know one of the barriers there, particularly at the moment with the cost of living biting right around the country, is that the cost of accessing those qualifications is a real and genuine concern and a barrier to a lot of those people being able to, for instance, get the quals they need as a sparky to access one of the many jobs that are available in that sector, including hydrogen. That is the importance of the fee-free model, to withdraw that barrier and make it easy for all South Australians who are, as I said, jobseekers or looking for a career change to access one of the training courses they need to get the job they are looking for.

Those cost-of-living savings in terms of what is being waived through the fee-free model are really significant. In the case of a Diploma of Nursing, which is a two-year degree, I think if someone was to gain a fee-free position, the saving across the life of the two-year qualification is more than \$11,000. Early childhood education and care, another priority area for this government with three-year-old preschool, is \$5,000. These are large sums of money that we all in this place who engage with our local communities know would well and truly be a barrier in the current cost-of-living environment to accessing these courses.

There are a number of things in those areas that we are doing to make sure that we actually increase the pipeline of people coming in and taking up a course, which is part of the problem and part of the solution to addressing the skills crisis. But the other part, of course, is how we improve that completion rate. If we take into account all training courses, including apprenticeships nationally, the completion rate is still sub 50 per cent. When you consider the amount of money that both state and federal governments are putting in as primarily subsidies, so subsidising courses to make them more affordable in areas that those state governments view as priority areas, it is a vast amount of money.

If you look at the current efficiency of the system, it is not particularly efficient at all if nationally we only see roughly one in two people who go into a training course actually come out the other end. That is a big problem for the individual, but it is a big problem for business and for the taxpayers whose money is going in to offer that subsidy. We are doing a lot of work, we put our hand up in South Australia to lead, and I know that that will be a huge positive in terms of building the workforce we need here for hydrogen and all the opportunities it presents in South Australia as well.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (16:25):** I rise to make a contribution in regard to the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill and note that this is a bill that seeks to regulate these projects under a one-stop shop system, and that is the very short version.

We are in a changing world, we are in a transitioning world, and we are in a world where coal has been demonised, yet we see in Victoria the Loy Yang coal plant near Traralgon lacking maintenance. I note the other day that plant had a big steel beam fall on a walkway because coal has been demonised so much that either people are not making the investment or the financiers are not backing it in. Yet we are a substantial coalmining country, a substantial exporter of coal across the world, and we still need it into the future, and they are talking about this plant having an extended life because we are not quite there with renewables.

In regard to renewables, I have had solar panels on my farmhouse for many years now, and they are a great thing to export energy and keep the power bills down at home, but we still need base load power. Certainly, part of that still at the moment is coal and there is still a lot of gas in the system. As we transition, because gas is 50 per cent cleaner than coal gas it will be part of the system, some people say, for at least another 30 years. Gas is very much part of our life and part of our energy mix.

As we move forward, there are more and more solar projects coming on. Around Taillem Bend, there are at least 200 megawatts; there were 100 megawatts in already, and another 100 is not far off coming online next to the powerline that links South Australia through to Victoria and through to the rest of South Australia. These projects are going on around the state.

We have seen the work we did trying to get carbon neutral on our SA Water pump projects off the River Murray, pumping towards Adelaide, and I see those solar farms throughout my electorate at Mannum, Murray Bridge and other places. There are also wind farms around the place. There have been many debates in this house about wind farms and whether you can sleep, whether they cause problems or whether they cause health issues. That debate goes on.

There is a company called Tilt Renewables that is close—very close—after around 15 years to getting a project up around Palmer and Tungkillo and towards Mount Pleasant. This wind farm will traverse both my electorate and the member for Schubert's electorate. It was a project that initially had something like 100 turbines but now is being cut back to about 43, I think. I might have these numbers wrong, because I am speaking freestyle a bit, but the turbines were going to be about 160 metres high and now I think they are going to be about 240 metres high and they will cover about 5,000 hectares less.

With all these projects, it is a bit similar to mining proposals. Sometimes it is because people do not get the opportunity to utilise the payback period from having turbines on their property, because there is a lease that is a bit like a phone tag. You have a leaseback system every year that can be quite lucrative. Certainly, we have to take heed of the genuine concerns that I have had put to me by local constituents from across both my electorate and the member for Schubert's electorate.

