

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 30 November 2023

The SPEAKER (Hon. D.R. Cregan) took the chair at 11:00.

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.

Parliamentary Committees

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr BROWN (Florey) (11:02): I move:

That the report of the committee for the Fifty-Fifth Parliament be noted.

On 6 July this year, I moved to establish a select committee to inquire into and report on the current state of artificial intelligence development, deployment and application across various sectors, with a particular focus on the economic, social and ethical implications for South Australia. In my speech to the house on this day, I acknowledge that we are on the precipice of major change and that artificial intelligence—or AI as I will refer to it henceforth—is fast becoming part of our day-to-day lives, in our homes and in the workplace. Like it or not, the age of AI is upon us.

I have previously stated that there is an opportunity for this house to ensure the proper framework exists so that our state can continue to be a leader in AI research and application to enhance all our lives. AI is a rapidly expanding field and one that we have very quickly come to rely on. AI technology has integrated itself almost invisibly into the everyday lives of South Australians, from the use of virtual personal assistants such as Apple's Siri or Google Home, to generative AI such as ChatGPT, to everyday apps such as Uber and Google Maps, or even tech devices such as robot vacuum cleaners.

Not only after hearing the broad range of evidence presented but especially after hearing it, I believe that we are truly at the beginning of a new period of history. The constant announcements of new advancements must have been what it was like for the Victorians during the advent of the age of railways. Both technologies prompted rapid, disruptive change that transformed economies and societies. Just as the railroad provided faster and cheaper transportation of goods and people, AI promises to enable faster and more efficient completion of all manner of tasks.

Railroads fuelled the industrial revolution by expanding markets and integrating supply chains. Similarly, AI stands to boost productivity across all sectors of our economy, from manufacturing to services. For example, AI can optimise complex mining operations and port logistics, augment health care through improved diagnostics, and assist financial firms in detecting fraud. Adoption of AI in agriculture can increase yields and reduce costs, boosting the competitiveness of South Australia's food and wine exports.

Both railways and AI generated excitement about their transformative potential but also fears about their disruptive impact. When railways expanded across South Australia in the late 1800s, some feared it would disrupt traditional pastoral ways of life. Many early Victorians believed that travelling by train led to madness. Today, some view AI as a threat to human employment and agency. Others believe its use will mean the extinction of all human life.

At the risk of stretching the comparison, it should be noted that there are key differences between the two technologies as well. The railway age triggered centralisation of industry and population in Adelaide. AI enables decentralisation and remote work, potentially revitalising rural communities struggling with youth flight. While railways supported the development of large corporations, AI has the capacity to empower smaller firms and independent workers to better

compete. The economic gains from railways took decades to be fully realised, but AI adoption is progressing rapidly, promising quicker enhancements to efficiency.

Intelligent embracers of AI today can boost South Australia's competitiveness. Our state was at the forefront of railway expansion in Australia. Early adoption of AI could again give South Australia an edge in attracting high-tech future-oriented industries. Yet, we must also ensure the economic gains from AI are distributed inclusively. As with industrialisation, government has a role in assisting displaced workers through retraining programs. State initiatives to provide affordable broadband access can democratise the utilisation of AI tools. AI's transformative capacity across so many sectors of our social and economic lives might be said only to be limited by the human capacity to imagine it and the intentions and ambitions of those who seek to develop and implement it.

Our state has already become a leader in the field of AI, boasting success stories like AI-powered talent marketplace Pickstar, event and stadium point-of-sale application developers MyVenue, visual effects studio Rising Sun Pictures, geospatial technology company Aerometrex, media insights company Amplified Intelligence, and open-source intelligence solutions developer Fivecast.

Adelaide also hosts research institutes like the Australian Institute for Machine Learning, which in 2021 ranked second globally for computer vision research published over the period 2016 to 2021, as well as MIT's Adelaide Living Lab, the collective of innovators at Lot Fourteen, and offices of international companies like Amazon Web Services and Accenture.

However, despite its place in our lives and the economic potential it offers our state, many Australians still view AI with a great deal of trepidation, associating the technology with job losses, deepfakes or decreased privacy. The select committee looked at how these concerns can be addressed and how AI can be harnessed for the economic and social wellbeing of South Australians, by examining how it can be appropriately used by government in a way that is ethically sound but also innovative and in line with our state's security interests.

The committee invited submissions addressing terms of reference that sought to examine how SA is using AI now across the economy, from agriculture to mining, how it can be used in the future and what challenges may arise both from its use in these and other sectors and from rogue use.

We received 46 submissions from an array of stakeholders. The committee then heard from a wide range of witnesses, with 21 people appearing at public hearings, representing state government departments, specialist artificial intelligence institutions, researchers and AI experts. Consistent across the submissions received and hearings held by the committee was excitement about the possibilities offered by AI. AI can and does benefit South Australians, whether it be in our state school classrooms helping students learn or assisting SA Police solve crimes to keep the community safe.

The committee has developed 15 recommendations that seek to further this enthusiasm and also mitigate any risks involved with AI advancement, particularly those pertaining to privacy and image-based abuse, as the excitement surrounding AI was also tempered by concerns that regulations surrounding privacy may not be stringent enough to keep up with progress in the field. Therefore, the committee recommends possible reforms of laws pertaining to the use of AI to ensure the privacy and wellbeing of South Australians.

The committee further recommends that these laws be consistent with the rest of the country, keeping SA on an even playing field with the rest of Australia, and that the state government coordinates with the commonwealth to do this. A strong emphasis has also been placed on the need for continual and further investment in the field to foster innovation and economic prosperity.

The notion of sovereign capability was an important issue the committee touched upon, and it believes that opportunities for the successful use of AI across South Australia is somewhat reliant on our ability to generate this capability. This can mitigate security risks associated with using AI technologies developed offshore, lessen the risk of bias for Australian users and maintain self-reliance in an unpredictable world.

The committee is particularly interested in how South Australia can further build on its reputation as a leader in AI technologies and has developed several recommendations that look to continue to foster sovereign AI capability. We are also educating the next generation of workers, exploring how AI can be used more effectively in the classroom and across the curriculum.

The committee considers educating students about AI will not only keep them safe but also foster talent in AI-related areas, thereby building an AI-ready workforce for the future, leading to greater sovereign capability. The committee believes that adequate instruction about AI in how to use it safely and ethically is essential across the educational spectrum and for all age groups across the community, including groups such as older South Australians who may not feel as technologically literate as their younger peers.

Some members of the workforce may also express fear that AI is coming for their jobs, that AI might render them obsolete. However, from what the committee has heard, human oversight is essential to the successful and, moreover, ethical use of AI. The committee found that this human-in-the-loop element is crucial across all sectors, from health care to policing, and heard repeated evidence stating that a human element must remain to ensure human accountability in its use and to maintain accuracy in decision-making.

Retaining this human oversight can also combat any bias in the use of AI. It is equally pertinent to point out that, like the industrial revolution, AI will likely result in new roles being created, including AI-related roles not yet imagined. Additionally, as AI replaces some tasks, workers may be able to shift their focus to other tasks that are less repetitive, or they may have the opportunity in time to undergo further training and build upon their skill set.

Throughout the inquiry, the committee was impressed with how state government departments and agencies are already integrating AI into their work practices. We wish for this to continue and recommend that frameworks are put in place to enable continual success in these areas. I would also like to particularly mention the Department for Education, who chose not to issue any blanket bans on generative AI tools in schools but, instead, have taken a cautious but ambitious approach to make sure that South Australia can get the most value out of the opportunities created by AI in education.

I am reminded of the sentiments expressed by the department's chief executive, Professor Martin Westwell, who told the committee:

...our students are going to need to work in a world where AI exists, and we need to teach them to use that technology ethically and productively.

One area of education where AI shows a particular promise is its use to tailor learning for individual student need, both from the assessment angle and the instruction angle. In a TED talk in April this year entitled 'How AI could save (not destroy) education', Sal Kahn—the founder of Khan Academy and the Khan Lab School in Mountain View, California—spoke about how AI could be used to create a personalised instruction environment, how the very latest in technology could be used to reinvent the use of the Socratic method.

He envisages providing every student with a bespoke personal AI tutor whose output is highly responsive to and precisely tailored to their learning needs, informed by the evaluation not only of whether the students are answering questions correctly or incorrectly but, in instances where they are not correct, using models to ascertain how they arrived at their incorrect conclusions. AI will be able to use that information to help them build a stronger understanding in exactly the way they need in the moment.

This is exactly how individualised instruction should work, but because it is prohibitively costly for every student in our schools to have individually tailored instruction from humans in the flesh, the potential for AI to create a state where individually tailored instruction can be provided to every student feels almost within our grasp.

The committee is also aware of the importance of effective governance and human oversight and has developed recommendations that seek to build on existing frameworks and also collaborate with state and commonwealth governments to ensure consistency of legislation as it pertains to AI. This has led to a recommendation that the government consider the formation of a permanent,

whole-of-government body or group dedicated to creating and implementing an AI framework based on accountability, transparency, societal and environmental wellbeing, universal access, fairness, safety and security, and human agency and oversight.

While South Australia has quickly established itself as a leading destination in the field of artificial intelligence, the speed at which AI technologies are developed is currently working at a faster pace. The committee is mindful that, for the state to maintain its reputation as an AI hub, continual significant work must be done to keep and attract research and investment. Furthermore, rather than be the proverbial jack-of-all-trades but master of none, the committee recommends that South Australia build a competitive advantage by identifying selected areas of AI to champion and develop world-leading levels of expertise.

To achieve this, the development of a state action plan is recommended to effectively market South Australia as a premier destination for AI investment in Australia. Support from the Department for Industry, Innovation and Science to harness critical technologies such as AI can also provide a pathway to drive both innovation and South Australia's economic growth in some of the state's key strategic economic areas.

One of the challenges of this committee was to keep abreast of developments in the field that pertained to our remit—no humble feat, given the speed at which AI innovation and technology are advancing. Indeed, as the final touches were being made to this report, President Biden issued an executive order establishing new standards for AI safety and security to safeguard the privacy of American citizens and protect their national interests. Now, as I speak to you today, some technologies mentioned in the body of the report may already be obsolete or superseded by a new, updated product, such is the pace at which this field is moving.

It is the hope of the committee that the recommendations contained in this report acknowledge and allow South Australia to keep pace with the rate at which AI technology is advancing. In dealing with such a complex and malleable topic, expert advice is essential. The committee thanks those who submitted to the inquiry or attended a hearing and values their contributions in developing these recommendations.

I would also like to thank the committee members—the member for Davenport, the member for Elizabeth, the member for Heysen, the member for Morphett and the member for Narungga—who have shared my interest in this important topic and have collaborated to form recommendations that we believe represent constructive steps forward on this complex matter. I would also like to thank the committee staff: Melissa Campaniello, Dr Amy Mead and Hadi Slyman.

Lastly, I speak to this report today and note that the National Artificial Intelligence Centre has commenced Australia's AI awareness month from 15 November to 15 December, an exciting initiative that looks to illuminate the brilliance of Australia's AI landscape. I encourage my colleagues to look into this initiative and possibly participate in one of the events on the program. I commend the report to the house.

The SPEAKER: That was most interesting, member for Florey. You had me at railways.

Mr PATTERSON (Morphett) (11:16): I will aim to continue that interest in this important topic. I also want to speak on artificial intelligence. I was a member of the select committee, as was mentioned by the member for Florey, and, as you said, AI has certainly recently captured a lot of interest. It is a rapidly expanding field and we are seeing a lot of applications that are now becoming ubiquitous in our everyday life.

So many people would use Google Maps to get where they need to go, especially new destinations; gone are the old days of having to have the *Lonely Planet* guide to get around in a foreign city. You can just take your phone and you have Google Maps which really gets you to where you need to go, especially in highly populated areas where the application is very accurate. You also have Uber, of course, and people now find it very easy to get around and can order transport wherever they are.

Then we are seeing it come into our lives with these assistants: either Siri in the case of Apple, or Google Home. Most recently, ChatGPT has really stirred things along, which is generative AI which has really taken the interaction of AI to the next level. While it might seem that this has

happened quickly, it has been slowly building over many decades in terms of the work. There has been incremental change and then all of a sudden it seems to have pushed over the dam wall. Really, we have seen it move from science fiction into our everyday lives.

Of course for people of my generation, probably their first experience of AI would have come out of *The Terminator* movies, seeing a future where we saw a computer actually gain self-awareness and launch nuclear missiles and create a post-apocalyptic world. That brings with it fear, as many people see that as something to be cautious about with computers taking over from humans, whereas in reality what we are actually seeing at the moment is that AI can lead to significant productivity gains in business and also in people's personal lives.

There are certainly some risks that we need to be rightly concerned about. A lot of them are based on how fast-moving the technology is. It is very hard for legislators to keep up. In a submission, one of the points made was that legislation can often take years and by then the technology that people were concerned about has actually been surpassed anyway.

As I said, many people are interested in this and, for me, with my background, there is a personal interest as well. When I studied electrical and electronic engineering, one of the areas of study was in computer science and artificial intelligence. As is now, back then the definition of artificial intelligence was that a human using a platform would not know whether there was human on the other side of the screen or in fact a computer.

Of course, in days gone by computing power was not able to cater for millions and millions of scenarios, so it was quite easy to trick these computers and they became quite limited. But as computer power has increased, these processors on the other side handling these applications are able to process more and more data, so can basically appear as if it is a human, thereby introducing it as artificial intelligence. In fact, in my final year of university, I built from scratch a neural network that was designed around predicting salinity in the River Murray. Fast-forward and this form of machine learning is now becoming commonplace and much more advanced based on the computer power of hardware.

In a way, these things revolve around training neural networks to recognise patterns. Effectively, you train them on a whole list of data to then recognise patterns and it becomes a bit like a black box in a way where you are putting information in and you are getting a result out and are not quite sure definitely how that decision was arrived at. That is a caution in terms of AI in terms of knowing how a decision was arrived at.

That leads us to where we are at now with generative AI. It uses natural language to be able to provide outputs to humans. In these early days, because the datasets they have been trained on may be limited, some of the results coming out are based on what information they have been trained on. Most people say that poor data in leads to poor data out and that can certainly be the case at the moment, so we do need to be careful with that as the committee found.

In terms of where South Australia sits in artificial intelligence, we have the Australian Institute for Machine Learning. That has grown out of the University of Adelaide's computer science department's electrical and electronic engineering department. I know it well. When I was going through, they were already looking at computer vision. Fast-forward now and, as was said by the member for Florey, the Australian Institute for Machine Learning is the number two institute in the world in terms of artificial vision. We also have the MIT Living Lab based here.

These are really key pillars. They are based in Lot Fourteen and are really centres of excellence that are attracting global interest into South Australia and bringing with that significant companies. We have had Accenture set up here in Adelaide, South Australia. We have had AWS, one of the top five companies in the world, and Google set up a presence here, as well as Cognizant and MTX.

Of course, they bring with them skilled workers as well, which really just increases the intelligence and problem-solving ability that South Australia has at its hands because a lot of these really intelligent people are problem solvers as well. We also have homegrown companies. One of those is Life Whisperer. They do AI-enhanced fertility, which is a real-world application helping couples with fertility to make it easier for them to have the joy of babies.

We also have MyVenue, which does point of sale; Rising Sun Pictures, which wins Academy Awards for their visual effects; and Fivecast, which is an AI-enhanced intelligent security platform. One of their directors and owners, Dr Brent Cooper, went to uni with me. He is a very smart, intelligent individual and he has been able to set up a fantastic company here in South Australia that is going to be of benefit to South Australia more broadly.

In terms of the committee, we heard from a number of key stakeholders; in fact, 46 submissions were received. We had 21 people appear in front of the committee, and overall they were very excited about the possibilities. They likened AI to the introduction of the telephone and the internet in terms of the big step change it is able to make from a communications perspective.

Of course, there were some concerns as well around the possibility for this tech to do harm in a number of areas. It can be used by criminals. It can be used in terms of computer generation of quite realistic voice mimicry to trick people. There is also AI-based image fakery. I think just in the news last week Dick Smith was again having to point out that it was not him who was endorsing a quite spurious financial product. AI is being used to mimic trusted sources to dupe people into taking action they otherwise would not. It could potentially be used to mimic politicians as well and cause panic throughout democratic societies, so we have to be on our guard for that.

It was pointed out that some of the ways to do that are through effective governance and human oversight. If I could maybe leave with the comments made by Professor Simon Lucey from AIML, he was very wary, though, of having a kneejerk reaction and overregulating. He says it is important that we allow AI to develop here in South Australia because it is going to be important for our South Australian companies to compete in the global environment. If you have overseas companies who are using AI to leapfrog ahead, so too must South Australian companies.

I thank all other members of the committee for their contributions and say that it was time well spent, and it will benefit this parliament as it goes forward in its decision-making around this important area.

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (11:26): I would like to add my thoughts on this report and start by thanking this house for allowing me to be on the committee. It really was, as the member for Morphett has said, time well spent and thoroughly enjoyable. A very informative set of witnesses appeared before the committee and offered evidence as to the future and the current state of AI in this state and more broadly. It was a wonderful thing.

For me, the takeaway was that there is no doubt that artificial intelligence is going to dramatically change the way of life for us as time progresses. It certainly seems like we are on the precipice of dramatic change in technology, and the way in which we handle that, empower that and harness that will be of critical importance going forward. That came through in spades, and it was certainly interesting to hear different viewpoints about what we need to do to make sure we are ready for that change as it comes.

There is some fear in the community, I think, about how AI will impact people, particularly with regard to how it might impact their employment and job prospects going forward. There certainly does seem to be some threat, particularly as I see it, in terms of white-collar employment. There seems to be quite obvious overlap in terms of the functions of what we know today as AI and what some white-collar jobs are doing. It will be interesting to see how that progresses and whether those labour-intensive jobs which are difficult to do currently due to cost come back in vogue, and we find the return to manufacturing, inventing, building and those sorts of things as time progresses, where computers are doing the thinking and we are doing the doing. It will be interesting to see what happens as time progresses.