I have met with Tilt and I have had ongoing conversations with them. They are based in Melbourne. I have been getting responses from them around the specific queries from constituents in regard to these wind turbines. Other people are quite happy that they are getting the opportunity to, I guess, partially droughtproof their properties through getting that leaseback plan on some wind turbines on their property.

Renewables will become bigger and bigger as we transition, and they are going to cover a lot more of the landscape, whether it be on freehold land, pastoral land or even offshore. We note already that there is significant opposition to the proposals in the South-East, with offshore turbines, and there is different opposition to various projects around the place.

Certainly, some of that opposition we see in the Eastern States is where there are transmission lines, like the project that we have built, most of it on our side of the border, EnergyConnect, the link through to New South Wales so that we can link our 70 per cent renewable power generation and the other power generation we have in this state if it is needed.

Essentially, the 70 per cent power generation we have in this state from renewables can be linked through to the Eastern States so that we can pump that excess power when we have it through to the Eastern States grid that we are linked to, right through New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. Also, it is there to pull power back, if we need to, from gas-fired generation in the east, or Snowy Hydro or coal, because coal will play a part for a little while longer.

Also as part of the mix, we see the state government proposing the hydrogen sector at Whyalla and Port Bonython. I was looking at something the other day. It was the same year I started up at Moomba in the Cooper Basin in 1982 when the Port Bonython gas line went into play. It was interesting looking at those old photos and remembering the sidearms on the bulldozer, the track vehicles for laying pipe and welders out in the desert, essentially. They did some fantastic work those people—it was pretty well all blokes—working out in the sun and just getting those gas lines built.

I do have some concerns about hydrogen. We are told that the government has put up \$593 million. I think it will need a lot more than that to get it going. We have already seen pullback from some of the storage that was going to be installed. I just wonder how much energy will be used from other forms—whether it is gas or something else—to develop the hydrogen. What did alarm me was we had a night here with some academics (and this is no reflection on them at all) and I was asking them about how this would function, and there were no clear answers. There were no clear answers, which shows how new this technology is.

As we move forward, there will be different rules and different regulations about putting these plants in place with release areas and prescribed areas. One thing that does interest me is the special enterprise licence, where there is a project of major significance and there cannot be agreement over whether the land can be purchased for whatever area is needed, whether it is for plant, transmission lines, etc.

I know that Minister Koutsantonis, the member for West Torrens, when he is talking about other projects does not like talking about compulsory acquisition. He is quite happy to acquire 540 homes for the Torrens to Darlington project, but then he does not like the idea of acquiring a bit of land to sort out the Hahndorf bypass properly. What this special enterprise licence will be is exactly that: it is compulsory acquisition dressed up as something else. Let's call it out for what it is. We will need to make sure that the appropriate regulations are in place.

What I see right through the briefing notes I have from the shadow minister, and he has done an excellent job going through the bill, is that there will be a lot of regulation put into this and not legislation. Obviously regulation comes in when we do not see it all. We can obviously do the legislation in this house and in the other place, so we need to be very mindful of how that goes about. As the member for Narungga stated the other day, he has had his concerns with mining land access, and he is having concerns with this, with the access for hydrogen and renewable projects.

I would just about guarantee that over time these projects will dwarf the amount of land impacted by mining in South Australia, and they are probably already heading there in a big way. That is the way of the world, that is the way we are going. We need to make sure that in regard to getting agreement with landholders, getting agreement on whether they are freehold landholders,

and certainly in the pastoral lands, where there is a shared purpose between the government and pastoral lessees, getting agreement about how much rent will actually go to the lessees' pocket or whether it will just be a transfer from whoever the company is with this energy project going just straight to government, there is fairness and equity.

Obviously, these proposals are only going to go near the big transmission lines, so for anyone with a property of any size—it does not even need to be a huge property—next to a transmission line is the obvious place where these projects could go. We do have abundant sun and wind in this state, as we have proven with the rollout of the technology over time.

The thing that concerns me from everything I am hearing and seeing about the hydrogen project is that it will not bring down power prices in this state. We have recently seen power prices go up by about 30 per cent. I notice my new bill recently, notwithstanding having solar panels, has gone up significantly. That is hurting South Australians. With the cost of living and the cost of supplying power, everything is getting more and more expensive day by day.

We have issues with the network. We saw during the River Murray floods—from up in the Riverland around some of the bigger grape-growing areas, right through to my electorate to more horticulture, down to dairies and other farming down towards the mouth of the Murray near Goolwa—issues with powerline operation, powerlines being switched off and people having to find a way to generate electricity to keep their businesses going.

At times, we are told that this is a gold-plated network. Well, I can assure you it is not a gold-plated network. We saw that come into play the other day when 1,300 properties were switched off, in September around Ceduna and the West Coast. Yes, it was a nasty, hot, blowy, dry day, but what concerns me about this is that it was a proactive approach by SA Power Networks in case of a fire being lit.

The simple fact was that the green crop land was not going to burn anyway. As it was, and as the member for Flinders indicated on radio, there was a scrub fire that did get going, but as soon as it reached the edge that was the end of it. If that is going to be the way we manage our power systems into the future, that it is all about the perceived risk, these lines are not gold-plated.

SA Power Networks need to up their inspection—more accurate inspection—and I know they have indicated that they do more of that since it was privatised. I am not going to hear the argument from anyone saying, 'This has all gone bad since the electricity services were privatised decades ago.' But it needs to be a lot better than what it is. The simple fact is it has happened at Nangwarry in the member for MacKillop's electorate and, in the same electorate, the Yumali-Netherton fire started from dropped powerlines. There needs to be a better system in place, better inspection, better insulators and better systems put in to make sure that we can keep the lights on and the power on to make this state run.

We saw the recent conversation around the Country Fire Service—of which I am a proud member, and other members in this house are as well—looking at reducing the fire danger index which would take away hours of viable harvest time. That just hits farmers' pockets. I indicated earlier today that farmers are going through a tough time with stock prices dropping and they need every opportunity to get these valuable crops off. The harvest has started. A couple of loads have come in at Thevenard and Port Pirie in the last couple of days, so harvest is on, hay season is on, and farmers need the opportunity to get those crops off.

There is a perception that farmers are not prepared for fire. They have better equipment than they have ever had for fighting fires. They have chaser bins with up to 4,000 litres of water in a machine that is following the harvest—it could be 30 seconds behind. They have ex-CFS trucks in the paddock. They have big ex-military trucks in the paddock. They have 10,000 litre tankers, etc., standing in the corner ready to go, because those of us who live in the bush know that we have to hit it alongside the CFS to make sure we get the right outcome. Most of the time we do. Yes, there are some losses, but the idea is to obviously minimise the losses and minimise the loss of assets.

There will be a lot of questions asked in the committee stage of this bill about how the different licence forms are going to play out. I will be interested to see what the conversation is around the compulsory acquisition powers and that kind of thing. Even though some of this looks like it has

been modelled on the Mining Act to a degree, we do not have compulsory acquisition in the Mining Act. It will be interesting to see where that conversation goes.

As I said earlier in my contribution, there is no doubt that we are in a time of transition, but it needs to be managed. We saw the chaos in this state when over 500 megawatts of coal-fired power got knocked down too early at Port Augusta. On 28 September 2016, we were sitting, working in this very place, and the whole state went out. We should never, ever see that again. In the management of power supplies across the state, not only do we have to get the generation mix right but we need to make sure that we can get that transmission to people's places right, because we would not expect 1,300 homes, or 20,000 homes in the urban area, to be happy about having their power switched off just because people thought the risk was too high. It just would not happen.

Yes, I do note there are some shocking days, but we need to find a better way to make sure that we can keep the electricity supplies running through the state. I will be very interested to see how the committee stage of this bill progresses into the future.

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (16:46):** I rise to speak on the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill and, in general, really support the whole process that has been allowed to occur today in this parliament. There is a clause above it, that does not mean that I am fully cognisant and understand whether the production of hydrogen as an alternative to our old fossil fuels stacks up today, stacks up tomorrow or will stack up in 10 years. I think it is going to be brave governments and business leaders to do those sorts of investments and understand it better than I can.

I am actually quite pleased about this process. I will speak locally first, about my seat of MacKillop in the South-East, and talk about some large businesses, plus opportunities that we battle with in the area of energy. Before I go any further, and just covering off on what the member for Hammond talked about when he talked about lines, poles and infrastructure, which obviously transport energy around our regions, it is a really big concern when our infrastructure starts to fail and become of the age of 60 years plus. It is really hard to measure and manage and be forewarned of any sorts of accidents occurring, such as lines dropping to the ground because insulators are perished and beyond their use-by date.