I think we can take solace from the fact, as has been referenced in the member for Florey's speech, that at all times in human history when society has been confronted with dramatic change, humanity has found a way to prosper and thrive. I am sure this will be exactly the same and that we will find an adequate way to harness and build on AI and use it to our advantage. It surely will be exciting times ahead if we do it properly.

There were a few things that I wanted to touch on specifically with regard to the report. Certainly a wide range of issues were discussed, and I do not mean to discount any other things but,

for me, there were four that I wanted to bring up in the context of this contribution. Firstly, we heard some really exciting evidence from PIRSA about the opportunities that would present to them, to the ag sector, with the advent of artificial intelligence.

To start with, we heard some wonderful examples from the agtech grants that have been opened recently, the initiatives that were successful in securing funding as a part of that grant program and the technology that is coming as a result of those grant programs and that funding. It will have a dramatic impact on ag. It will help lessen costs and make more targeted action, and ultimately there will be a better bottom line for ag businesses and, hopefully, a better product at market for us consumers. There are some really exciting things happening in that space.

It was identified by PIRSA that the management of snails is something that is very much at the forefront now and not too far away. There was the evidence that ordering of chemicals and inputs would be able to be done more efficiently and with less waste as a result of AI. There is also technology to identify fruit fly, which is the world's largest agricultural trade pest.

So there are some really exciting things happening in technology in ag. I think they will continue to grow and expand as AI continues to grow and expand, and I look forward to seeing how that will impact our local businesses in Narungga and our local ag businesses and hopefully lead to better bottom lines—more profitable businesses—and better things for our ag community.

Another thing locally I really wanted to touch on, which is an area of great passion of mine, is I think in the fullness of time AI will present a wonderful opportunity to help alleviate some of the pressures that are being felt by our regional health system. The technology is there to help diagnose and recommend treatments and those sorts of things. I think it will be a wonderful addition to areas where it is difficult to find doctors where we might be able to empower nurses to make an initial diagnosis and have AI verify or confirm and those sorts of things. It really will, hopefully, be a wonderful improvement to our system.

In a rather significant coincidence, I actually had the great fortune to have in parliament this morning the team from Project Checkmate. At the Paskeville field days recently, Project Checkmate, which is a project initiated by the Rosemary Bryant AO Research Centre and co-funded by Skin Check Champions, set up a stall. They had trained local nurses in the diagnosis of melanomas. So they had a stall there, and they encouraged people who were walking past or visiting to pop in and have their skin checked by a trained local nurse, who was then able to make an initial assessment and then refer that assessment to AI that was on site which would either be able to confirm or deny that diagnosis.

Where in the past we have had pressure put on the GP system and a little bit of a blockage form through the difficulty in getting appointments, we are able to use some latent workforce—the nurses—to make that initial diagnosis and have AI there to support them, to back them up and to confirm that diagnosis. That was a wonderful thing. They had 170-odd people through over the three days of the field days. They trained eight local nurses up to make those diagnoses, and it was really wonderful, a raging success, I think.

I had Professor Marion Eckert, Mr Greg Sharplin and Ms Pam Adelson in today to talk about that and talk about a path forward as to how we can make sure that goes from a pilot program to an actual training program to train our nurses and to improve that AI technology so that it can make that confirmation or that verification and really have a wonderful impact on the prevention of melanoma.

The difference between detecting a stage 1 melanoma and stage 4 melanoma is hundreds of thousands of dollars per case, so if we can make those savings it would be wonderful for the economy. It will certainly be wonderful for the health system, keeping people out of the more critical care. It will be a wonderful benefit all round.

That is just one example. While I am at it, I should urge the federal government and Mark Butler to agree to that funding program. They have put a rather sensible proposal forward to him recently—I think it is on his desk at the moment—where they are working to convert it, as I said, from a pilot to an actual program. It will be money well spent, for mine. Here is hoping that Mark Butler agrees and we can see that project rolled out more fully.

It was wonderful to have them in parliament. I thank them for the work they did at the field days and training the local nurses and treating local people. It is just one example of how AI can help with our regional health care going forward.

There are a couple of other things, and they have been touched on already, so I will not spend a great deal of time on them, but I think it would be really exciting to make sure that South Australia continues to be positioned as a hub for AI technology. We have heard from previous speakers the current situation and current businesses we have been able to attract and the progress we have been able to make but, as the member for Florey said, if we can target our effort and make sure we are not trying to be a jack-of-all-trades and really focus our attention on some areas that are winnable it will be a wonderful thing to have here in South Australia, here in Adelaide—to have some high-tech jobs paving the way into the future. I look forward to seeing how that plays out.

The other thing that is worth touching on slightly more is that we do need to be wary about the pitfalls of AI. There is an opportunity cost for everything, isn't there, and some of the evils that come along with the exciting prospects of AI really have the potential to have a dramatic impact on people. I think particularly of evidence of deepfake images being used for blackmail and extortion, which could be really damaging to sections of society. There are recommendations in this report about training people up and educating people about the evils of AI and how to spot those pitfalls and identify them before they become a problem, which is a really valuable thing and might be of the highest priority in this report going forward. I commend those recommendations specifically, and all 15 recommendations. It really was a tremendous committee to be a part of.

It is a really exciting time in our world's progression, I think, as we watch this technology develop and the opportunities that it will present to businesses and individuals right across the spectrum of industries. I commend the report to the house. I thank the committee for allowing me to be a part of it and I look forward to hearing all further speakers.

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (11:35): In joining the reflections on the report of the AI committee, I want to thank the member for Playford—Florey, sorry. I withdraw that. I did not rely on AI, even, for it.

I want to thank the member for Florey for chairing the committee and for his remarks outlining the work of the committee and the report that we are here noting. I also wholeheartedly agree with and will not repeat those observations of the member for Morphett who, perhaps more than any of us on the committee, brings that wealth of technical and professional expertise to the consideration of the opportunities and challenges that AI is presenting at this time. The member for Narungga has reflected on some of those key areas of opportunity in industry that might affect us and help us in each of our local areas.

I resisted, more generally, any urge to seek the assistance of AI in the preparation of these remarks. I think there is a cautionary note for all of us who are engaging in the world of technology, the analysis of data, the presentation of advocacy and so on, that we make sure that we are using technology and deploying it for the powerful purposes that it is able to serve.

It might be well to reflect on the events in New York in June this year. Judge Castel, of the US District Court, was moved to sanction two practitioners and the law firm, I understand, by the name of Levidow, Levidow & Oberman for whom they practised, for what has become a particularly celebrated example of a misuse of AI in the most basic of ways. Those two unfortunate practitioners found themselves providing written submissions to the court including reliance upon six wholly fictitious authorities, as it turned out. Apart from monetary sanction, the judge has moved to require those practitioners to go and apologise to the very real judges who were supposed to have made these fictitious findings and the parties concerned and so on.

It is certainly not as simple as it looks. I think it is interesting to bear in mind what might be the sentiment of many such amateur would-be 'dip the toe in' in terms of use of AI. The law firm, in response, made a statement that included that they asserted:

We made a good faith mistake in failing to believe that a piece of technology could be making up cases out of whole cloth...

That is what the firm's statement said, in what seemed to be an attempt to couch a pretty mundane mistake in rather more elegant language than it deserved.

There is clearly this now wealth, if not universe, of transformative change that will now be before us, confronting us and providing us with a chance to proceed. The member for Florey has couched that in terms no less than the transformative effect of previous industrial and technology revolutions, and I think it is right to couch it in those terms. I am less inclined to perhaps characterise it in terms of a precipice but more perhaps a point of embarkation, a base camp or a point at which we are to see quite comprehensive and rapid change as we go forward from this point.

I make particular mention of the 31st of 46 or so written submissions received by the committee. The Australian Institute for Machine Learning participated both in that regard and as a witness to the committee; the work it is doing and the innovative activities in this space otherwise conducted at Lot Fourteen are truly remarkable. They are beacons for and ornaments to our state and will show the way in terms of innovation over the years ahead.

Of the 15 recommendations of the report, I highlight that, while there is a mixture of recommendations to industry and for the purpose of public sector to government, recommendation 11 is really directing a recommendation very much on the education side, to recommend that the STEM curriculum in our state is very deliberately focused on enhancing the capacity of those students in this state to get to grips with and take full advantage of the opportunities this new technology will present.

As other speakers have, I commend the report. I hope it is a useful contribution to our tracking forward as a state, and I hope it is a subject the parliament can come back to and revisit before too long.

Mr BROWN (Florey) (11:42): I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to the debate. In closing, I echo some of the sentiments expressed by the member for Heysen about AIML, who are world leaders in this area of research. I have no doubt that in the years to come, whilst it is certainly the case now that AIML are not known universally in South Australia, many, many more South Australians will know who AIML are, and I have no doubt that the work they are doing now will really light up the sky.

They are doing some amazing work there already and they have some of the world's leading personnel in this field. People often say to me about research and other things, 'Oh, well, South Australia is just good old South Australia,' but you can look at the fact that people who come from our state and who work in our state can do things that can change the world. You only have to look at the person after whom my electorate is named, and there is no reason why some of the things we do in South Australia, and that AIML do in particular, cannot have an equally large impact on the lives of ordinary people.

Motion carried.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: NDIS INQUIRY

Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (11:44): I move:

That the 46th report of the committee, entitled 'Inquiry into the impact of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) on South Australians living with disability who have complex needs and are, or are at risk of, residing for long periods in inappropriate accommodation', be noted.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those involved in the Social Development Committee inquiry and especially the individuals who shared their stories of living with disability and the families and carers of the individuals who shared their journey through the NDIS system. Thank you for giving the committee the insight into what you have had to endure. Your evidence was invaluable. I also wish to thank the secretariat for their work, Robyn Schutte and Mary-Ann Bloomfield, and also the committee members: the Hon. Ian Hunter MLC, the Hon. Irene Pnevmatikos MLC, who has recently left the other place, the Hon. Robert Simms MLC, the member for Frome, the member for Unley and the member for Chaffey.

As a result of this inquiry, the committee has made 53 recommendations to the government of South Australia through the Minister for Human Services. In tabling its 46th report today, the Social

Development Committee notes that there has been a lot of work done to improve the NDIS for some 600,000 people across the country who receive supports through the scheme. It is important to note the Social Development Committee has not been alone in considering the NDIS and the broader circumstances of people with disability. Since the committee completed its work, the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability handed down its final report, totalling more than 6,000 pages with 222 recommendations.

Throughout 2023, Professor Bruce Bonyhady AM and Ms Lisa Paul AO PSM also conducted a review of the first decade of the NDIS, and it is expected the review will be released in the not too distant future. I refer to these other pieces of work because the Social Development Committee's report touches on many of the same issues, and its recommendations will no doubt need to be considered in the context of that other work that has been carried out around the nation.

Our committee heard that the NDIS has been a life-changing scheme for many Australians, yet for some of the most vulnerable in our community it has not delivered the promise of an ordinary life. Some participants have been forced to live in situations that have caused them harm or with service providers unwilling or unable to provide adequate care and support.

The committee acknowledges that some of the work needed to address the issues which have arisen during the inquiry and which are referenced in the report has already commenced as a result of previous inquiries in other jurisdictions. The committee acknowledges the work of the South Australian government to address the ongoing housing crisis and the work it has done to improve the availability of short to medium-term accommodation for participants exiting hospital, such as the Regency Green facility.

The committee received evidence from people living with a disability, NGOs and advocates that South Australians who live in rural and remote areas face additional challenges in accessing specialist disability accommodation (often referred to as SDA) and the support services that they need. To that effect, regional and rural participants have less opportunity to exercise their choice and control. This is even more the case for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whose needs are not being met because a market-based approach fails in regional, remote and outback locations.

The committee heard there are other gaps in the system that need to be filled and that there will continue to be an ongoing need for the mainstream services that support people with disability even if they have an NDIS package. This presents unique opportunities for the government of South Australia to step in and fill these gaps and to work with people with a disability and other stakeholders to develop and implement innovative and novel solutions.

This inquiry has also shown—and what we know from the stories of participants and their advocates—that it is essential that the Australian government work with the South Australian government to address the accommodation needs of South Australians with disability and complex needs. There also needs to be renewed commitment to closing the gap in the accommodation opportunities for Aboriginal South Australians.

The committee has made a recommendation that the government of South Australia implement a co-design process to update the state's housing strategy, *Our Housing Future 2020-2030*, including a focus on housing that will be accessible to people living with disability. The committee has also made several recommendations that the South Australian government work with the Australian government to improve safeguarding mechanisms for children and young people, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people with disability and complex needs, and that the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission be given greater powers to investigate breaches.

A well-functioning disability support system means that people get appropriate care and do not end up in inappropriate settings like hospitals or, even worse, the justice system. The committee received evidence during this inquiry that, between 1 January 2021 and 30 June 2022, at least 71 NDIS participants presented to a public hospital for a non-health related admission. There was also concerning evidence about the amount of time that NDIS participants were spending in hospital when they were medically ready for discharge.

The committee heard about discharge delays, totalling 67,188 days between June 2019 and December 2021, related to 830 NDIS participants in SA hospitals. While I understand and am pleased that work over the past year has seen the number of NDIS participants ready for discharge from hospital reduced by around half, I hope the committee's recommendations can help that to improve even further.

Part of what makes the NDIS so unique is a participant's right to exercise choice about many aspects of life. Specialist disability accommodation (SDA) is a funding stream under the NDIS home and living supports program, which can provide opportunities for participants to exercise choice and control. Despite this, the committee received evidence that decisions about a participant's home and living arrangements could not be made without any face-to-face contact by NDIA staff. The NDIA is charged with an incredible responsibility, and it was troubling to learn that such important decisions were at times being made in such impersonal circumstances.

Support coordination is known to be important for people with complex support needs, yet the committee was informed that many support coordinators lack essential skills expected of them. The committee heard there is a need for increased scrutiny over these roles, and that means an increase in the minimum standard of training for anyone providing support coordination services. The committee has recommended that this be mandated at the national level.

Access and equity issues were raised in relation to the adequacy of the resources available for hard-to-reach cohorts, such as people facing homelessness, CALD communities, people with experience of the criminal justice system and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The committee also heard that the local area coordinators (LACs), whose role it is to provide support to people trying to access the NDIS or mainstream services, need to have a redefined role. The committee heard in some instances there were cases of LACs having no real understanding or experience with disability and with people with complex support needs.

The committee heard case management is not funded, nor is it part of an NDIS model of support. However, some submissions evidenced a need to reintroduce case management services for some participants who have very high needs. The committee has recommended the government of South Australia work with the Australian government for the NDIA to implement case management for the small percentage of participants with complex support needs.

One of the key concerns highlighted during the inquiry was that the NDIA has been taking a cost-saving approach to its assessments and taking excessive time to make decisions. Some submissions made by advocates commented their organisations had witnessed participants being rejected for funding because it would not be value for money for the NDIS.

Another issue that emerged was that the NDIA started to place an even bigger burden on families and carers by assessing familial relationships as automatic formal support, hence reducing the amount of funding approved. The committee has recommended the state government work with the Australian government to urgently develop a policy and procedure to allow for flexibility to be built into NDIS plan structures to respond to the fluctuating needs of children and young people.

Evidence provided to the committee by Housing Hub shows times frames for SDA applications for NDIS participants in hospital can take from 60 days to 90 days, or even longer. The NDIA has been working on improving SDA decision time frames and a lot of work has been done within the agency following the 2019 David Tune review which saw the implementation of the NDIS Participant Service Guarantee. But there is still work to do, especially when a person is in crisis.

The welfare of younger South Australians in residential aged-care facilities was also raised as a significant and ongoing issue during the inquiry, where delayed decision-making is having negative impacts. For people under 45 years of age who exited residential aged-care facilities, approximately one in seven (14.3 per cent) returned to the community while 37.1 per cent exited due to health.

The committee has recommended the government of South Australia work with the Australian government to urgently integrate the housing outcomes and targets of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Australia's Disability Strategy in developing all future housing policies and frameworks, including those under the NDIS and South Australia's Disability Inclusion

Plan. The committee has also recommended that both governments urgently address achieving the Younger People in Residential Aged Care targets in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

For some participants who were successful in their SDA application, the committee heard this is not the end of the road in terms of gaining appropriate accommodation; rather, it can be the beginning of an even longer journey. Participants and disability advocates described the toil it takes to locate, apply for and win SDA in a market that has not expanded as envisaged.

Witnesses provided evidence that SDA supply is inadequate for NDIS participants in South Australia. To provide some insight into the numbers, in the quarter to 31 March 2023 there were 2,316 South Australian participants with approved SDA funding in their plans and only 1,287 SDA-enrolled dwellings. There were also 621 South Australian NDIS participants seeking an SDA dwelling. The notion that an SDA market would be created out of demand from participants with SDA funding has clearly not worked.

Housing for people who have a disability requiring very high support demands urgent attention from government. The committee would like to see, and has recommended:

- the government of South Australia continue to develop and implement a plan to address the shortage of long-term disability housing supply in South Australia;
- the government of South Australia work with the disability community to design and build more public disability housing that can meet the diverse needs of South Australians with disability, including for people with a disability and complex support needs; and
- the government of South Australia continue to fund, develop and implement sustainable state-based service systems to assist both NDIS participants and non-NDIS participants who have no other housing options available to them or where other service systems break down.

The committee has further recommended that the government of South Australia work with the Australian government for the NDIA to develop a comprehensive market and workforce strategy with short and long-term measures specific to the South Australian context.

The committee heard numerous stories from participants and advocates that the NDIS has the ability to significantly benefit the lives of South Australians living with disability who have complex support needs, including having a positive impact on their wellbeing. However, the evidence shows in some cases system failures have caused detrimental outcomes for NDIS participants. Accordingly, the impacts on the wellbeing of participants who experience living in inappropriate accommodation can include a deterioration in mental health, an increase in behaviours of concern, an impoverished quality of life, and an unreasonable burden of care on family carers.

The committee heard it is vital that participants have access to NDIA advice and the availability of service providers outside of regular business hours. The committee understands, as the evidence shows, one of the things that can improve the application and planning process and serve to benefit participants is personal advocacy. For some participants, being able to have a one-to-one interaction with the person making the decision on their support can also go a long way. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

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

A quorum having been formed:

Bills

VETERINARY SERVICES BILL

Second Reading

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (11:59): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This is a very important bill, which I understand has been in the other place and debated rather thoroughly. I do not intend to make a long second reading contribution. These are important bills.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: There is no need to interject on such an uncontroversial matter. As I understand, this bill dictates to various things that allow vets to operate in our state. I seek leave to have the second reading explanation and explanation of clauses inserted in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave granted.

I am very pleased to introduce the Veterinary Services Bill 2023 into this place on behalf of the Hon. Clare Scriven in the other place.

Veterinarians play a key role in animal, human and community wellbeing by maintaining the health and welfare of our pets and the productivity and growth of our livestock industries.

Australia has one of the highest proportions of pet ownership in the world, and as such veterinary services contribute significantly to the nation's economy. In 2022, Australian households are estimated to have spent over \$33 billion on their pets, with veterinary services representing about 14% of this expenditure or \$4.7 billion to the economy.

Veterinarians also support the livestock industries, which were worth a combined \$5.3 billion in revenue to the South Australian economy in 2022. Veterinarians provide our livestock industries with advice and investigate, prevent, control and treat disease. Importantly, they are crucial in detecting diseases and responding to emergency animal disease incursions, with these activities both supporting and protecting valuable domestic and export markets.

Commensurate with the growing demand for veterinary services, the number of veterinarians in South Australia has been steadily increasing in recent years, with an increase from 761 in 2017 to 877 in June 2021, and more recently to 912 in June 2023. Currently, veterinary practice and the veterinary profession in South Australia are regulated via the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 and the Veterinary Practice Regulations 2017.

The veterinary profession and animal care industry have evolved significantly since 2003 when the current legislative framework first came into effect. Significant changes to the industry have occurred in practice models and location, employment type, species serviced, and specialties offered.

The role of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia, the body responsible for regulating the veterinary profession in the state, has also changed during this time, most notably with the responsibility for hearing and determining alleged unprofessional conduct by veterinarians transferring to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal in 2020.

The new Veterinary Services Bill 2023 seeks to address these changes and ensure veterinary practice regulation in the state is flexible and aligns with both the contemporary nature of the profession and the standards expected by users and providers of veterinary services. Feedback from a 2020 review of the current Veterinary Practice Act 2003 showed that stakeholders overwhelmingly supported reform of the legislative framework supporting veterinary practice in South Australia.

The raft of potential legislative changes that were identified through public consultation and the broader review process meant it would be more effective to propose new legislation as opposed to amending the current act. As such, the new Veterinary Services Bill will address stakeholder feedback by updating the state's veterinary legislation to fulfil the objectives of supporting animal health, safety and welfare and the public interest.

A key change is that the bill proposes a variation to the definition of veterinary treatment. Veterinary treatment will become veterinary services, and the definition will be updated for clarity and to more accurately reflect veterinary services delivered by the veterinary profession in 2023.

Another feature of the bill that aims to improve the regulation of the veterinary profession in South Australia relates to changes to the state's Veterinary Surgeons Board. The Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia will become the Veterinary Services Regulatory Board of South Australia and will be modernised and transformed to better serve the needs of both veterinary users and providers.

Board composition will be modified to ensure membership includes the sufficient and appropriate breadth of skills, knowledge and experience to fulfil board responsibilities. The collective membership of the board aims to cover the diversity that exists within the profession in regard to employment type, location and other demographic factors. The number of members will increase from 8 to 9 with the addition of one veterinarian member. The chair will be a veterinarian with management or governance skills, knowledge and experience, unless another member is considered more appropriate to be appointed as chair.

As supported by consultation feedback from 2020, board functions will be expanded under the proposed legislation to include additional responsibilities relating to communication, information, and advice. Transparency surrounding administrative processes will be supported along with conferring and collaborating with other veterinary regulatory authorities to ensure effective national exchange of information and promote uniformity and consistency in the regulation of veterinarians in Australia.

The bill includes provisions that enable the minister to provide directions to the board. These powers are included to ensure that public interest matters are dealt with appropriately. Details of the direction given and action taken by the board in response are required to be included in the board's annual report and laid before parliament.

The bill will provide for requirements for board members to complete training related to corporate governance to support them in effectively carrying out board functions. The board will also be required to regularly provide the contact details of veterinarians registered under the act to the government for the purposes of enabling timely communication in a number of defined circumstances. This will ensure the government has an avenue to communicate with the state's veterinarians in the case of an emergency such as a bushfire or an emergency animal disease event, and will contribute to the overall aim of increased communication that the bill brings.

Adequate availability of veterinarians, particularly in regional areas, is essential for animal health safety and welfare, the public interest and the productivity and growth of livestock industries. Where possible and within its scope, the bill proposes to introduce changes that are intended to support and encourage veterinarians to practise in, or return to practising in our state.

To provide veterinarians returning from a period away from practice with a transparent, clear, and predetermined pathway that ensures appropriate recent experience, knowledge, and competence are considered prior to returning to practice, the bill will introduce a requirement for the board to publish requirements relating to transition to practice and clarify that a non-practising veterinarian wishing to return to practice must comply with any requirements of the board relating to this transition.

Additional scope has been provided for the board to control the categories of registration offered by clarifying that registrations need not be tied to the calendar year or require payment of an annual fee. While scope has been provided and may enable consideration of a non-practising or part-time category of registration, these matters are ultimately for the board to consider.

A provision has been added to clarify that, in addition to other criteria, a person is eligible to be registered as a veterinarian on completion of relevant academic requirements but prior to degree conferral. This will ensure that graduates will be available to enter the workforce upon completion of the academic requirements of their degree if recognised by the university as having done so.

Limited registration provisions have been expanded to enable a person who, in the opinion of the board, has appropriate qualifications or experience in a particular area of veterinary practice obtained in an overseas jurisdiction, to provide veterinary services or engage in other conduct as a veterinarian while residing or visiting the state. Related provisions have also been expanded to enable the board to impose a condition limiting the kind of animal in relation to which the person may provide veterinary services as a veterinarian.

The bill also provides for the registration of all veterinary premises including clinics, practices, hospitals, emergency and specialist centres. A reference to premises will also be taken to include a reference to a mobile hospital or clinic in which it is intended that veterinary services will be provided, in recognition that such hospitals or clinics may become more commonplace into the future.

The requirement for premises registration is a key change to the current legislation that requires only the accreditation of veterinary hospitals. This change will enable the board to set minimum standards for veterinary premises to ensure all premises that provide veterinary services are fit for their intended purpose and appropriately regulated. Compliance with minimum requirements for veterinary premises will be supported by new offence provisions and the ability to inspect premises. Careful consideration has been given to the growing mobile and telehealth veterinary services sector to enable these important services to continue.

Another major change in the bill is the increased transparency it offers veterinarians and consumers regarding the handling of complaints concerning the conduct of registered veterinarians. The provisions for handling complaints in the bill largely reflect current processes; however, they include additional options for the board to appropriately resolve matters that are of a less serious nature where formal disciplinary proceedings are unnecessary. Such matters may be addressed through education and training with a goal of improving the future conduct of the veterinarian concerned.

The bill enables the option for the board, should both parties agree and it is appropriate to do so, to provide conciliation between the complainant and the veterinarian. The board will also have the ability to accept an undertaking made by a veterinarian, have powers to issue a reprimand, provide the veterinarian with counselling, require them to complete specified remedial training or education to address any shortfalls, or impose conditions on their registration. These avenues are seen as more appropriate to reduce the impact on all parties involved and will support the timely and efficient resolution of complaints.

The bill retains the ability for the board to refer complaints that are of a more serious nature to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Veterinarians will continue to be able to seek a review of a board decision from the tribunal.

The bill, however, removes the ability for an aggrieved person to lodge a complaint directly to the tribunal. This supports the board being the appropriate entry point for lodging complaints and will ensure that each complaint has been subject to an assessment to determine that there is proper basis for referring the matter to the tribunal. These changes also reflect that disciplinary proceedings are brought in the public interest and are not strictly inter partes proceedings. Certain information in respect of complaints received about the conduct of veterinarians will be included in the board's annual report to further support transparency.

Finally, the bill will remove unnecessary offence provisions, instead enabling requirements pertaining to professional conduct to be set out in professional codes, standards, and guidelines where relevant. This will ensure a contemporary and flexible approach to regulation that can accommodate future changes to the profession. Essential provisions from the current legislation, such as a number of important offence provisions, key board functions, the majority of provisions relating to veterinary registration and the recognition of interstate veterinarian registration, are retained in the bill.

I have filed an amendment to clause 79, which seeks to provide flexibility to constitute the appropriate tribunal depending on the circumstances of the matter being heard. In addition to retaining the ability to appoint two veterinarian assessors to the tribunal, this amendment offers an alternative to appoint one veterinarian assessor and one non-veterinarian assessor. I look forward to the committee stage and the contributions of members in the house. I commend the Veterinary Services Bill 2023 to the house and look forward to further debate.

Explanation of Clauses

Part 1—Preliminary

1—Short title

This clause is formal.

2—Commencement

Commencement of the measure is by proclamation. Section 27(6) of the *Legislation Interpretation Act 2021* is disappplied.

3—Interpretation

This clause defines terms and phrases used in the measure.

4—Application of Act

This clause clarifies that the measure does not derogate from other Acts or laws.

Part 2—Veterinary Services Regulatory Board of South Australia

Division 1—Veterinary Services Regulatory Board of South Australia

5—Continuation of Board

This clause provides for the continuation of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia as the Veterinary Services Regulatory Board of South Australia as a body corporate with perpetual succession, a common seal, the capacity to litigate in its corporate name and all the powers of an individual capable of being exercised by a body corporate.

It also provides that the Board is subject to the direction and control of the Minister and limits the directions that the Minister may give.

6—Composition of Board

This clause provides for the Board to consist of 9 members appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of the Minister and empowers the Governor to appoint deputy members. It provides that 6 members must be veterinarians and sets out the skills, knowledge and experience that those members must possess. It also requires the Chair of the Board to be a veterinarian with management or governance skills, knowledge and experience unless another member is appropriate. The Minister may consult with a peak body representing the veterinary profession in the State that is prescribed by the regulations before recommending veterinarians for appointment as members of the Board.

7—Terms and conditions of membership

This clause provides for members of the Board to be appointed for a term not exceeding 3 years and to be eligible for re-appointment on expiry of a term of appointment provided that the member does not hold office for consecutive terms that exceed 9 years in total.

It sets out the circumstances in which a member's office becomes vacant and in which the Governor is empowered to remove a member from office. It also allows members whose terms have expired to continue to act as members to hear part-heard medical fitness proceedings.

8—Direction if Board fails to carry out functions

This clause allows the Minister to direct the Board to carry out its functions if of the opinion that the Board has failed to do so satisfactorily. The Minister must give the Board reasonable time to comply with the direction and must table the direction in Parliament.

9—Removal of all members of Board

This clause allows the Minister to recommend to the Governor that all members of the Board be removed from office if the Minister is of the opinion that the Board has failed to comply with a direction to carry out its functions. The Governor may subsequently remove all members from office by notice in the Gazette. It also sets out the provisions that apply if all members of the Board are removed.

10—Vacancies or defects in appointment of members

This clause ensures acts and proceedings of the Board are not invalid by reason only of a vacancy in its membership or a defect in the appointment of a member.

11—Remuneration

This clause entitles a member of the Board to remuneration, allowances and expenses determined by the Governor.

12—Governance training

This clause requires a member of the Board to complete training related to corporate governance in accordance with any requirements in the regulations.

13—Publication of appointments

This clause requires the Board to publish and maintain a list of current members of the Board on a website.

14—Functions

This clause sets out the functions of the Board and requires the Board to exercise its functions with the object of supporting animal health, safety and welfare and the public interest by achieving and maintaining high professional standards of competence and conduct in the provision of veterinary services in South Australia.

It also sets out the requirements for preparing, endorsing, varying, substituting and revoking a code, standard or guidelines under the measure.

It further requires the Board to provide the Minister with such information, records and other documents relating to the functions or operations of the Board as the Minister may require.

15—Reporting on exercise of functions

This clause allows the Minister to request, and requires the Board to provide, a written report about the exercise of the Board's functions generally or in relation to a specified matter.

16—Committees

This clause empowers the Board to establish committees to advise the Board and assist it to carry out its functions.

17—Delegations

This clause empowers the Board to delegate functions under the measure, other than a function prescribed by the regulations, to a member of the Board, the Executive Officer, a member of staff of the Board or a committee established by the Board and requires a delegation to be provided to members of the Board and the Minister within 7 days after it is made.

18—Procedures

This clause deals with matters relating to the Board's procedures such as the quorum at meetings, the chairing of meetings, voting rights, the holding of conferences by telephone and other electronic means and the keeping and provision of minutes.

19—Staff and resources

This clause provides for the Board to have such staff as it thinks necessary for the proper performance of its functions and allows the Board to make use of the services, facilities or officers of an administrative unit of the Public Service with the approval of the relevant Minister.

20—Application of Public Sector (Honesty and Accountability) Act

This clause provides that the *Public Sector (Honesty and Accountability) Act 1995* applies to a member of a committee of the Board as if the committee were an advisory body and that a member of the Board or a committee will not be taken to have a direct or indirect interest in a matter for the purposes of that Act by reason only of the fact the member has an interest in a matter shared in common with veterinarians generally or a substantial section of veterinarians.

21—Power to require medical examination or report

This clause empowers the Board to require a veterinarian or person applying for registration or reinstatement of registration as a veterinarian to submit to an examination by a health professional or provide a medical report from a health professional, including an examination or report that will require the person to undergo a medically invasive procedure. If the person fails to comply, the Board can suspend the person's registration until further order.

22—Accounts and audit

This clause requires the Board to keep proper accounting records in relation to its financial affairs, to have annual statements of account prepared in respect of each financial year and to have the accounts audited annually by an auditor approved by the Auditor-General and appointed by the Board. It also empowers the Auditor-General to audit the Board's accounts at any time.

23—Annual report

This clause requires the Board to prepare an annual report for the Minister and requires the Minister to table the report in Parliament.

Division 2—Executive Officer

24—Executive Officer

This clause provides for the appointment of an Executive Officer by the Board on terms and conditions determined by the Board.

25—Functions

This clause sets out the functions of the Executive Officer.

26—Delegations

This clause empowers the Executive Officer to delegate functions under the measure, other than a function prescribed by the regulations, and requires a delegation to be provided to members of the Board within 7 days after it is made.

Part 3—Registration of veterinarians

Division 1—Registers

27—Registers

This clause sets out the registers that the Executive Officer must keep and maintain for the purpose of registration of veterinarians and lists the information that must be included on the registers. It also requires a copy of the registers to be published on a website and empowers the Executive Officer to exempt information from the copies of the registers on the website if satisfied it would be inappropriate to disclose that information.

Division 2—Primary registration

28—Registration on general or specialist register

This clause empowers the Board to grant primary registration to a person, outlines when a person is eligible for registration (as well as limited and provisional registration), sets out the authorisation general and specialist registration gives and sets out how an application must be made.

It also empowers the Board to impose conditions on a person's registration and makes it an offence for a person to contravene a condition with a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months.

29—Veterinarian to inform Board of changes to certain information

This clause requires a veterinarian with primary registration to inform the Board of changes to certain information and fixes a maximum penalty of \$250.

30—Removal from register

This clause requires the Executive Officer to remove a person from a register in specified circumstances.

31—Reinstatement on register

This clause requires the Board to reinstate a person on a register if they are eligible for registration and sets out the circumstances in which a person may apply for reinstatement and how an application for reinstatement must be made.

32—Fees and returns

This clause deals with the payment of registration, reinstatement and practice fees and requires registered persons to furnish the Board with an annual return in relation to their provision of veterinary services, continuing professional development and other matters relevant to their registration under the measure. It empowers the Board to remove from a register the name of a person who fails to pay the practice fee or furnish the required return.

Division 3—Deemed registration

33—Recognition of veterinarians registered in other jurisdictions

This clause sets out when a person will be taken to have deemed registration and the authorisation deemed registration gives.

34—Contravention of conditions of deemed registration

This clause makes it an offence for a person to contravene a condition of the person's deemed registration with a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months.

35—Veterinarian with deemed registration to inform Board of contact details etc

This clause requires a veterinarian with deemed registration to provide the Board with their contact details within 1 month of providing veterinary services or engaging in other conduct as a veterinarian in South Australia and requires the veterinarian to inform the Board of changes to that information. In each case, a maximum penalty of \$250 is fixed for a contravention.

Division 4—Registration in participating jurisdictions

36—Registration to be subject to conditions

This clause provides that a restriction, limitation or condition on a person's registration in another jurisdiction applies to the person's registration under this measure and empowers the Board to waive or modify such a restriction, limitation or condition. It also allows the Board to impose conditions on a person's deemed registration.

37—Suspension or cancellation of registration or disqualification

This clause provides that if a person's registration in another jurisdiction is suspended or cancelled, or the person is disqualified from registration in another jurisdiction, then the person's registration under this measure is suspended or cancelled, or the person is disqualified from registration, on the same terms. It also empowers the Board to waive a suspension, cancellation or disqualification and sets out the effect of a waiver.