I do share those concerns the member for Hammond has raised. It has happened around Nangwarry, and no doubt it could happen elsewhere to our ageing infrastructure. All I can say to any government, no matter the colour of their politics, is that we do need good infrastructure across our state so it not only transports energy but is reliable and safe to use 24/7, rather than switching it off because the winds might be too high.

Coming back to this bill in more direct terms, it gives the opportunity to license and allow the generation of hydrogen using renewable energy. Two of those energies obviously are solar and wind. In our neck of the woods, particularly during winter, the sun is not much of an energy opportunity for us, but certainly wind is. In the summer months, we do have more sunshine than in winter months, and we also have some large industries that would benefit from this type of energy base if it were allowed to stack up.

One of the businesses I am going to touch on is Kimberly-Clark, which is a large employer in my neck of the woods, on the southern end of my region near Millicent and Tantanoola. It is a pulp mill, it imports from overseas, it produces a world-class product of tissue paper in many forms and it transports that product all around Australia.

One of the things that has been a bugbear—and we have always tried to help and assist wherever we could through the Marshall years, and no doubt I will try to do that in the new Malinauskas years that are in front of us—is that we keep energy costs down to a minimum for Kimberly-Clark and, not only that, that we make sure, if there is an access opportunity for Kimberly-Clark to use hydrogen and renewable power to substitute its high need on natural gas, that we allow them to do so. This is all yet to be determined, about how much it can use in the way of hydrogen and natural energy.

We have the Lake Bonney wind farm there, which is one of the older wind farms in South Australia. The fans have certainly been superseded by newer and bigger ones, but I know that the wind farm now has a large battery on board. It is certainly not used to its maximum because the



competition to access the grid is not as easy as it probably was when it first started. I know that we could benefit more from that production if we could get more of the energy used for the likes of hydrogen.

Another thing I want to touch in that area is Bordertown, a small community busting at the seams to build more houses and capture more business. The Minister for Housing, Nick Champion, is working with me on affordable housing, but one of the imposts for us in Bordertown is the lack of water and also the lack of power. Bordertown cannot even have its own solar investment in the town because the grid that supplies Bordertown cannot cope with excess energy being produced in Bordertown to go back into the grid. My understanding is that the general answer to developments in Bordertown is, 'No, you cannot put a solar farm or development here because the grid can't cope with it,' yet in Bordertown we have a diesel generator that has to be started because the grid does not meet the town's needs anymore.

A large and strong business in Bordertown is Blue Lake Milling, which has a methane capturing type model alongside the business to produce methane for power production. It certainly can and does meet the needs of Blue Lake Milling, but it cannot get it into the grid either because the contracts are too tight. So far, it has not worked as well as they were hoping to utilise that investment.

What may be possible for Bordertown, and this is only if this sort of infrastructure and these types of processes are allowed—and this is what the bill could help manage—is if a development of renewable energy were produced in Bordertown, such as solar, and they were then allowed to produce hydrogen. There would then be two outcomes. They could distil more fresh water, and the watertable that does not quite meet human consumption needs with its salinity levels could be desalinated down by about 20 to 30 per cent, and also produce hydrogen and also produce energy. That may be something that this type of legislation and regulations would allow for investors to participate in.

Another thing about the bill and how it has been explained to me, and we see it in the mining industry—and this is rather adventurous of the Malinauskas government and probably even adventurous for the minister—is to develop a policy where he does not want to see investment banking or land shadowing, where investments or rights to access sites and renewable energy type projects actually say, 'We'll do this,' but we actually do not. We sit on it and we do not allow other players to come in.

I think that is rather bold and I think it is rather positive, the way that land tenement, mining access and the Mining Act works now by locking potential developers and investors into minerals out of the game, because it has people with silent licences on land just waiting for that opportunity when someone might find something below the ground. Yes, it can work, but it is very opportunistic and maybe it is not that conducive to maximising benefit for the South Australian economy if there are players in that game who make it really hard for developments to take place.

If this legislation works well, in the fact that silent players cannot sit on their hands and lock away other investors and say, 'This is mine. You can only have this site, this idea, this model or this development if you pay me something for it,' then I think that would be a great outcome and maybe it will make South Australia more accessible for all the natural energy that may be out there in the way of sun and wind.