Division 5—Suspension or variation of registration in urgent circumstances

38—Suspension or variation of registration where veterinarian charged with certain offences or unacceptable risk to animals

This clause allows the Board to suspend the registration of a veterinarian or vary the conditions of a veterinarian's registration if the Board becomes aware that the veterinarian has been charged with an offence prescribed by the regulations or the Board reasonably suspects that the veterinarian poses an unacceptable risk to animals.

Part 4—Registration of premises at which veterinary services provided

39—Registers

This clause sets out the registers that the Executive Officer must keep and maintain for the purpose of registration of veterinary premises and lists the information that must be provided on the veterinary premises register. It also requires a copy of the registers to be published on a website and empowers the Executive Officer to exempt information from the copies of the registers on the website if satisfied it would be inappropriate to disclose that information.

40—Veterinary premises standard

This clause requires the Board to prepare or endorse standards relating to minimum requirements for registered premises. The standard must contain requirements relating to mobile hospitals and clinics.

41—Responsible person in respect of registered premises

This clause requires there to be a responsible person in respect of each registered premises and sets out who that person is in different circumstances.

42—Registration by Board of premises as registered premises

This clause sets out the circumstances in which premises are eligible for registration and how an application for registration must be made. It also states that registration of premises remains in force for a period specified by the Board (not exceeding 3 years) and empowers the Board to impose conditions on registration.

43—Suspension or cancellation of registration

This clause allows the Board to suspend or cancel registration of premises in specified circumstances.

44—Removal from register

This clause requires the Executive Officer to remove premises from the veterinary premises register in specified circumstances.

45—Reinstatement on register

This clause requires the Board to reinstate premises on the veterinary premises register if the premises are eligible for registration and sets out how an application for reinstatement must be made.

46—Fees

This clause provides that premises will not be granted registration or reinstatement of registration on the veterinary premises register until the relevant fee has been paid.

47—Contravention of conditions of registration

This clause makes it an offence for a responsible person in respect of premises to contravene a condition of the registration of the premises with a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months.

48—Requirement to inform Board of changes

This clause requires a responsible person in respect of registered premises to inform the Board of changes to certain information and fixes a maximum penalty of \$250 for a contravention.

Part 5—Veterinary practice

Division 1—Veterinary practice

49—Veterinary services to be provided by veterinarians

This clause prohibits a person from providing veterinary services for money or other consideration unless the person is a veterinarian and fixes a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months. It also sets out exceptions to the prohibition.

50—Veterinary services must be provided at registered premises

This clause prohibits a veterinarian from providing veterinary services at premises that are not registered premises and fixes a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months. It also sets out exceptions to the prohibition and provides that it is a defence to the prohibition for the defendant to prove that they did not know, and could not reasonably be expected to have known, that the premises were not registered premises.

51—Offence to carry on certain businesses other than at registered premises

This clause prohibits a business consisting of, or including, the provision of veterinary services from being carried on at premises that are not registered premises and provides that each person prescribed by the clause is guilty of an offence if the prohibition is contravened. It fixes a maximum penalty of \$20,000 and sets out exceptions to the prohibition.

52—Veterinarian to hold certain insurance

This clause prohibits a veterinarian from providing veterinary services for money or other consideration unless insured in a manner and to an extent determined by the Board against civil liability incurred in the course of providing those services and fixes a maximum penalty of \$10,000. It also allows the Board to provide exemptions from the requirements of the clause.

Division 2—Improperly influencing veterinarians etc

53—Application of Division

This clause sets out who the Division applies to and does not apply to.

54—Undue influence

This clause prohibits a person to whom the Division applies from inducing or attempting to induce a veterinarian to provide, or not provide, veterinary services, or veterinary services of a specified class, by dishonesty or undue influence and fixes a maximum penalty of \$20,000.

55—Improper directions etc to veterinarian

This clause prohibits a person to whom the Division applies from requiring, inducing or encouraging a veterinarian to engage in conduct in the course of providing veterinary services that would constitute unprofessional conduct or does not reflect current standards of veterinary practice in South Australia and fixes a maximum penalty of \$20,000.

Division 3—Other offences relating to veterinary practices etc

56—Offence to give, offer or accept benefit for recommendation or prescription

This clause makes it an offence—

- for any person to give, or offer to give, a veterinarian or prescribed relative of a veterinarian a benefit as an inducement, consideration or reward for the veterinarian recommending a prescribed veterinary service or prescribing or recommending a veterinary product manufactured, sold or supplied by the person;
- for a veterinarian or prescribed relative of a veterinarian to accept from any person a benefit offered or given as an inducement, consideration or reward for such a recommendation or prescription.

In each case a maximum penalty of \$20,000 is fixed for a contravention.

57—Illegal holding out as veterinarian or specialist

This clause makes it an offence for a person to hold themselves out as a veterinarian, specialist or particular class of specialist or permit another person to do so unless registered on the appropriate register or in the appropriate specialty. It also makes it an offence for a person to hold out another as a veterinarian, specialist or particular class of specialist unless the other person is registered on the appropriate register or in the appropriate specialty. In each case, a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months is fixed.

58—Illegal holding out concerning limitations or conditions

This clause makes it an offence for a person whose registration is limited or conditional to hold themselves out, or permit another person to hold them out, as having registration that is not subject to a limitation or condition. It also makes it an offence for a person to hold out another whose registration is limited or conditional as having registration that is not subject to a limitation or condition. In each case, a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months is fixed.

59—Illegal holding out concerning registered premises

This clause makes it an offence to hold out that particular premises are registered unless the premises are registered under the measure. It also makes it an offence to hold out that veterinary services or services of a particular kind are, or can be, provided at particular premises unless those services can be lawfully provided at those premises. In each case, a maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months is fixed.

60—Use of certain titles or descriptions prohibited

This clause prohibits a person who is not appropriately registered from using certain words or their derivatives to describe themselves or services that they provide, or in the course of advertising or promoting services that they provide. A maximum penalty of \$20,000 is fixed for each offence.

Part 6—Medical fitness to provide veterinary services

61—Medical fitness to provide veterinary services

This clause provides that in making a determination under the measure as to a person's medical fitness to provide veterinary services, regard must be given to the question of whether the person is able to provide veterinary services personally to an animal without putting the animal at significant risk of serious injury or harm.

62—Duty to report medical unfitness of veterinarian

This clause imposes a duty on health professionals to inform the Board if they are of the opinion that a veterinarian they have treated, or are treating, is or may be unable, as a result of a physical or mental illness, disability or deficiency, to provide veterinary services personally to an animal without putting the animal at significant risk of serious injury or harm. It requires a health professional who makes such a report to the Board to notify the veterinarian of that fact and the nature of the information provided. A person incurs no civil or criminal liability in carrying out their duty under this clause.

63—Medical fitness of veterinarian

This clause empowers the Board to suspend the registration of a veterinarian, impose conditions on registration restricting the right to provide veterinary services or other conditions requiring the person to undergo counselling or treatment, or to enter into any other undertaking if, on application by the Executive Officer or Minister or after an investigation, and after due inquiry, the Board is satisfied that the veterinarian is medically unfit to provide veterinary services and that it is in the public interest to take such action.

64—Proceedings before Board under Part

This clause sets out provisions relating to proceedings before the Board regarding medical fitness, including the powers of the Board to summons witnesses and require the production of documents and other evidence for the purposes of those proceedings.

Part 7—Complaints, investigations and proceedings

Division 1—Preliminary

65—Interpretation

This clause provides that a reference in the Part to a veterinarian includes a reference to a person who is not but who was, at the relevant time, a veterinarian under this measure or a veterinary surgeon or veterinary practitioner under the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1985* or the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003*.

66—Proper cause for disciplinary action

This clause sets out what constitutes proper cause for disciplinary action against a veterinarian.

Division 2—Complaints

67—Board to establish processes for complaints

This clause requires the Board to establish administrative processes for receiving and dealing with complaints received about the conduct of veterinarians and sets out certain matters the administrative processes must address.

68—Making complaint about veterinarian etc

This clause allows an aggrieved person to make, and the Board to initiate, a complaint about the conduct of a veterinarian in accordance with the Board's administrative processes.

69—Assessment of complaints

This clause requires the Board to cause each complaint to be assessed to determine how the complaint should be dealt with and sets out the complaints that do not need to be assessed.

70—Dismissal of certain complaints

This clause sets out when the Board must and may dismiss a complaint.

71—Decision to take no further action

This clause allows the Board to take no further action in relation to a complaint if it thinks it appropriate in the circumstances.

Division 3—Certain complaints may be resolved by Board

72—Application etc of Division

This clause provides that the Division applies to particular complaints, or complaints of a class, determined by the Board after consultation with the Minister and requires notice of each determination, and variation of a determination, to be published on a website. It also sets out the principles that the Board must have regard to, and seek to give effect to, in respect of the operation of the Division.

73—Complaints that may be dealt with under Division

This clause allows the regulations to specify the kinds of complaints and conduct that may, or may not, be determined by the Board to be complaints that can be dealt with by Board resolution.

74—Dealing with matters by way of Board resolution

This clause provides that a matter to which the Division applies is to be referred to the Executive Officer for resolution and sets out requirements in respect of dealing with the matter. It sets out the circumstances in which conciliation must take place and allows the Board to take certain action, or order the taking of certain action, after consultation with the Executive Officer.

75—Duty of Executive Officer with respect to conflict of interest

This clause requires the Executive Officer to disclose interests that may conflict with their duties in resolving a matter and comply with any directions given by the Board to resolve a conflict between the duties and interests.

76—Monitoring of Board resolutions

This clause requires complaints dealt with under the Division to be monitored and reviewed to maintain proper and consistent practices.

Division 4—Investigations

77—Investigation of complaints

This clause requires the Board to cause an investigation to be undertaken into each complaint to be dealt with under Division 5 or, if satisfied an investigation is unnecessary, to lodge a complaint in relation to the matter with SACAT. It also sets out the actions the Board may take following an investigation.

Division 5—Disciplinary action before Tribunal

78—Hearing by Tribunal as to matters constituting grounds for disciplinary action

This clause allows the Board or Minister to lodge a complaint setting out matters that are alleged to constitute grounds for disciplinary action against a person with SACAT and sets out the orders SACAT may make. It also allows SACAT to suspend a veterinarian's registration pending the outcome of SACAT proceedings if it thinks it is necessary due to a serious risk to the health and safety of the public or health and welfare of animals.

79—Constitution of Tribunal

This clause sets out how SACAT will be constituted for proceedings under the Act and requires SACAT to establish a panel of assessors.

80—Punishment of conduct that constitutes offence

This clause provides that if conduct constitutes both an offence against the measure and grounds for disciplinary action under the measure, the taking of disciplinary action is not a bar to conviction and punishment for the offence, and conviction and punishment for the offence is not a bar to disciplinary action.

81—No internal review by Tribunal of decision under Division etc

This clause provides that a decision of SACAT under this Division cannot be the subject of an application for internal review and disapplies certain provisions of the *South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013* in relation to an appeal against such a decision.

Part 8—Inspectors

82—Guidelines

This clause requires the Board to publish guidelines about the conduct of investigations and inspections on a website.

83—Inspectors

This clause empowers the Board to authorise persons to be inspectors for the purposes of the measure.

84—Functions of inspectors

This clause sets out the functions of inspectors.

85—Powers of inspectors

This clause sets out the powers of inspectors.

86—Offence to hinder etc inspector

This clause makes it an offence for a person to hinder an inspector, use certain language to an inspector, refuse or fail to comply with a requirement of an inspector, refuse or fail to answer questions to the best of the person's knowledge, information and belief, or falsely represent that the person is an inspector. A maximum penalty of \$10,000 is fixed.

Part 9—Review of certain decisions by Tribunal

87—Review of certain decisions by Tribunal

This clause confers SACAT with jurisdiction to deal with matters consisting of the review of specified decisions.

88—Variation or revocation of conditions imposed by Tribunal

This clause empowers SACAT to vary or revoke a condition imposed on a veterinarian's registration at any time on application by the veterinarian and provides that the Board is entitled to appear and be heard on such an application.

Part 10—Miscellaneous

89—Exemptions

This clause allows the Minister to exempt a specified person or a specified class of persons from the operation of a provision or provisions of the measure and sets out the notice requirements. It also allows the Minister to vary or revoke an exemption for any reason the Minister thinks fit and makes it an offence for a person to contravene a condition of an exemption. A maximum penalty of \$20,000 is fixed for contravention of a condition.

90—Contact details to be provided to Chief Executive

This clause requires the Board to, every 3 months or on request, provide to the Chief Executive a list of contact details for each veterinarian registered under the measure and restricts the uses of the details to specified circumstances.

91—False or misleading statement

This clause prohibits a person from making a statement that is false or misleading in a material particular in information provided under the measure. A maximum penalty of \$20,000 is fixed.

92—Procurement of registration by fraud

This clause makes it an offence for a person to fraudulently or dishonestly procure registration or reinstatement of registration (whether for themselves or another person). A maximum penalty of \$20,000 or imprisonment for 6 months is fixed.

93—Self-incrimination and legal professional privilege

This clause provides that a person cannot refuse or fail to answer a question or produce documents as required under the measure on the ground that to do so might tend to incriminate the person or make the person liable to a penalty or on the ground of legal professional privilege.

If a person objects on either of the first two grounds, the fact of production of the document or the information furnished is not admissible against the person except in proceedings in respect of making a false or misleading statement or perjury. If a person objects on the ground of legal professional privilege, the answer or document is not admissible in civil or criminal proceedings against the person who would, but for this clause, have the benefit of that privilege.

94—Confidentiality

This clause prohibits a person who obtained personal information in the course of the administration of the measure, the *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1985* or the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003* from divulging any such information except in certain circumstances. A maximum penalty of \$10,000 is fixed.

Any information disclosed under this clause must not be used for any other purpose by the person to whom it is disclosed or by any other person who gains access to the information as a result of the disclosure. A maximum penalty of \$10,000 is fixed.

95—Victimisation

This clause prohibits a person from victimising another person on the ground, or substantially on the ground, that the other person has disclosed or intends to disclose information, or has made or intends to make an allegation, that has given rise or could give rise to proceedings against the person under this measure. Victimisation is the causing of detriment including injury, damage or loss, intimidation or harassment, threats of reprisals, or discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to the victim's employment or business. An act of victimisation may be dealt with as a tort or as if it were an act of victimisation under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

96—Arrangements between Board and interstate registration authorities

This clause allows for a national database for veterinarians and for other purposes related to the recognition of people engaged in providing veterinary services, practice or treatment in other jurisdictions to be established.

97—Notification of disciplinary action to interstate registration authorities

This clause requires the Board to notify each interstate registration authority of any disciplinary action taken against a veterinarian under the measure or of any other action of a prescribed kind.

98—Evidentiary provision

This clause requires specified matters to be accepted as proved in the absence of proof to the contrary in legal proceedings (including Tribunal proceedings). It also allows specified matters to be proved in legal proceedings (including Tribunal proceedings) by means of a certificate.

99—Regulations and fee notices

This clause provides power to make regulations and to prescribe fees by fee notice.

Schedule 1—Related amendments, repeals and transitional provisions

Part 1—Amendment of Agricultural and Veterinary Products (Control of Use) Act 2002

Part 2—Amendment of Animal Welfare Act 1985

Part 3—Amendment of Controlled Substances Act 1984

Part 4—Amendment of Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

Part 5—Amendment of *Health Care Act 2008*

Part 6—Amendment of Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (South Australia) Act 2010

Part 7—Amendment of *Livestock Act 1997*

These Parts make related amendments to the Acts specified consequential to the enactment of the measure.

Part 8—Repeal of Veterinary Practice Act 2003

1—Repeal of Act

This clause repeals the Veterinary Practice Act 2003.

Part 9—Transitional provisions

This Part makes transitional provisions in respect of the enactment of the measure and the repeal of the *Veterinary Practice Act 2003*.

Ms SAVVAS (Newland) (12:03): It is a pleasure to speak today about the Veterinary Services Bill and acknowledge the wonderful work that vets do across our state, particularly in my community in Tea Tree Gully. Veterinarians play a key role in animal, human and community wellbeing. All of us have had different experiences with vet services and really seen the value that vets bring to our own lives.

Australia has one of the highest proportions of pet ownership in the world and for my entire life I have had beloved pets. We grew up with both cats and dogs and used to take our pets to Vets4Pets at Dernancourt or to Holden Hill Veterinary Clinic, which was affectionately known as 'the rainbow vet' because of the beautiful, large rainbow sign on the outside of the building.

In 2022, Australian households are estimated to have spent about \$4.7 billion on veterinary services. I was indeed one of those, as my dear cat Louis needed an overnight admission stay at the Tea Tree Gully Veterinary Hospital after contracting the cat flu. Tea Tree Gully Veterinary Hospital is a wonderful place, a place that takes extraordinary care of the many animals that come through its doors, not just from Tea Tree Gully but of course from the northern Adelaide Hills. I know that a number of the rural properties at Chain of Ponds, particularly, take their animals down to the Tea Tree Gully Veterinary Hospital, and they have done so for many years.

I also remember all too well the care they took of my big dog Boston—an enormous bundle of hyperactivity; I would not wish him upon any vet—when he was being desexed and further as he struggled to recover from his surgery. Unfortunately, he is not the type of dog to understand what it means to rest. They also looked after Louis in his hospital stay. I am sure they will continue to support my community and the pets in my community for years to come.

Veterinarians also support the \$5.3 billion South Australian livestock industry. Veterinarians are crucial in detecting diseases and responding to emergency animal disease incursions, with these activities both supporting and protecting the domestic and export markets. They play a really crucial role here in Australia, knowing the degree of our exports and the contribution that we make as an exporter around the world. I would like to acknowledge the vital role that vets play, not just in the pet market but also in our trade market.

Currently, veterinary practice and the veterinary profession in South Australia are regulated by the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 and the Veterinary Practice Regulations 2017. The veterinary profession and animal care industry have evolved significantly since 2003, when the current legislative framework first came into effect.

The role of the Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia, the body responsible for regulating the veterinary profession, has also changed during this time, most notably with the responsibility for hearing and determining alleged unprofessional conduct by veterinarians transferring to SACAT in 2020. The new Veterinary Services Bill seeks to address these changes and ensure that veterinary practice regulation in the state is flexible and aligns with both the contemporary nature of the profession and the standards expected by users and providers of veterinary services.

Feedback from a 2020 review of the Veterinary Practice Act identified a raft of potential legislative changes that indicated it would be effective to propose new legislation as opposed to making a large number of amendments to the current act. A key change is that the bill proposes a variation to the definition of veterinary treatment. 'Veterinary treatment' will become 'veterinary

services', and the definition will be updated for clarity and to more accurately reflect the services delivered by the profession in 2023. Of course, we very much value our vets, and we know that the services can be incredibly complex. Wording does matter, as does accurate acknowledgement of the services provided by our veterinarians.

In addition to the Tea Tree Gully Veterinary Hospital that I mentioned before, I would also like to acknowledge the vet right next door to my office, Vets4Pets at Ridgehaven. Vets4Pets provide an enormous service in our community, particularly with the emergency care service at Golden Grove. I have sad memories of taking our cat to be put down at Golden Grove on a public holiday after he was bitten by a snake when I was a kid, but I do recall very specific conversations with my parents about how lucky we were to have an emergency vet service nearby so that Batman—my little brother named the cat Batman, not me—could receive urgent and humane end-of-life care.

Vets4Pets have rightfully also had some time in the spotlight this year, as they featured on a television program called *For the Love of Pets*, which was a 16-part series and an insight into what is said to be the busiest vet hospital in South Australia. I watched keenly, as it was highlighting our local community and I recognised some of the vets and some of the clients coming in with their pets. It really showcased the work around the vet hospital and gave a real insight into the incredibly powerful and important work done by local vets.

This bill aims to improve the regulation of the veterinary profession here in South Australia. The Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia will become the Veterinary Services Regulatory Board and will be modernised and transformed to better serve the needs of both veterinary users and providers. The board will have the option to appropriately resolve matters that are of a less serious nature where formal disciplinary proceedings are deemed to be unnecessary because many of those matters can be instead addressed with education and training, with a goal of improving the future conduct of the veterinarian concerned, particularly in the case of junior vets.

Compliance with minimum requirements for veterinary premises will be supported by new offence provisions and the ability to inspect the premises. Another major change in the bill is the increased transparency it offers veterinarians and consumers regarding the handling of complaints concerning the conduct of registered veterinarians.

Pets, for so many of us, are loved ones—parts of our family. We want to ensure that there is both transparency for pet owners and protections for those vets who are doing their jobs. We know that losing a pet or having a pet with an injury or an illness can be quite an emotive time for individuals. Of course, individuals grieve pets in the same way that often you would grieve any other member of your family, when the pet particularly is dear to you. We do want to make sure that vets are protected in those circumstances as well.

The bill enables the option for the board to provide conciliation, and it also retains the ability for the board to refer complaints of a more serious nature to SACAT if required. Certain information in respect of complaints received about the conduct of veterinarians will be included in the annual report to further support transparency in the profession.

Finally, the bill will remove unnecessary offence provisions, instead enabling requirements pertaining to professional conduct to be set out in professional codes, standards and guidelines where relevant. This will ensure a contemporary and flexible approach to regulation that can accommodate further changes to the profession as we move forward.

I very much want to finish today by again acknowledging the vital work that vets do. We all know the role that pets have in our own lives. I know for myself, growing up we always had cats and dogs, if not birds because my mum would often find a bird that hurt itself in the garden and bring it in, and we were often taking injured pets out to the vet and seeking their support.

I do really want to acknowledge the role that vets play because, particularly for those who are living on their own or people without family and close friends of their own, pets can exist as a family where often there are not other supports. I think that that is a really important thing that pets do, but of course the service that vets provide to ensure that people are able to have those companions is really important as well. I very much commend the bill and look forward to its hopeful passage this morning.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:13): I rise to let the chamber know that I will be the lead speaker on this bill. It is a very important bill. The Veterinary Services Bill 2023 is bringing the veterinary science and the veterinary industry into line with modern-day expectation. What we should first and foremost understand is that the Veterinary Services Bill modernises the needs of a very complex industry. The industry is there for different parts of veterinary practices—animal health, animal wellbeing—but it is also an institution that is there for the mental health of human beings and for the wellbeing of animal husbandry and the competitive nature that we as racegoers will sometimes take for granted but the industry does not.

I think it is really important that we understand the deeper impact of what the veterinary industry means to a number of sectors in mainstream society, what it means to the economy, what it means to the health and wellbeing of animals and, as I have said, the contribution that it makes to human behaviour and human companionship.

It needs to be also very well pointed out that a very important part of the industry, which I think goes under the radar, is a working animal. A working dog by most people's understanding cannot be overstated in terms of not only what they mean to the livestock industry but also how they help the agricultural sector, as well as helping people in isolated regional communities. I come from a farming family and a family that has dealt with a significant amount of isolation over a long period of time. It also comes on the back of some of the livestock sectors that rely on that working animal.

Obviously, as I have said, the livestock industry is a crucial part of this bill as is the racing industry, and I know that a number of members here will contribute. We talk about pets and pet ownership, but we also talk about the significant economy that comes from that. Let's just unpack it. We will start with a small animal vet because there are a number of sectors within veterinary science that need to be understood I think a little more. When we talk about small animal vets, we are usually referring to vets for domesticated pets, household pets.

For different reasons, people have pets, whether it is for company, whether it is as a working dog, whether it is as a guard dog or a guard animal or whether it is a hobby. We have different pets for different hobbies. I know that in a previous life I used to watch a lot of wildlife in the outback, particularly in some of the uncharted country up in the oil and gas fields, where we see animals that come out of nowhere. They come out of holes in the ground, they come out of rock pools, they come out of the water and they come out of the sky. What we have very quickly realised as a society is that different people are looking for different types of relationships or different types of exposure to animals, and it is all underpinned by a veterinary service.

You might be looking to collect pets that live in an aquarium. Whether it be a fish, whether it be a reptile or whether it be a bird, as I understand it an animal collection, animal hobby or just acquiring an everyday pet is a growing sector. What we see in most of mainstream society is that everyone loves to have a pet of some sort. The majority of people, mainstream society, look to a cat or a dog as a pet not only for company and conversation but also, as I said, for mental stimulation.

Normally for most of my life we always had dogs, and mostly working dogs, but along the way we have also had household pets that have been great company for children. They are great company in terms of the fabric of a farming community, whether they are just for the family, whether they are part of the workforce within a farm or whether they are a pet that is part of what we like to think of as our family-friendly backyard.

Over time, we have seen a change in those animals. We are now seeing different breeds come into mainstream society, breeds that potentially do not shed hair, that grow to a certain size and have a very mild temperament. Those animals, I think, are now fitting a mould of inner-city suburbia, where they are prepared to cope with confined spaces. Again, they do not create a lot of the work that a lot of the thoroughbred animals do.

Anyone who has had a thoroughbred dog or cat understands the amount of moulting that they do, the amount of work that you have to put in to keep floors, furniture and the like clean in the household. We need to understand that the changes in needs, the changes in society's expectation with animals, are about the ease. It is no easy undertaking to own a pet and just go by the wayside when it comes to the attention that they need, the feeding.

They need a vet regularly, because they are just like we humans: they need care, they need their teeth fixed, they need their bones fixed, they need disease fixed and they need external intervention dealt with sometimes. I have had a number of animals that have endured snakebites. They have endured getting tangled up with some of our native animals. Many a time, I have had to pull apart dogs that have been tangled up with a kangaroo, deal with cats that are dealing with predatory birds, deal with all sorts of those interactions. At the end of the day, that normally requires a vet to come in and play a role in making sure that our animal is managed, dealt with, repaired, medicated and then gets back into the environment that we expect.

We have 900 registered vets in South Australia and, as I have said, we have a number of sectors within the veterinary industry. I have talked a little about household pets and what those small animal vets do, but we also have to understand that we have large animal vets and they also usually look after a sector. I call it livestock. The racing industry has a role to play, particularly with large animals. More times than not, it is to do with limbs. It is normally to do with making sure that we deal with some of the ailments that larger animals have.

They normally suffer issues with feet and they suffer issues with joints, but sometimes they can also need a vet to intervene when we are starting to talk breeding or when we are starting to talk the complexities of a large animal that is competing. Whether it be a thoroughbred, harness, equestrian or a trial rider, or whether it be a farm or an open paddock friend or pet, we have to make sure that veterinary intervention is there for the betterment of all of those industries.

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. Some say it is a luxury, but I say that in many instances they are there for a very good reason. As I have said, company and companionship have a big role to play. I do not know too many pets at home that argue back. I do not know too many that give you a mouthful of lip when you have told them off or when you want them to do something that they do not want to do. I think it should be understood that humans and pets sometimes become one, and it is only when vets are called that that relationship is restored and the pet can go about its expected day-to-day life.

Obviously, what I would like to touch on is about the economy that comes from animals and pets. Households spent about \$33 billion on pets only last year, and 14 per cent of that expenditure, \$14.7 billion, was spent on veterinary services. The important role they play in a modern society cannot be understated. I have been to a lot of isolated communities that are dealing with pets, with small animals, that do not have veterinary services. In most instances, it is a sight that brings a tear to one's eye.

I have seen a number of times where dogs, mostly, have not received the veterinary service they needed, and those animals, sadly, in many instances, will have a slow and painful death, whether it be from mange, whether it be from a tick infestation, whether it be from a disease, whether it be from malnourishment—for all different reasons, that is when intervention by a vet is an important presence.

Along the way what we must understand is that the Veterinary Services Bill today is to improve not only the industry, not only the selection of the process to put good people into advisory services, but to make sure that those good people are there for the betterment of the industry, and that significant spend on pet ownership cannot be understated.

I do not have the numbers of the intervention by vets on some of the racing industry. I will touch on that. Nationally, it is a \$9.15 billion industry here, the thoroughbred industry. On the back of that, we have the harness sector, the harness industry, as well as the equestrian and the trial sector. They are significant contributors not only to the sport but to making sure that those animals are in mainstream looked after. Some would say that in most instances these animals are treated better than their human counterparts.

As former shadow for sport, rec and racing, I witnessed over a long period of time the care that is given to all forms of the racing industry. The thoroughbred industry cannot be understated. It is a multibillion-dollar industry. The owners, the trainers, the handlers, the jockeys and the ownership groups that look after animals have to be commended for the effort, the time and the care they put into the industry.

Some of those events are overshadowed by what we see as some of the world-class racing events. I note that the most rewarded horse races in the world, the Saudi Cup and the Dubai World Cup, are significant races that, on a world stage, show what human intervention with animals does. There is an element of mainstream society that is concerned about the way those animals are cared for, but I can assure them that those animals are given the best of the best. They are given the best of the veterinary service, they are given the best of training, they are given the best of handling and care, and the environment that they live and train in cannot be understated.

Here in South Australia, even in my electorate, there are a number of training facilities. There is one at Murbko and there are a number at Angaston in the Barossa Valley. I know that the member for Schubert is keeping a very close eye on the great contribution that those facilities make into the racing industry, because they are some of the best facilities in the country. Of course, just recently we have seen the Spring Racing Carnival and we saw the \$21 million The Everest run and won.

With racing here in Australia, nationally, the Melbourne Cup has always been the golden event people flock to because it has been renowned for many, many decades as the premier event in the country. Of course, the commercial intervention is always trying to take the focus off the Melbourne Cup, and I think that is what has happened at The Everest. Obviously the Golden Eagle and the Breeders' Cup are two other notable races where we see those thoroughbred horses are racing at the top of their game.

I will not go into the harness sector too much. It is a sector that is supported and buoyed by very, very passionate people, people who care for their animals like no other but, of course, there is always an element—when I say an element, I mean there are always situations that arise from the racing industry and where we have hiccups along the way. It is a little bit like when a crime is committed: the first thing we do is ring the police. Well, in the animal industry when there is an incident the first person they call is the vet. The vet is always that person who is relied on to come to the aid of an animal that is distressed, injured or sick. It cannot be understated how important the veterinary services are.

The stakeholder engagement has been a big part of this bill. Along the way, the consultation by the former Liberal government saw a significant amount of consultation between 2020 and 2021, including representation from the Australian Veterinary Association, particularly here in South Australia through their SA Division; we had input from the Law Society of South Australia; Livestock SA; the South Australian Dairyfarmers' Association; a number, or many, private veterinarians; and Sophie's legacy—Garry and Kate Putland gave great feedback; as did Helen Gibb, who is a psychologist. Yes, there are psychologists for animals. They, too, have feelings and they, too, have a mental undertaking, I guess, of having to be in a good state, and that is why those organisations were a go-to when looking to deal with the Veterinary Services Bill.

Obviously as part of the review of the Veterinary Practice Act 2003 and the Veterinary Practice Regulations 2017, in December 2022 the draft bill was prepared following stakeholder feedback. This bill is a combination of veterinarian voices from right around South Australia who came to the former government and, of course, the government and the minister of the day listened. I think what we have seen along the way are a number of amendments that have been through the other place. They were widely supported, which I think is a great show of common sense

Putting politics to one side, this is a serious conversation to be had about how we better serve the veterinary sector and also how we better serve the care of all animals, both small and large. The extensive stakeholder engagement was essentially listening to the veterinary community. It was about listening to industry and getting the maximum amount of feedback so that we could make a fully informed decision on making sure that this Veterinary Services Bill was relevant. There were ears that listened, more so than what we are doing now in this chamber, which is doing a lot of talking.

A number of amendment have been supported in the other place and I want to commend the leader in the upper house, a former vet herself, for her good work. I think she has put a significant amount of work into this bill, making sure that she represents an industry she had charter of within her working life for somewhere between 10 and 12 years. They are the credentials that I stand with

here today with the brief I have taken from her—the consultation she had with industry that we as a loyal opposition are putting to the government of the day.

One of the most important amendments concerns the tribunal's constitution and ensuring it is in line with other professions, subject to review by the tribunal. The South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013 stipulates that the tribunal should have no more than three assessors; however, the current bill stipulates that only one member be a registered veterinarian. I am very pleased that the government has presented an amendment. I think when we take that to committee it is something that will complement the current bill before us so we are doing everything we can to make sure that the Veterinary Services Bill is the best that it can possibly be in the current day situation.

It makes practical veterinary experience just one-third and I am hoping that this amendment will override that. We need to understand that, when disciplinary action is necessary, one member does not provide the knowledge required for such a complex industry. The amendment suggests increasing to a panel of two members, and this position is supported across the industry and was widely supported in the other place by the opposition and the crossbench. I thank the government for their bipartisan approach to what is such an important bill.

I want to touch on another couple of sectors within the livestock sector that I think are very important and where vets play a significant role. AI is probably one of the great modern-day technologies within livestock, whether it be in the racing industry, whether it be in bloodline breeding or whether it be in the dairy industry. I am sure the member for Finnis has been up to his elbows in it at certain times as have I. One of my lasting memories as a young fellow was helping my grandfather out by having to put on the long glove and making sure that things—

Mr Pederick: You had gloves?

Mr WHETSTONE: I digress. I do not know whether the member for Hammond has ever had the long glove on, but I can assure you that it is an industry that is now relying on technology more and more. Vets are now more qualified and have more of a professional understanding about artificial insemination and what that means. I think that what we are seeing now does form a genetic balance, a genetic improvement, in some of the bloodlines. For livestock, in particular, we have seen a significant change over the last 12 months, or I could say the last decade, or I could say the last two and three decades. It is a constant improvement. Vets—mostly large animal vets—have risen to the occasion.

I know that out at Roseworthy we have a significant equine centre that is looking at some of the great work being done by vets, particularly those in the equine industry. My background obviously was cattle and sheep breeding with my family farm, particularly in the South-East and then into the Mid North. But, as I have said, along the way I have had family members who have had dairies, and we have seen the significant change in the landscape and what it means now to rely more and more on a vet's intervention, whether it be for care and maintenance, for breeding, or for advice.

One of my most recent trips up through South Australia into Queensland was to visit all of the S. Kidman & Co. properties and to have a look at some of the care and maintenance facilities, and the onsite veterinary services that have been put into those properties cannot be understated. What the livestock industry has seen over such a long period of time is working with the livestock industry, working with the farmers, being on the ground, understanding the natural environment, how we can improve an animal's life and how we can stimulate an animal, keep it healthy and keep its dietary requirements up to speed.

I vividly remember my grandfather saying that 'the best way to tell a healthy animal is by its coat'. Whether it has a leather coat or a fur coat, it is whether it has a shiny gloss and whether it is out there going its merry way. If it is a dairy cow coming into the dairy, producing its quota of milk, it is about making sure that when those cows dry off or when they are put into calf, they are put in there with the best possible chance of reproducing and making sure that the next generation of that animal comes along and is a contributor to that property's economy, and also making sure that that property has accreditation, making sure that the animal husbandry is second to none.

I am very proud to say that here in South Australia we are an exemplar when it comes to animal care, particularly in the livestock industry. I guess along the way we have seen some detractors within the livestock sector and there has been a minority that have misbehaved when it comes to animal care, animal husbandry, but that is not the mainstream. When we look at government intervention when it comes to the livestock industry, it always ends in tears—always. If we reflect on live trade, if we reflect on the greyhound industry, if we reflect on some of the animal industries—I will put it as broadly as I can—they are not a representative of the majority. Sadly, they are the minority, and that minority makes the majority look bad in some instances.