Another thing I would take liberty to speak on is the fact that I do have family interests in the pastoral regions. Our family has been farming in pastoral areas for over 100 years now and we have always welcomed and tried to work with mining companies for all the benefits they bring to our regions. They bring in population, roads, infrastructure, telecommunications, water and, in general, population for the benefit of others in such isolated circumstances.

Renewable energy is proposed in the way of windfarms and solar and perhaps even microcells, which I will touch on in a second. These big investments are talked about on Eyre Peninsula or 100 kilometres west of Port Augusta and beyond. I think there is a 1,200-fan investment looking at potential there.

I know that the pastoral property owners there are very excited by this proposal, and so are we as an owner of one of those properties out there, by the fact that this investment has to work with the Indigenous population and owners first and work through that process and then work through the access of pastoral owners and where the best site is for fans. Then there is the rental, the workers, the maintenance and the energy that may be created to then roll back into what I am seeing and hearing is a massive production site of hydrogen and energy heading towards either Whyalla or other developments. I am not quite sure where all that lands at this stage and, as I said, it is going to be people with a much bolder vision and expertise in this area than I to say whether it will work or whether it will not.

I certainly know that we as a human population are very clever. Technology keeps on changing and I think that when there is legislation rolled out like this, which allows for even greater uptake and opportunity, we all have to get in behind whoever puts their neck on the line. There used to be a saying: who dares wins.

Another area I want to touch on is these tiny microcells for our most isolated communities. I know there are engineering businesses out there—and I will just give an example—that would like to be able to set up little microcells of solar and wind producing renewable energy to produce hydrogen to produce power that would take away the small diesel generation that takes place now. The other benefits of this are that they would have potable water and energy and they may even have hydrogen for sale that would be sold in the near vicinity.

If you think long term, when we are talking about our own transport network in the future being driven on hydrogen, you could imagine going to the APY lands and they are totally self-sufficient in energy, water and hydrogen. You might drive up there and refuel with energy that is produced onsite, for example. This is the sort of technology they are saying is not that far away. It is possible and, obviously, it will not just be the APY lands but any sort of small, isolated pockets that warrant and have access to renewable energy that will be able to participate in these areas.

With that, I wish this whole process well. I think it is well intended. I think it is for the benefit of the great good of South Australia. As I said at the outset, I am not here to choose and pick winners as to whether hydrogen can outcompete and produce energy cheaper than the fossil fuels that we are trying to leave behind, but I will say that this process here and what I have seen and read and been told about is to make sure that we progress down the renewable line, unencumbered, without restrictions, and allow investors to have the best opportunity for benefits in South Australia as possible.

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (16:59):** I rise to make some brief comments in support of the government's Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill. It is pleasing to see forward planning that will accommodate large-scale developments and the government actually being proactive, in terms of highlighting areas of Crown land or pastoral leases that may be suitable, and developing those opportunities in a thoughtful and constructive manner. I think it does put our state in very good hands to have potential proponents be able to come to the government or the government to put out to tender these projects, and that it be done in a systematic way. We are talking about large-scale developments where this will prevent an ad hoc mismatch of approvals perhaps in areas that may not be ideally suited or perhaps could have been done in other ways or in other locations.

I would like to highlight, and perhaps put front and centre in the government's mind, the idea of genuine consultation. When projects are being developed it is really important to engage meaningfully with communities. I have seen a number of large-scale developments where some have done that really well while others have treated it as a side issue or a box that needs to be ticked. When the community rallies against a proposal it can gather momentum to the point where it means that the viability of that project really comes into question, so social licence, community consultation is extremely important.

I would also like to reaffirm the weighting given to generation of renewable energy, and also hydrogen, in that there is an increased weighting for energy to be used in South Australia. Why I say that is that Mount Gambier and much of the Limestone Coast is in a cross-border region. We have developments where proponents wanted to develop in South Australia, on land or at sea in South Australia, yet the power is diverted or generated purely for use in Victoria. Whilst I am not against

that if the project stacks up, I think the weighting needs to be for those developments to be supplying power into South Australia.

Probably the more contentious one around that would be South Australian waters—not federal waters; we are talking two kilometres out to sea being South Australian waters—and the delicate balance that needs to be struck between existing industries, in our case the crayfish industry, and recreational fishing that occurs within those state waters to make sure that it is managed appropriately and for the benefit of all users of South Australian waters, not just a proponent of renewable energy.