My father was a great, well-respected stock agent here in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. A lot of my travels as a young fellow—for any of you, maybe the Minister for Trade being an Adelaide Plains kind of person growing up would understand the amount of miles that stock agents travel to visit, to buy, to sell animals—sheep, cattle, horses in the main—and would understand that the amount of care needed to breed animals, to grow animals, to transport animals, then move them to new homes or move them into processing facilities should not be understated. In the care that we see with that movement now, we are seeing sophisticated trucks and trailers for the care of those animals, and we see the sophistication with the yards that are now providing a significant amount of shade. They provide rubbing equipment. They provide stimulation mechanisms, making sure that those animals are looked after.

Getting back to the live trade, as a young fella I did make one trip on a sheep ship over to Kuwait, and my father was head of that consignment. There were 100,000 sheep on that boat, and back in those days it really did need some improvement. I think through the course of the livestock representative industries—the vets and the veterinary sector, and governments—we have seen a significant shift in animal care, but there are always detractors.

I am very proud that my father was one of the pioneers when we were looking to put pelletised food onto ships to make sure that we were giving them better nutrition. They were better cared for and the watering points were improved, and that made the condition of the ship floor much better and much safer.

We have to understand that when a lot of ships leave the port, when they are headed to a faraway place, it is not always smooth sailing. They can go through storms, heat and all sorts of adversity, and it is about making sure that those transport ships are best prepared and that the animals are best looked after and best managed and maintained. I think it really is chalk and cheese, that what we have seen over the last couple of decades has changed significantly.

Again, once we saw government intervention, particularly with the cattle trade, we saw a significant amount of uncertainty put into the industry, and that is when vets have to come in to put animals down because they have no value, or they have no home. We have seen that recently with another government announcement. The current federal government has intentions to cease the live trade of sheep. What we are seeing here in South Australia is a significant pinch point.

In Western Australia, there was a significant reliance on live trade. Now that the government have signalled their intention, we have many truckloads—and when I say 'many' I mean thousands—of sheep coming into South Australia. That freight is subsidised by the Western Australian government. It is now putting pressure on the markets here in South Australia, and so it creates a supply and demand situation. It creates pinch points in markets. Then we see the decrease in the price of animals. Again we are seeing sheep now being shot because of irrational government decisions that are really putting pressure on an industry that has been pushed into a corner.

I think the government has responded to the squeaky wheel, to a small, green minority that really needs to better understand just what the current situation is. This is all backed up by vets. We go to a vet when we are looking for better ways to manage, maintain and care for animals, and the live trade is no different. That is just to give an understanding of what the live trade has meant.

I was recently on Kangaroo Island. Obviously, the trade and investment portfolio is very important on the island because they have to maximise every facet of primary industries, of horticulture, of livestock, of seed breeding. What we are seeing is prime animals on the island being put down because of the constraints with the logistical challenges of getting those animals off the island. Once they get them onto the mainland, they have no value. So, rather than putting an animal

into a truck, onto a boat and onto the mainland and taking it to market where it has no value, it is being put down. They are being put into pits, and it is an absolute crime. It is an absolute crime to see that done with a prime Kangaroo Island lamb.

For what it is worth, a Kangaroo Island animal of any persuasion is a smaller animal than a mainland animal. They normally have their different attributes by and large. A lot of those animals, whether they are grass fed or whether they are grain fed, are high-value animals for the processor. When we see breeders or farmers putting animals down through no fault of their own, it again highlights the inaccuracy by governments in dealing with an industry that is so very important.

It is one of our great export industries. It is important here in South Australia and nationally, in Australia. It cannot be overstated that the industry needs to have certainty. If I had my way there would be no government intervention. Yes, there needs to be regulation. Yes, there need to be guidelines and care put into legislation and regulations dealing with animal husbandry, dealing with animal care and maintenance, but when we have a squeaky wheel dictating the agenda of the government of the day, it really does beggar belief. It has unintended consequences. Again, this is where vets play an important role. Vets are a sounding board, they are the go-to. As I said, vets are the calling card whenever there is an issue with an animal, big or small.

Along the way, it cannot be overstated that what we are seeing here in South Australia, here in this chamber, is a significant level of bipartisanship. The approach we will see now with the amendment that will be introduced as part of this bill just demonstrates that the government of the day is listening and is working with industry. It is working with those that have contributed and given feedback to this Veterinary Services Bill.

I think it is important that governments of the day need to understand that you cannot put a political agenda on a live thing, whether it be an animal, whether it be a human, whether it be anything that has a pulse. What we are doing today is putting a stronger representative voice, a stronger panel, a stronger understanding, a better standard of expectation and professionalism into the veterinary sector, and that can only be done by good legislators. It can only be done by what I consider a bipartisan approach. That is not to say that the government of the day or the opposition are not listening or they are listening; it is about coming together and looking for the betterment of this sector.

As the veterinary community has said and as the livestock industry has said and as the racing industry has called on, this is a very large set of industries that rely on one stable, and that is good veterinary service. They rely on good advice, they rely on good appointments within veterinary science and within veterinary care but they also rely on that interaction between the vet sector, between legislators, between all the industries that rely so heavily on the animal doctors in making sure we get the best possible outcome we can.

The majority of this bill has been through the other place, and there were some amendments put forward. Some of them were supported; some of them were not. But I think this amendment that will be presented today during the committee stage will really add a shine to what the Veterinary Services Bill 2023 will mean.

It will give confidence to the vet sector that legislators have listened further and that we are moving to making sure that this bill is in the best interests of the industries that rely on vets and on good communicators. Vets make sure that everyday South Australians have a companion next to them, every farmer has a working companion with them and the livestock industry is there providing protein and food to every mouth, three times a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

I think it is also important that when we talk about the economy generated and the expenditure on the veterinary sector and the animal sector, we note that we cannot put a price on the mental health of human beings. I think animals are a significant contributor that has no price. It has no number attached to it. That is why it is so important that this piece of legislation be the best it can be, that we make sure it has the most accurate input and that it is listened to as best it can be. That is why we will move this bill through the house today, with one amendment, and hopefully we will have an outcome at the end of everyone's contribution.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:55): I rise to support the Veterinary Services Bill 2023. I want to acknowledge the great work that the many hundreds of vets—900 of them—do across South Australia and the many more who work across Australia and, as has been mentioned, work in conjunction with our live cattle and live sheep industries.

I certainly want to pay credit to a couple of vets who were very significant in my young life back in the mid-seventies, when we had a very good commercial Poll Hereford herd: Harry Ousley from Meningie and Jack Redden from Murray Bridge. Both men are still about, which is a good thing. They assisted us—probably more times than we wished, when you get the vet bill—and they were certainly great men when we had issues with the very good commercial herd that dad was running. Dad would have run a stud, but he did not want to do the paperwork.

We sold many bulls throughout the community and it was quite a feature when we were running the Hereford stock. Dad had crook hips, so at times it was left up to us kids to get especially the first-time heifers that were calving into the cattle yards and assist with the process of pulling a calf that had been stuck—obviously, at that age, we would have been calling the vet in—going through the whole process of keeping a heifer upright and throwing spare rails from the cattle yards underneath them, just to keep them in place, and doing the best we could so that we could locate the legs and use the calf-pulling apparatus with the ropes. You essentially jack them out. It was so good to have that veterinary support.

Other times we needed that support were when we had some high feed years and we did not have enough roughage in the cattle. You only get caught once. If they have too much green feed, they can blow up with bloat. It is pretty wild when you see for the first time a vet sticking a knife straight into a beast, into a cow, in the appropriate location to let the air out. It works, and it works very effectively, and keeps the cow alive, mind you. That comes with the training and skill that vets have, and I truly appreciate the great work they do. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12:59 to 14:00.

Parliamentary Procedure

ANSWERS TABLED

The SPEAKER: I direct that the written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Professional Standards Councils—Annual Report 2022-23

By the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water (Hon. S.E. Close)—

Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium, Board of the—Financial Statements 2022-23

Coast Protection Board—Financial Statements 2022-23

Environment and Water, Department for—Financial Statements 2022-23

Mamungari Conservation Park Co-management Board—Financial Statements 2022-23

Preparing South Australia's Coast—Progress Report—

Department for Environment and Water

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

Energy and Mining, Department for—Annual Report 2022-23

Energy Market Commission, Australian—Annual Report 2022-23

Hydrogen Power South Australia, Office of—Annual Report 2022-23

Power Line Environment Committee—Annual Report 2022-23

Technical Regulator, Office of the South Australian—Annual Report 2022-23

By the Minister for Energy and Mining (Hon. A. Koutsantonis) on behalf of the Treasurer (Hon. S.C. Mullighan)—

Funds SA—Annual Report 2022-23
Industry Advocate—Annual Report 2022-23
Local Government Finance Authority—Annual Report 2022-23
Lotteries Commission of South Australia—Annual Report 2022-23
Metropolitan Fire Service Superannuation Scheme, South Australian—
Annual Report 2022-23
Southern Select Superannuation Corporation—Annual Report 2022-23

By the Minister for Health and Wellbeing (Hon. C.J. Picton)—

Ambulance Service, South Australian—Annual Report 2022-23
Health Advisory Council—
Balaklava and Riverton Annual Report 2022-23
Coorong Health Service Annual Report 2022-23
Eudunda Kapunda Annual Report 2022-23
Hawker District Memorial Annual Report 2022-23
Mid West Annual Report 2022-23
Naracoorte Area Annual Report 2022-23
Port Lincoln Annual Report 2022-23
Quorn Health Services Annual Report 2022-23
Whyalla Hospital and Health Services Annual Report 2022-23
Local Health Network—Southern Adelaide Annual Report 2022-23
National Health Funding Body—Annual Report 2022-23
National Health Funding Pool—Annual Report 2022-23
Public Health Council, South Australian—Annual Report 2022-23

By the Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing (Hon. K.A. Hildyard)—

Recreation, Sport and Racing, Office for—Annual Report 2022-23

By the Minister for Human Services (Hon. N.F. Cook)—

Housing Trust, South Australian—Annual Report 2022-23
Human Services, Department of—Annual Report 2022-23

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

Teachers Registration Board—Annual Report 2022-23

By the Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services (Hon. J.K. Szakacs)—

Police, South Australia—Annual Report 2022-23

Ministerial Statement

NORTHERN GAWLER CRATON

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:01): I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The mineral resources industry is a substantial contributor to the success of the South Australian economy. In fact, today the ABS released new data showing that mining contributed around 35 per cent of South Australia's total capital expenditure in the September 2023 quarter. In the September quarter, the sector contributed \$963 million. In current

price terms, this is the highest South Australian quarterly mining capital expenditure recorded by the ABS since 1989. It is important we continue to support the sector, and we do that in a number of ways, including providing contemporary precompetitive data.

Today is Discovery Day, which is an annual technical conference established in 2016 bringing together the Geological Survey of South Australia's expert team and its collaboration partners with industry. It is an opportunity to engage with industry and scientific peers to highlight the work of our Geological Survey, including discoveries, findings and opportunities for the future.

Today, at the conference, our Geological Survey will announce a second drilling campaign as part of the MinEx CRC national drilling initiative in the northern Gawler Craton area. The National Drilling Initiative (NDI) is a collaboration between the commonwealth and state to implement geoscience programs that use innovative techniques to gather new scientific data and information about the potential mineral, energy and groundwater resources concealed beneath the surface. This is an opportunity to increase exploration investment, potentially leading to new mineral discoveries in our state.

The first drilling campaign of the NDI—the Delamerian drilling campaign—was completed earlier this year. Twenty-three drillholes were completed, and data was analysed by our experts prior to being published and made freely available to industry. This led to the release of tenement acreage to the exploration industry through a competitive bid process in mid-2023, with successful applicants now primed to explore areas previously left unexplored for decades.

The second drilling program is seeking the same outcomes to deliver new, timely and previously missing data from our state's geological database to drive new exploration programs and mineral discoveries. The northern Gawler Craton area is an underexplored terrain with geological similarities to highly prospective mineral provinces, including:

- the Olympic Copper-Gold Province, which hosts Olympic Dam, Carrapateena and Prominent Hill mines; and
- parts of Northern Australia that host world-class mines, such as Ernest Henry and Mount Isa.

The Geological Survey and MinEX CRC will undertake pre-competitive geoscience to understand the fundamental geology of the area that will inform new exploration ideas, models and programs in this frontier region.

All the data gathered by the Geological Survey will feed into the South Australian Resources Information Gateway (SARIG), which is the number one ranked geological database in the world as declared by the pre-eminent Annual Survey of Mining Companies conducted by the Fraser Institute. To further our lead in this space, the Geological Survey will also announce today the release of its new critical mineral dashboards, which are interactive maps enabling exploration and mining companies to access and interact with our extensive geological database in new and easier ways.

We cannot understate the value of our Geological Survey and its pre-competitive data programs in stimulating industry activity and enhancing exploration activity in this state. If we have not achieved it already, we are well on the way to having the best Geological Survey in the country, if not the world.

Parliamentary Committees

PUBLISHING COMMITTEE

Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (14:07): I bring up the first report of the committee for 2023.

Report received and ordered to be published.

The SPEAKER: Before I call questions without notice, I observe that it is the birthday of the member for King.

*Question Time***DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:08): Happy birthday to the member for King on St Andrew's Day—the patron saint of Scotland, of course. My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier support a royal commission into domestic and family violence?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:08): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. As I have enunciated in the media over the course of the last few days—I think I first said it on the weekend and then earlier this morning on ABC radio and, more recently, at a press conference we have just had—the government is keen to work with this sector that represents the interests in and around domestic violence and other key agencies to establish a path forward about how we can best respond to the extraordinary incidents that we saw in recent weeks.

We have a meeting, a round table, with the sector on 13 December along with the minister responsible for issues associated with domestic violence. We will have that meeting on 13 December and thoughtfully go through a range of options, and naturally there will be a discussion around a royal commission.

As a government, making a judgement around a royal commission is something that we want to think through carefully and make sure it's done properly. We can't make a judgement of this significance in haste, but we don't rule it out either. But we certainly want to be satisfied that if there was going to be a royal commission that it would serve a purpose that can't otherwise be met without a royal commission and the delay that that would necessarily bring.

We are conscious also of the fact that there have been other inquiries that have occurred around the country in regard to domestic violence, including a royal commission in Victoria that came up with over 200 recommendations in their own right. In Queensland there wasn't a royal commission, but there was a substantial task force that was undertaken that provides a number of recommendations that we can look at as well. So these are various things we will consider.

Notwithstanding all of those possibilities that arise out of those recommendations, there has been a significant suite of actions that this government has already taken and continues to take to respond to the concern of domestic violence.

Domestic violence as a challenge within our community did not start in the last fortnight. This has been here for all too long, and as the alternate government we thoughtfully developed a suite of actions, a number of policies, to confront domestic violence that we are progressively rolling out.

If I was to highlight one, which I know is very close to the minister's heart and one she has been working on rather assiduously over the course of at least the last 12 months, it is regarding the introduction of nation-leading legislation with respect to coercive control. Coercive control is an insidious form of domestic violence that has otherwise not been outlawed. We see there being the capacity for South Australia to yet again provide a position of leadership in substantial progressive legislative reform through the establishment of the criminalisation of coercive control.

There is a discussion paper that is out in the public at the moment. We always made clear that it was our intention to introduce legislation in the first half of next year. We are on track to realise this. It being the first legislation of its type in the country, it does mean that it takes time because it means we can't pick up an existing bill and just replicate it here in South Australia.

So it has to be done with the active engagement with the sector and active engagement with law enforcement agencies because we don't want to criminalise an act without the law being able to be enforced. We thank SAPOL and other agencies for engaging in that process, and we look forward to that legislation being introduced at the beginning of next year on top of the other measures that I have run out of time to talk about.

COST OF LIVING

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:12): My question is again to the Premier. What cost-of-living measures is the government working on for the South Australian community? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: ABS data released this month showed that South Australia's real household disposable income per capita fell 6.8 per cent in the 2022-23 financial year, the worst in the nation. The Premier suggested on ABC radio this morning that the government had already started preparing cost-of-living relief measures for South Australians in the 2024-25 state budget.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:13): I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. There is a cost-of-living crisis that exists throughout most Western economies at the moment. Australia is no exception and South Australia is certainly no exception within that. There are a number of measures that the government has already delivered upon to try to provide relief to as many South Australian families as possible.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I mentioned previously the record investment in energy bill relief that has eclipsed any effort that has preceded it. At least—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta, order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —153,000 households and 45,000 small businesses across the state have been the beneficiaries of that relief. Of course, the government has also delivered reduced CTP premiums for South Australian road users throughout the course of this year. We were able to keep the increase in SA Water fees and charges below the rate of inflation. Similarly, with other fees and charges, we have increased them in such a way that is below the rate of inflation. When it comes to taxation policy, which informs people's capacity to spend on other elements in their life, this government has done something that is very, very distinct from the practice of the former Liberal government, as we haven't increased fees and charges, we haven't concocted—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta is warned. Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —brand-new taxes out of thin air after promising to do the opposite.

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: A very different—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta, order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I note the—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta is warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I note that the member for Morialta interjects suggesting that things are going badly. I would simply make this point that this government is very conscious of the fact that there are people in our community who are hurting at the moment as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. But we are also very grateful for the fact that the South Australian economy is better placed than any other in the nation at the moment to be able to withstand those pressures.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: There are a range of metrics that are independently assessed—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Schubert is warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —and released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that point to the strength of the performance of the South Australian economy, which again is very, very different to what we saw from the government prior. The other thing I will mention about the cost of living is that—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta is on two warnings.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: In respect of the cost of living, it isn't just about putting downward pressure on prices and fees. It's also incomes that matter to people. On this side of the house we have a very firm view that if we can support workers by growing their incomes, that matters. We know again this is very distinct from those opposite.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Even the modest proposition—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Colton! Member for Newland!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —to make Easter Sunday a public holiday—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Wright!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —so that people working throughout the course of Easter—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Florey is warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —can access the public holiday penalty rates. What do those opposite propose?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Colton!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: What do those opposite propose when we want to make Easter Sunday a public holiday?

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: They said, 'No, no, no, we have to stop Easter Saturday from being a public holiday.'

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Elder!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: On this side of the house—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —we are keeping—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Colton!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —pressures low on costs and we are increasing incomes for people who deserve it most in our community who are servicing you—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —on public holidays. We stand for growing wages—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —you stand for reducing them.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morialta is on a final warning, member for Colton on a first, member for Florey joining on two, and the member for Newland warned.

AMBULANCE RAMPING

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:18): My question is to the Premier. Does the government have a priority, a plan or a policy to fix ramping? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Despite promising to fix ramping at the election, it has doubled since the last full month of the former Liberal government. Labor has now delivered the worst 17 months of ramping in our state's history.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:18): The government took to the election a comprehensive policy regarding new health investment in our state over and above existing policies.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The Leader of the Opposition invites an opportunity to compare and contrast policies. I will take that—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —opportunity because we—

The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner: Let's compare your election promises with what you've delivered.

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta! The Premier has the call.

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

The SPEAKER: Member for Morialta, you are on a final warning. If you continue to interject, I will have no option. The Premier has the call.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: It invites an opportunity to compare and contrast policies. We made very clear that Labor in government would increase the number of hospital beds substantially.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We said we would have no less than an additional 300 hospital beds.

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We have now delivered over an extra 500. We said that to service those hospital beds we would have more doctors, at least an extra 100. We also said that—

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hartley is warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We also committed to increasing the number of nurses in the hospital system.

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I am pleased to report that we now have a lot more beds, we have a lot more nurses, we have a lot more doctors, and we also have a lot more ambulance officers.

Mr Cowdrey interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Colton!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: What we need to contemplate, if we are having a—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morialta is testing the patience of the house.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: He is treating this with complete contempt. One has to reasonably contemplate, on any objective analysis, about what the world would look like if we didn't have all those extra hospital beds, if we didn't have all those extra nurses, if we didn't have all those extra doctors.

The Hon. V.A. Tarzia interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hartley!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: It would be a situation that would be demonstrably worse. I am pleased to report to the house that the rollout of that plan and that policy continues. We have seen substantial movement in regard to additional beds coming online but we know that there are yet more due to come online throughout the course of next year. We still have more paramedics, nurses and doctors to be employed throughout the course of 2024.

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: And each and every time—

Mr Cowdrey interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Colton!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —that we roll out those additional resources, we know that they are able to help people who would otherwise not have been helped if those resources were spent on something like a basketball stadium, for instance.

Ms Pratt interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Frome!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: It does take time—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Schubert is warned for a final time. Member for Hartley joining on a final warning, and I see the member for Frome also interjecting.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: It does take time for a lot of those additional resources to be rolled out, but we are glad to see them progressively occurring and we know that will ramp up again throughout the course of next year. Throughout the majority of calendar year 2023, we have seen an improvement on ramping data month on month in comparison with last year. Notwithstanding—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Schubert is on a final warning; member for Schubert, you are warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Notwithstanding the fact that we know that there is still lots of work to be done, there have been signs of progress, and we are not resting on our laurels for a moment. The other demonstration of improvement goes directly to the ambulance-on-time performance. We are pleased with the progress there. It has been moving at pace. In fact, I received a piece of correspondence just today from the Ambulance Employees Association, and in that letter—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: They laughed at them for four years and they continue to laugh at them now, but we didn't. In that letter, I was very grateful to hear about the fact there are literally people who are alive today as a result of ambulances rolling up on time rather than was the case under the former government.

ELECTIVE SURGERY

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:22): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. How many patients have had elective surgeries cancelled across our health system this month? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mrs HURN: The ABC has reported this month that more than two dozen elective procedures at the Lyell McEwin Hospital alone have been cancelled. Elizabeth Murphy from SA Health stated on Monday this week, and I quote:

We are having to make some difficult decisions for patients who need overnight beds because the volume of patients in our hospitals is just so high.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:23): I am happy to chase the exact details of the figures, but let me be very clear that when it comes to elective surgery we have reduced the overdue elective surgery list by 990 patients, compared with what we inherited. This is a list that blew out under the previous government.

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Schubert, you are on a final warning.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: This is a list that blew out under the previous government and the reference that we heard earlier from the Leader of the Opposition to figures in February 2022 was because there was a total ban on public and private elective surgery across the state.

Mrs Hurn interjecting:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: We have not put such a ban in place as had happened—

The SPEAKER: Minister, please be seated. The member for Schubert, you leave me no choice. You are on a final warning. You may have additional questions. I have done my best with you: 137A, remainder of question time.

The honourable member for Schubert having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: In February 2022, no elective surgery was operating. What did we see in March 2022, which was the actual final month of the Marshall government? Ramping went right back up as soon as the elective surgery ban was lifted. In contrast, we haven't been issuing statewide bans of elective surgery. Our hospitals do have to make difficult decisions in terms of managing the number of beds that they have available to them on a day-to-day basis to make sure that patients can be seen appropriately. We know that our hospitals are under pressure, and that is why we need additional beds in our hospital system.

As the Premier has already outlined, we have commitments for 550 extra beds across our healthcare system. The vast majority of those need to be constructed to be able to open. Many of those projects are now underway. In many of those projects we have gone a lot further than we originally committed to do at the election.

For instance, at Flinders Medical Centre, where we committed to opening 24 additional beds at the election, we are now opening over 130 as part of our redevelopment there. At the Lyell McEwin Hospital we committed that we would open 24 more beds; we have doubled that now to 48 extra beds there. At Noarlunga Hospital, where we said that we would open 24 extra beds, we are now doubling that to 48 extra beds as well.

Sir, I know you know very well that people from your electorate have to come to the city to get the vast majority of their inpatient hospital services at the moment, which is why we are committed to rebuilding the Mount Barker hospital and tripling the number of beds in that area. All of these issues, all of these investments need to happen—not only to address ramping and flow and access block and ambulance response time issues but also to make sure that we have the capacity in our hospital system—

Ms Pratt interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Frome!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —to make sure our elective surgery can continue to operate when there are periods of high demand as well. This is something that our hospital local health networks, with their boards and their management, operate on a daily basis. They try to make sure that this is avoided as much as possible, but sometimes there will have to be deferrals of that elective surgery.

You can see from the results, you can see from the stats very clearly, that the overdue elective surgery list is down by almost a thousand people compared with what we inherited when we were elected. That is very clearly because we saw those bans of elective surgery in place and an artificial effect in terms of what was going on in the hospital system, but it lengthened people's waits. It made people wait longer for what is very important surgery for many people in our community.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:27): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. How many GPs in South Australia have registered for the payroll tax amnesty? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr COWDREY: The registration period for the payroll tax amnesty for clinics with contracted GPs closes today.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:27): As the member knows, this is an area of responsibility for the Treasurer, who is unable to be here today, but I will certainly take that on notice and we will get an answer from the Treasurer in terms of those exact numbers.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

Mr COWDREY (Colton) (14:27): My question is then to the Premier. How much revenue will be collected as a result of payroll tax changes proposed for contract GPs in South Australia?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:28): I thank the member for Colton for his question, notwithstanding the fact that it grossly misrepresents any realm of facts.

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

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order. Member for Hartley! Member for Frome! I see the member for Morialta under 134.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Standing orders 98 and 97: if the Premier has a problem with a question he has an opportunity to address that through a standing order. That answer is disrespectful to the house and it is well and truly—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: —in breach of standing order 98.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! That may be, member for Morialta, but there are a number of interjections from your distant backbench. The member for Hammond and the member for Florey—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Although, I observe their seats are in front of mine. I will listen carefully.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: What I would say to the member for Colton is there are no proposed changes, nor have there been any changes, to payroll tax rules around GP services. The rules, the legislation regarding the application of payroll tax of GPs in South Australia is exactly the same today as it was during the life of the former government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morialta is warned. If I use 137A, there will not be any sensible—

The Hon. P.B. Malinauskas interjecting:

The SPEAKER: I am not certain about that. In fact, some of his points of order are reasonably useful and if I get rid of him now there will be no useful points of order and I might have to turn to someone else and that would trouble me.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

MIDWIFERY SERVICES, KAPUNDA REGION

Ms PRATT (Frome) (14:30): My question is to the Minister for Health and Wellbeing. Can the minister provide an update to the house on midwifery services for Kapunda maternity patients? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Ms PRATT: On 1 November, the minister told this house that, and I quote:

I am happy to seek further information from the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network in terms of the exact issues that are happening in the Kapunda region...

The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurana—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:30): I am happy to answer the question from the member for Frome and understand the interest from her local area. I certainly have spoken to both the chair and the chief executive of the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network about this issue.

This is a relatively small birthing service, comparatively. I understand that there are 51 projected births for Kapunda in this calendar year. What has occurred is that issues in terms of the midwifery availability at that service over a period over the next nine weeks, where people have been either seconded to other sites or on leave over that period, has led to there having to be a diversion in place to Gawler.

What the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network has done is work very closely with the doctor involved, who provides services at Kapunda Hospital, who is Dr Van Dissel and who I am sure many members, particularly on the other side, will be familiar with. Dr Van Dissel has done an incredible job providing services in that community for many, many years.

They have worked with him in order to make sure that there can be continuity of care for patients to be able to receive their services at Gawler. I understand that that has been occurring and that appropriate support has been provided for those women to be able to give birth at Gawler during that period and also to make sure that there are the antenatal services as required being provided locally in the Kapunda region as well.

This is something we are very happy as the local member raises—if she would like a briefing on this matter I am happy to organise that from the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network and understand her interest in it. It does give me the opportunity to raise an issue, which I noticed from *Hansard* yesterday, when the member for Frome raised about birthing services, where she made a comment that the Waikerie services had closed in the past year and Kangaroo Island. It does give me the opportunity to correct that.

Ms Pratt: Five towns in 12 months and counting.

The SPEAKER: Member for Frome, order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: It was actually the Liberal Party that closed the Waikerie birthing services during the term of the previous government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: It is incredible—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Frome! The member for Frome is warned.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —to hear not only when the Waikerie birthing services were closed—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —by the Marshall Liberal government, but now we hear the first comments ever from the member for Chaffey about it, who made no comments about it when it closed whatsoever.

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

The SPEAKER: Minister, please be seated. There is a point of order from the member for Morialta, which I will hear under 134.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: The simplest way to go is standing order 98.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is some merit to the matter that has been raised with me by the member for Morialta. I bring the minister to the question.

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: If there had been comments along those lines, I certainly wasn't made aware. I am happy to correct that from the member for Frome yesterday and also to inform

her, in relation to Kangaroo Island services, that this government worked incredibly hard with the member for Mawson—

Ms Pratt: Four months, they were out of service—four months.

The SPEAKER: Member for Frome, you are on a final warning! Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —to bring those services back—

Ms Pratt: Whyalla, still unresolved.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: —and to deliver those services, very importantly, to Kangaroo Island.

Ms Pratt: All recommendations accepted but still no workforce.

The SPEAKER: Minister, be seated. Member for Frome, you just continue to interject. It is constant. Despite my assistance to you by way of warning, you are going to have to depart under 137A for the remainder of question time.

The honourable member for Frome having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. C.J. PICTON: We were on Kangaroo Island recently through country cabinet, being able to meet families who had their babies delivered on Kangaroo Island thanks to the extra investments, the extra work that had been done to make sure that those birthing services could be delivered, another very small service, but particularly critical on Kangaroo Island because of the difficulty in terms of being able to access the mainland through limited ferry or flight services.

I thank the member for Mawson and his community for their strong work on this issue, and that is an excellent example of the hard work and the very difficult work that it took to get those birthing services back up and operating.

MIGRATION POLICY

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:34): My question is to the Premier. Now that the Premier is aware of changes to South Australia's state-nominated visa allocation, what action is he taking? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr WHETSTONE: In the middle of a workforce and skills shortage crisis, the Albanese Labor government has slashed South Australia's 2023-24 state-nominated visa allocations. The skilled nominated visa allocation has reduced from 3,000 in 2022-23 to 1,100, and the skilled work regional visa allocation was reduced from 5,800 in 2022-23 to just 1,200 in 2023-24.

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:35): The member is correct in his recitation of the facts of what the Albanese government are proposing to do for migration over the next little while. I appreciate that they are responding in some ways to the challenge of housing and therefore the capacity for people to be welcomed into our country; however, this government is not of the same mind.

We regard having more skilled workers here as being an essential part of developing the workforce and have made representation to the federal government on that basis. There will be a meeting of migration ministers in Melbourne in a few weeks' time at which I will be reiterating our points and also some of the points that were raised yesterday in question time by the member.

The SPEAKER: The member for King, who has been waiting patiently.

BUSINESS INVESTMENT

Mrs PEARCE (King) (14:36): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and thank you to all who provided birthday wishes today. My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house on business investment levels in South Australia?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:36): I thank the member for King for her question on her birthday. Her asking this question, I know, is all her birthday dreams and wishes coming true.

The member for King does ask an important question because yet again today we have seen the Australian Bureau of Statistics release yet more figures that demonstrate just how well the South Australian economy is performing. Today, they released their quarterly figures for private new capital expenditure, and that showed that annual private new capital expenditure is now at a record high in South Australia of \$10.2 billion. That is in excess of 10 per cent higher on where it was at the time of the election of this government.

This record level of new private capital expenditure meant there was growth of 13.6 per cent, which has outpaced the national average currently of 10.7 per cent. Business investment in buildings in particular has been growing at a great clip. On its own, this statistic might not amount to too much, but it doesn't exist on its own. It exists in conjunction with basically every recent report coming out from the ABS, where it weighs up the performances of states around the country, showing that South Australia is not just outperforming the rest of the country; it is actually outperforming almost every other jurisdiction in the country. We have the second lowest unemployment rate in the mainland, we have the highest gross state product growth in the state—

Mr Teague: Address the issues you went to the election on.

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen is warned.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: We are outperforming the country in growth, we are outperforming the country in business investment, we are outperforming the country in respect of the labour market, and each of those things matter because they are a reflection of South Australians' standard of living. We cannot expect South Australia's position around wages policy, which is something that this government cares about deeply, to be improving unless the state's economy is performing well. It is something that we were committed to at the election. Of course, we are doing that in an environment where we are operating with a commitment to try to balance the budget as best we possibly can, and it is underpinned—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —by a robust policy in regard to investing in economic growth in the areas that we know will deliver for people in the long term. We are absolutely committed to a long-term economic trajectory to bring new wealth to our state but, more than that, to make sure that that new wealth we are able to attract—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —gets dispersed amongst as many people as possible and that, in that period of growth, we do not leave behind generations or swathes of people who are not able to participate in the labour market because we haven't invested in their skills and in their education.

Regardless of whether you grew up in regional South Australia, outer suburban Adelaide or closer to the city, we are investing in technical colleges and we have a lot more public investment in TAFE, three-year-old preschool and greater access to universities, particular from lower SES communities, so they can get the skills to be able to participate in an economy that is growing, becoming increasingly diverse but also focused on industries of tomorrow, industries into the future, particularly around the decarbonisation opportunity.

We have a serious and comprehensive economic plan not just for the sake of the economy itself but for the sake of the welfare of our people in this state, each and every one of them, regardless of their background or where they come from.

REGIONAL SKILLS SHORTAGES

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (14:40): My question is to the Premier. What action will the Premier take to address the skills shortages across regional South Australia? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr WHETSTONE: The latest Housing Industry Association Trades Report shows that regional South Australia has the highest cost of trade and the second highest trade shortage in the nation. Meanwhile, regulations implemented by unions for farm labour have caused fruit and vegetable costs to skyrocket.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:41): The member for Chaffey is not missing an opportunity to yet again bash the only institution we have in this country that is focused on wages growth rather than wages suppression. As I made clear in an earlier answer, if you are serious about the cost of living, if you are serious about wanting to see people's positions in the economy improve, then you have to be serious about income and wages growth.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: You have to be serious about that. I would suggest to those opposite—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen is warned.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I would suggest to the members of the Liberal Party that it is now time that they get with the program—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for Chaffey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —that decades of wages suppression has actually undermined people's standard of living rather than enhancing it.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Chaffey!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: What we see on this side of the house is a commitment to growing the state's economy in conjunction with growing skills so we grow productivity and we grow people's wages, and on this side of the house, we acknowledge the legitimate role that the trade union movement has to play in that regard, whether—

Members interjecting:

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

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: In respect to skills in regional communities, yes, there is a skills shortage in regional communities that is more acute than what we see in metropolitan Adelaide, but if you want to do something about skilled labour, then you know what you are going to invest in? You are going to invest in skills, education and training. Rather than actually cutting TAFE—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: —what you need to do is invest in TAFE.

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

The SPEAKER: Premier, there is a point of order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Florey, you are warned for a final time. It is a topic that does seem to excite you.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Heysen is joining that list. The member for Morialta under 134.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Sir, the Premier is in breach of standing order 98.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Sir, I have a further point of order.

The SPEAKER: Very well, member for West Torrens.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Standing order 137: there is a wall of noise from members opposite.

The SPEAKER: Yes.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: They ask a question, and then they scream at the Premier while he is giving his answer.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

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

The SPEAKER: Very well, member for Morialta.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: That is a bogus point of order from somebody who is one of the people who is contributing to the noise—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: —not least the Premier, shouting into the microphone—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: —as any review of *Hansard* will demonstrate.

The SPEAKER: Very well. The member for West Torrens on the duelling points of order.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: I ask that you retract that. I have not interjected. Retract it.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Sir, I withdraw my scurrilous accusation against the Grandfather of the House.