In closing, I keep promoting the South-East as an ideal place for hydrogen generation. When you think about it, putting electricity through fresh water to separate the hydrogen and oxygen atoms you of course need fresh water, and you need—if it is going to be green hydrogen—renewable energy. The South-East is abundant in both of those categories. It has more fresh water probably running out to sea every day than nearly any other part of South Australia, and with the renewable energy in solar and windfarms along our coastlines it has abundant renewable energy.

The other component that you need to have a hydrogen hub would be a major end user, and the South-East has those as well, with Kimberly-Clark being a big consumer of energy and then, into Victoria, Alcoa making aluminium at the Port of Portland. Of course, if you are going to transport hydrogen out of the country, you need a deep-sea port. Again, the Port of Portland provides that facility.

Whilst I applaud and certainly support the government looking at many areas across South Australia for hydrogen development and production, the South-East is ideally suited, along with other areas, for that hydrogen. This type of legislation will lead proponents who want to bring their dollars to South Australia to invest in South Australia with these developments, creating jobs and renewable energy, in particular hydrogen. I am very supportive of the government's direction.

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (17:05):** I rise to make some brief remarks in relation to this bill. It was introduced into the house by the Minister for Energy and Mining on the Thursday of sitting 14 September, so just short of a couple of weeks ago. I might say it is a substantial bill, a substantial body of work that runs to nearly 100 pages. It sets out what would really be quite a dramatic change of scene affecting landholders across the state.

It will not come as any surprise that those of us on this side of the house really hesitate to speak too much and too soon about it, respecting as we do the views of those individual pastoralists in particular and those who represent them, because they are the landholders who are primarily on the receiving end of changes at the early stage, and also the views of those in industry that ought to be given a proper opportunity to have something to say about it.

I am glad to see that it seems the government and the minister have seen sense in what the shadow minister has proposed, that the matter ought not be further progressed in this place in the course of this sitting week and that we are at least given an opportunity over the coming weeks before proceeding further in any way, including to the committee stage. The shadow minister, of course, has made a substantial contribution to the second reading debate, and I, as other members have observed, thank him for the diligent work that he has done in getting to grips with what landscape this bill would provide for and what it would be covering.

Of course, you need look no further than Ross Garnaut's book *Superpower* to have an understanding of just what an enormous resource and opportunity South Australia has to lead and to thrive in the world of future energy. I commend Ross Garnaut's book to all in the house and Ross Garnaut's work and advocacy in this space. He is well known to all of us, and all sides of the house, and I know his counsel is sought by those leading in this policy area in not only South Australia but across the country, indeed globally.

You also have to recognise that you need to do no more than google 28 September 2016 to have a primary result come up straightaway, which is, 'Statewide blackout, South Australia, September 2016'. 28 September 2016 is a date that is going to be forever seared into the memories of South Australians who not only lived through those stormy conditions, it has to be said, through the spring of 2016, but the cataclysmic results that occur when you have a history of making your

decisions about energy and energy infrastructure over a period of years whose vulnerability reveals itself when the weather comes along and presents some difficult conditions. It ought to be a salutary reminder to all of us here, as we are embarking upon what would be a very dramatic shift in terms of the way in which these energy investments are made, that there is a good way of going about it. There are also potentially catastrophic bad ways of going about it.

I have said a few times now over the journey in this place that not only were we faced with and having to deal with the statewide blackout—an unprecedented one; you do not want the eyes of the world on you for a reason like that—but, in the course of the balance of 2016, we had to endure extended blackouts through December and over Christmas, either side of Christmas. Again a substantial number of energy consumers in the state were facing a blackout in February 2017, so much so that what was preoccupying energy users in the Hills, in the area I represent in the hills of Heysen—large areas of which do not have the benefit of mains water—was a situation in which without power you therefore do not have running water, no toilets. The power has gone and within a few hours your mobile phone towers start to drop out, all of which in the course of the summer and the fire season leads to particularly heightened anxiety.

For those in industry in the Hills, in fresh produce and so on, it leads to the loss of product and very much a situation where around the meeting tables, the barbecues and even at home and in conversation in the community, the conversation turns to who has zeroed in on the best kind of generator that you really have to have for the inevitable unreliability of power that we have got used to into the second half and the end of 2016, and into 2017. It really needs to be emphasised that what government does at a state level is really very heavily about day-to-day management of utilities and day-to-day decision-making with a view to ensuring that there is confidence in our power supply—confidence because the prices are heading down and confidence because the reliability is going up.

It is one of the very proud achievements of the Marshall Liberal government, under the stewardship of Minister Dan van Holst Pellekaan, that over those four years we saw prices go consistently and substantially down, in excess of the pre-election commitment. We saw that consistently down, and not only that but we saw an end to blackouts. We saw an end to the unreliability. We saw an end to the culture of conversations about who has what generator at home to cope with the unreliability.

Yes, on the one hand we have the brave, bold, bright and confident future that is articulated so well by Ross Garnaut and others and that is there for us to embrace. I hear and respect, if I interpret it correctly, that tentative optimism that is expressed by the member for MacKillop in his remarks about where this heads, and indeed in the remarks of others, but let's not be too quick to launch into the new regime. Let's ensure that we are aware, front and centre, of those whose rights we would be impacting and whose services we must ensure have a downward price trajectory and an upward reliability trajectory.

It is those who would be affected by these changes that I have very much in mind at this opening stage. As I say, I am glad to hear, and it is certainly absolutely appropriate, that debate will not proceed further at this stage so that responses, particularly from those who speak for landholders, can be properly heard in a committee process, be properly undertaken. I share the concerns of the member for Narungga, who spoke so well about it earlier in the second reading debate, and indeed those of the shadow minister, the member for Morphett, who spelt out those concerns with some thoroughness earlier in the debate as well.

In that regard, I want to put on the record and spell out the provisions that are the subject of clause 10 on the one hand and clause 28 on the other. I might deal first with what is an entirely novel concept, as far as I am aware, that is introduced by part 3 of the bill in clause 10. It is the ordinary day-to-day business of the operation of the bill and it is the one that is going to have the most immediate and acute effect. Clause 10 provides that the minister may declare a release area. Clause 10(1) tells us:

The Minister may, by notice in the Gazette, declare an area of land comprising designated land specified in the notice that the Minister considers to be suitable for the operation of renewable energy infrastructure to be a release area.

Designated land is defined to mean pastoral land, Crown land and South Australian waters. It expressly does not include the Arkaroola Protection Area, a restricted access zone or a sanctuary zone within the meaning of the Marine Parks Act, a reserve within the meaning of the National Parks and Wildlife Act or a wilderness protection area or a wilderness protection zone, both within the meaning of the Wilderness Protection Act.

As might be seen, leaving aside South Australian waters for a minute, the designated land is zeroing in on pastoral land and on Crown land. In this regard, pastoralists—and those who represent them—will be zeroing in on clause 10 because, all of a sudden, by virtue of part 3 and clause 10 it will be for the minister and within the power of the minister to go ahead and to declare land that is the subject of a pastoral lease to be within a release area. It gets more unilateral than that, not less, in that the clause goes on to say, 'A declaration under subsection (1) may specify the renewable energy resource' that has been determined. The primary candidates are solar and wind, so it might say, 'Well, this is a release area for, let's say, wind energy.'

It then says, 'A person may, by written notice to the Minister given in a manner and form determined by the Minister, nominate an area,' so someone can get involved in the process of making the declaration, and then there is an obligation on the minister but, again, pastoralists take note. The obligation on the minister to consult that we find in subclause (4)(a) when it comes to pastoral land is the minister must 'seek the concurrence' not of the pastoralist but of 'the Minister responsible for the administration of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act'.

So far as consultation is concerned, all we see with any clarity is that there is an obligation on the minister to consult with another minister, but so far so out of the picture for the pastoralist. After we deal with the potential difficulty of a lack of concurrence between ministers, we then get to subclause (6) where:

- (6) The Minister must, before declaring a release area—
  - (a) give notice in writing of the proposed declaration in the manner prescribed—

well, we will wait and see what the regulations say about that, and then here is the fig leaf for the pastoralist, subclause (6)(b), so put that up in lights while people are tentatively considering how positive they are about this proposed new regime, which provides:

- (6) The Minister must...
  - (b) undertake consultation required by the regulations in a manner prescribed by the regulations.

Anything you wanted to hear about from the pastoralists' point of view, you have to double trust us, trust us, both as to the obligation and the manner. That is really the last we hear about potential for pastoralists to know about what is going on or to hear about it or to have something to say about it or participate in the consultation. Then the rest of the clause deals with the way in which you—if you are a party that might seek a licence—might go away and put your hand up for the licence.

As has been observed by others, I just emphasise: have a close look at clause 10 because there is not much in it for pastoralists, on the face of that. The concerns do not stop at pastoralists, because while we have some indication via the definition of designated land—it does not include freehold land—wait until you get to clause 28, because in clause 28 we now see that again, on the face of the clause, there is the power in the minister to set or to grant a special enterprise licence.

There will be some relief in the fact that the minister, when considering an application for a special enterprise licence, must consult with owners of land or any registered native title claimant in the proposed licence area in regard to the application and have regard to matters specified in the relevant provisions of any guidelines that might be issued—again, down the track. So, freehold land is the subject of some real concern. On the face of the bill, pastoral land and those pastoralists who hold leases will have very legitimate concerns about the impacts on their rights, and so on it goes.

As I said at the outset, this is a very substantial bill which contains a whole range of very substantial impacts on landholders and landowners. We will be looking forward to scrutinising this in the weeks and months to come.

**The Hon. A. MICHAELS (Enfield—Minister for Small and Family Business, Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs, Minister for Arts) (17:26):** I rise to support the Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill. This bill represents a critical step forward as we venture into the new era of large-scale hydrogen and renewable energy development. South Australia, of course, has been a beacon for its green energy achievements and it is essential we continue on our journey towards a more sustainable and economically prosperous future.

We have made remarkable progress here in South Australia in pursuit of renewable energy. Thanks to our existing frameworks, we have successfully achieved over 70 per cent renewable energy consumption. This accomplishment not only underscores our commitment to environmental stewardship but also demonstrates the viability of transitioning towards cleaner energy sources. But we have to do more, and we are doing more. We have our own goal of achieving 100 per cent net renewables by 2030 and I want us to achieve that much sooner; many of us do.

The rest of the world is also looking for a cleaner future. It is evident that the world is entering a new wave of energy development, one dominated by hydrogen and renewables. This new wave brings with it a change in scale and complexity, necessitating a single comprehensive framework that can holistically address the needs of our environment, landowners, community, and our state's strategic and economic ambitions. The Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill is designed to provide just that: a consistent end-to-end framework that will offer investor certainty, harness economies of scale and enable efficient development and regulation of this burgeoning sector across South Australia.

Allow me to highlight three key points that underscore the importance of this bill for our state's economic wellbeing and sustainability. First and foremost, hydrogen holds tremendous potential for the South Australian economy and small businesses. As we strive to be competitive in the international market, embracing hydrogen as an energy source is paramount. The global shift towards clean energy demands innovative solutions, and South Australia can lead the way by nurturing a robust hydrogen sector. By doing so, we not only create jobs and stimulate economic growth but reduce our carbon footprint, reinforcing our commitment to a sustainable future.

Secondly, achieving net zero emissions is imperative for the competitiveness of our local businesses on the international stage. Many industries around the world are transitioning to cleaner practices, and South Australian businesses need to follow suit to remain relevant and attractive to global partners and investors. This bill sets the stage for a comprehensive approach to green energy, ensuring our businesses can align with international standards and thrive in a greener, more sustainable global marketplace.

Green hydrogen, a central element of this bill, offers a unique solution to our energy storage needs. With the increasing deployment of solar and wind power, South Australia often finds itself with excess energy in the system. Green hydrogen production during these surplus periods can store this energy effectively for future use. By using this surplus energy to produce hydrogen, we not only maximise the efficiency of our renewable resources but also create a valuable energy storage system that can stabilise our grid and provide power during peak demand periods. Moreover, green hydrogen can revolutionise our manufacturing base, reinvigorating our local economy. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

## **VETERINARY SERVICES BILL**

### *Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 17:32 the house adjourned until Thursday 28 September 2023 at 11:00.

*Estimates Replies*

**RIVER MURRAY FLOOD CLEAN-UP**

In reply to **Mr PEDERICK (Hammond)** (30 June 2023). (Estimates Committee A)

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining):**

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport advises \$6.6 million has been spent on road repairs due to the River Murray flood road damage.