The SPEAKER: There are points of order on points of order on points of order, and then of course also an invitation to withdraw and apologise. I think the hard truth is, on the final day, there are interjections on both sides with great vigour and some interest. We will get to the conclusion of question time in 25 minutes, hopefully without the exercise again of 137A but, if necessary, then of course.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: As I was saying—

The Hon. D.G. Pisoni interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Unley! Premier, please be seated. Member for Unley, you will have to go—137A.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Yes, the whole house was warned, in fact only seconds before.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Ten minutes—he doesn't want to miss the last day.

The honourable member for Unley having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Rest assured, if there is anyone we want back in this house, it's the member for Unley. The point that I was making is that if you are serious about skills shortages in regions—

Mr Whetstone interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Chaffey! The question has been asked. Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Elder, joining the list. The Premier has the call. Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: If you want to address—

The Hon. J.K. Szakacs interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Cheltenham, if there is a point of order, then it ought be made, but otherwise the Premier has the call. Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: What I would say to the member for Chaffey—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The exchange between the member for Chaffey and the member for Cheltenham will cease so that the house can hear the Premier.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: If the member for Chaffey is concerned about skills shortages in regional South Australia, he will be very grateful—

The Hon. J.K. Szakacs interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Cheltenham, you are warned. Order!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: No, there is only one way to resolve this. Member for Cheltenham—137A for the remainder of question time—joined by the member for Chaffey, who continues to interject whilst I seek to restore order, also for the remainder of question time. Both of you, now would be convenient.

The honourable members for Cheltenham and Chaffey having withdrawn from the chamber:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I was reassuring the member for Chaffey that this government is investing in skills shortages by investing in skills and training, particularly in the areas of need that are most acute, including in regional South Australia.

One of the biggest concerns that the state government has had over the course of the last 12 months in particular is in regard to the housing shortage that we have in South Australia. To address the housing shortage, you need more supply. If you want more supply, you need to have the trades to be able to build those homes. There are a range of programs that we have invested in as a state government in conjunction with the HIA, the MBA and the CITB, to invest in TAFE, to invest in campaigns, to encourage as many people as possible to take up those skills.

In regard to migration policy, we believe that has a role to play as well. The Deputy Premier announced earlier that we are willing to stand up to the commonwealth in advocating for a position for South Australia, notwithstanding that the federal government is of the same political persuasion as us. There is nothing we are not willing to do to try to get more supply of the skills that we need to drive the growth and the supply we need in the economy.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN PLAN

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (14:48): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Can the Deputy Premier update the house on the government's commitment towards the delivery of the Murray-Darling Basin 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) (14:48): I am very pleased to talk again about the Murray-Darling Basin Plan because at last we have seen some significant progress in its delivery through the passage in the federal parliament of a piece of legislation that modifies the plan. It does it in the following ways—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE: First of all, it legitimately accepts that, having had nine-odd years of almost complete inactivity, we are not going to reach the plan in time. For example, of 450 gigalitres—

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hammond!

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE: —of water for the environment that was part of the deal for South Australia to sign up, only 20-odd gigalitres have been delivered. It is due by June next year. Clearly, that is not going to be possible. Equally, some infrastructure projects that were agreed to—although South Australia of course has completed ours; interstate has not—were due to be completed and are not going to be able to be done in time by the end of this year, and therefore there is an extension proposed for those as well.

That is important, but what is really important is a new approach to being able to get that 450 gigalitres. To date it has only been able to be done through efficiency projects and, while I support the efficiency projects and hope that the commonwealth will soon open up another round of them, it has been demonstrated for the last 10 years that, if you're trying to get 450 gigalitres for efficiency projects, and you get about 20 gigalitres, probably that is not the tool that's going to get you to where you need to go, even if you add another three years to the time that we have to do it.

So what they have done is they have included a capacity to lease back, which is where the irrigator continues to own the water, but leases the water to the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. It remains to be seen how well that will be used. I suspect that the challenge with that is that at exactly the moment when the Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder needs the water is exactly the moment when the irrigator is going to want to have the water as well, but that policy will be developed.

There will, of course, remain efficiency projects, but importantly voluntary sale of water will be allowed. That is the one way we know is the cheapest and most effective way to get water. In fact, although there are people who are deeply concerned about voluntary buybacks, and I understand that, I will quote one person who came to realise that there is a necessity nonetheless to look at them:

I always think that while buybacks are a last resort you don't rule them out altogether. You put them in your toolkit and, if you don't need to pull them out, particularly upstream, because South Australia doesn't have any more water to give and won't be required to provide much towards the 450, but if you need to use buybacks or even threaten to use buybacks I wouldn't rule those out.

I am, of course, quoting the Leader of the Opposition. I think Labor and I are pretty close on that.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE: Labor, who the Leader of the Opposition has just called in public the 'sneering elites', or the people that he is close to—it is impossible to tell. Of course, what in fact we found—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. S.E. CLOSE: —is that irrigators themselves are very keen on buybacks because they are oversubscribing a program that's already open, trying to buy water voluntarily for the environment, where they have had double the amount of interest than they expected. A recent survey showed that 63 per cent of regional Australians support the policy to reintroduce voluntary water buybacks. This is finally a way in which we may see the 450 delivered, but not through complacency, not through just assuming our friends in Canberra will do the right thing, but continuing to stand up for the river. And let's hope that the Leader of the Opposition remains close to Labor on that, and that we finally have team South Australia back.

TRURO FREIGHT ROUTE PROJECT

The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (14:51): My question is to the Premier. Have any private properties been acquired compulsorily as part of the Truro freight route project and, if so, what will happen to them?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:52): That is a good question. We will be keeping any properties that we have acquired as part of those projects. The state government is committed to and very supportive of these projects. We lost our funding partner, despite what members opposite are saying about the South Australian government. The South Australian government did not cancel any project. We have not cancelled the Truro bypass. It was not us; it was the commonwealth government that decided that those projects should not proceed. We lost our funding partner at an 80:20 per cent split. Interestingly, I asked Tony Pasin who was on radio whether an incoming Coalition government would reinstate that 80 per cent funding. He said, 'Oh, oh, um, um, oh, oh, um, um.'

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: When I had a look at the transcript, that wasn't what—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! Member for West Torrens, there is a point of order from the member for Morialta under 134.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Standing order 98: despite the becoming gravitas of the minister's answer so far, the question was actually about private properties, and seeking information. It wasn't provocative and not making accusations about the state government as suggested by the minister. He is debating.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! That may be. Speakers, of course, consistently have allowed some context. It may be that this is beyond context; I will listen carefully.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: So, yes, we believe these projects are important, and the work that we have done—if we have acquired private properties—is because ultimately the planning stages of those works are important and we believe that they should still proceed. Unfortunately, we have lost the commonwealth government as a funding partner, which is very, very disappointing, and to say that the South Australian government or that South Australian Labor had cancelled these projects is just incorrect, and I look forward to prosecuting that further as we go.

So, if we have compulsorily acquired properties, they are essential for those programs, and I think it is important that we keep those properties in government hands because ultimately one day it is important that the Truro bypass be built. We think it is an important project. We think it is a project that is very, very timely, as is the Mount Barker duplication of the interchange, sir.

The SPEAKER: Indeed.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: The Speaker quite kindly took me on a tour of what was a—

Mr Teague: What about River Road?

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Yes, River Road is to be upgraded as well. Thank you very much, that's right, we are upgrading River Road.

Mr Teague: \$40 million? \$2 million? How much?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Members interjecting:

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: Attorney-General; act like the Attorney-General; not really the Attorney-General; having to take the files around to Vickie's house first: 'Can I sign this, please?'

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! There is a point of order, which I am bound to hear under 134.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The house is required to turn under 134—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The exchange between the member for Heysen and the member for West Torrens is unhelpful and contrary to the standing orders.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Sir, the member for West Torrens carries himself as a minister. Standing order 98 puts obligations on a minister in the way that they conduct themselves, and he is completely in breach of it.

Mr Teague interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Heysen!

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: If the shadow attorney-general wants to move a point of order, or do anything, he is welcome to. Here are the numbers, let's go, let's see how they turn out.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Torrens, the house does not permit quarrels of a sort of medieval type that you might be alluding to.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Morialta quite rightly is seeking the call under 134, which will be heard immediately.

The Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER: Sir, I raised a point of order under standing order 98 about which I await your advice. The member for West Torrens declined to offer you that opportunity, instead starting shouting again undermining you and the house.

The SPEAKER: There is a certain frisson and energy in the room. It could well be the last day. Minister, I bring you to the question.

The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS: So if we have acquired properties, for the Mount Barker project, the Verdun project or the project at Truro, we will be keeping those properties because we believe those projects have value. Ultimately those projects will be developed one day. It is important that we do work on the Verdun interchange, it is important that we do work on the Mount Barker interchange and it is very, very important that we do work on the Truro bypass.

Unfortunately for us the Truro bypass was underdeveloped. There was only a single lane as the bypass, and, interestingly, as soon as there was a change of commonwealth government those members who were part of only funding a single lane immediately started calling for a duplication of

that bypass. So it is important that any projects where we have seen acquisition of land in projects that are a priority for the South Australian government that we should keep those projects, we should keep that land.

Now ultimately what we do do, though, is if there are businesses that are impacted through compulsory acquisition, because we have acquired the land and there may be tenants, we are happy to enter into long-term arrangements with those tenants to give them continuity of work because it is important we keep those businesses working. We did that on the north-south corridor, we do that along other pieces of infrastructure where we compulsorily acquire property, and it is important that we make sure that we keep that focus there because one day we will go back to the Truro bypass and when we do go back to the Truro bypass ultimately to reacquire that land will obviously increase in costs. So it is prudent for the taxpayer that we keep that property within government control.

MOBILE PHONE TOWERS, LIMESTONE COAST

Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:58): My question is to the Premier. Has the state government contacted the federal government seeking funding support for 27 new mobile phone towers in the MacKillop electorate? With your permission, Mr Speaker, and the leave of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

Mr McBRIDE: The Premier has announced that the state government will commit \$5.5 million towards the Telstra South-East, South Australian project to enable the delivery of 27 new mobile base stations in the Limestone Coast. This funding commitment, whilst welcome, will still require federal investment for the proposal to be realised.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:58): I thank the member for MacKillop for his question because I know that this is something that has been a bit of a project of passion for him because it matters so much to his constituents. It is hard to believe that in one of the fastest growing regions of our state, home to our second largest city, that you don't have to travel very far before your mobile phone starts dropping out in, I've got to say, a pretty unacceptable way. It is something that I am sure all members of the house have experienced if they have had the chance to travel to the Limestone Coast, which I have a fair bit.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: The members of the Liberal Party interject, sir.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That is fine—

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hammond!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: That is their prerogative. I suspect there might be some places in the electorate of Hammond where they would wish they had an MP who has been able to deliver in a way that the member for MacKillop has been able to.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: These 27 towers come at an approximate cost of about \$1 million a pop, so the total package is \$27.7 million. As the member for MacKillop outlined, this is a very substantial contribution from the state government to the tune of \$5½ million. That's a big one considering what the past practice has been in South Australia regarding blackspot funding. This will be a really big step in the right direction if we can land the commonwealth government's funding.

The short answer to your question is, yes, we have been advocating to the federal government, particularly the federal communications minister, Michelle Rowland, that the federal government pick up their proportion of the deal because that would mean that we've got a contribution from industry, state government and local government, which I shouldn't neglect to

mention. A number of councils, in fact almost all councils in the Limestone Coast, have contributed with the exception of one, which we're still working on. Now we just need the federal government to do their bit.

This is a major investment in communication. It isn't just about the convenience of people who have access to mobile phones in the South-East; it's also an economic measure, which I don't need to tell the member for MacKillop about. In terms of the productivity of both agricultural assets and the safety of workers in the forestry industry, almost every element of the economy in the Limestone Coast will be advantaged in terms of safety and productivity if we are able to get that commonwealth contribution. We sincerely hope that that occurs sooner rather than later so that we can get on with this task.

When we announced this massive investment in the South-East on the back of the country cabinet, with the member for MacKillop, we were overwhelmed by the positive response that we received, so now we just have to get on and deliver it. The only other party that should be acknowledged, which I haven't mentioned thus far, is Telstra. This was a Telstra initiative in conjunction with the state and local governments. It shows what can be achieved when we work collaboratively. The member for MacKillop and, I should also mention, the member for Mount Gambier were very quick to pick up the phone to me and my cabinet colleagues to see to this investment being realised, and we were very happy to oblige.

We mentioned earlier the strong economic performance of the state outpacing the rest of the nation; there are many parts of the South-East that are outpacing the rest of the state. They have delivered for the state. We've got to choose to invest in them. We thank the member for MacKillop for his cooperation, and we will continue to advocate to the commonwealth until we get the result that I know we all want.

MOBILE PHONE TOWERS

Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (15:02): Fortuitously, Mr Speaker, I have a supplementary. Are there any plans to make funding available for other parts of the state to fix their blackspots?

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (15:02): I thank the member for Narungga for his question, another example of an Independent looking out for their community's interest, releasing themselves from the burden of suppression, another member who is demonstrating his capacity to deliver while leaving the pretenders who care about regional South Australia. We are always looking for an opportunity, sir. The member for—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the call.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Narungga is entitled to his answer, and he will get it. The Premier has the call.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: I will draw the member for Narungga's attention to the fact that, in regard to the Limestone Coast mobile phone tower proposition, what we were able to achieve is the coalescence of state government working with local government in conjunction with industry. At least to the best of my knowledge, I haven't been in receipt of a proposition from councils in and around Yorke Peninsula to do the same thing. Telstra also worked with—I am trying to remember if it's 11; I can't remember the exact number—a number of seven councils and the Limestone Coast to bring this together.

Should the state government be in receipt of such a proposition with respect to Yorke Peninsula and other districts of the Copper Coast or other parts of the member for Narungga's electorate, then that would be something we would actively consider. What has made this project stack up with respect to the Limestone Coast is that collaboration between industry, namely Telstra, local government and state government and, hopefully, the federal government.

We as a state government have appreciated some of the advocacy from the member for Narungga and other policy areas of his concern that we have been able to get some movement on.

We would love to add this to the list should such a proposition be put to us in the same way we saw come from local government and industry within Telstra. Notwithstanding that, the focus, and the priority of the government as it stands with respect to blackspot funding, is addressing the longstanding issues in the South-East.

FRANKFURT TRADE OFFICE

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (15:05): My question is to the Minister for Trade and Investment. Can the minister please update the house on the operations of the Department for Trade and Investment's European office located in Frankfurt, Germany.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Florey! The minister has the call.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (15:05): I thank the member for Elder for her question. There has been a lot of interest and a little bit of debate about the Frankfurt office over the last few days.

It is worth just reminding ourselves that on 9 May 2023 the Premier announced the establishment of our office in Frankfurt; on 15 June, the budget provided for two new offices, in Frankfurt and Washington, and the special envoy to Singapore and South-East Asia; and on 16 October the Frankfurt office became operational.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: That is in the EU, thank you, member for West Torrens. With the addition of those positions, the largest international footprint in the state's history, so that's good news, isn't it? Despite all the geopolitical uncertainty, I am confident that we will see a growth in trade that surpasses even these record export figures that we have had since we have had our term in government.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, member for Flinders!

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I will get to that. The new Frankfurt trade office is manned by Ms Mishra, who is going to promote the state's industries and exports. Basically, she is an experienced trade and investment manager who has most recently worked for the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Berlin. She can provide us with many insights and emerging market opportunities.

It is interesting to note that exports to Germany grew significantly in the last year, up by 37 per cent. We want to see that continue. Since starting 45 days ago, Ms Mishra has met with Invest SA, the Trade team, the Agent General's Office, providing a smooth transition from all the support that they have been given. She has supported the South Australian delegation of companies to Medica, which is the world's largest medical business to business trade fair—one of the world's largest—which was hosted in Dusseldorf, Germany, earlier this month on 13 to 16 November. The delegation of South Australian companies included—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: —Maxim, Tekcyte, Plasma Shield, Rehab Swift and Re-time. In collaboration with Invest SA's Health team, she helped those South Australian companies in the lead-up to the event, travelling with the delegation to Dusseldorf to provide on-ground support—exactly what we would expect a manager in these offices to do.

She has also been supporting (and I love this) Germany's Honorary Consul to the state, the former Liberal member for Hindmarsh, Mr Matt Williams—you would all know him—for his upcoming trip to Germany in December. She is working closely with Austrade and the Australian Embassy for collaboration with German companies in the hydrogen sector.

What we see here is the operation of a successful trade office—couldn't get a better start. We are very proud of her. We think this is a good thing. It is especially important when you make speeches to be up to date with the latest information.

Mr Pederick interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hammond, order!

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: I am happy to acknowledge the very fine speech made by the member opposite.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: But let me give you another bit of information. One other office we opened was the office in Washington DC and that will be filled imminently.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Member for Hammond!

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: There was quite a public campaign in *The Advertiser*. On 8 June there was an article in *The Advertiser*. 'Former premier Steven Marshall has US trade envoy role dangled before him'. It was a very public job application, which has been denied.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Grievance Debate

MALINAUSKAS LABOR GOVERNMENT

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (15:09): I rise today to ask the house a simple question—

Mr Brown: Where's Marshall?

The SPEAKER: Member for Florey!

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: —are South Australians—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Mr Speaker, I will start again.

The SPEAKER: Very well. You have the call.

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: I rise today to ask this house a very simple question: are South Australians better off today than they were at the 2022 state election? The answer is: not even close. The state is run by a bunch of charlatans and angry, arrogant, chortling individuals who mock their roles, who mock their communities, who take South Australians for granted, and who sneer with their elite inner-city latte-sipping inappropriate conduct at every possible opportunity.

These people are a bunch of inner-city elites. They are the empresses and emperors of woke and they have lost touch with society. They sneer and they chuckle and they drip with the most repulsive arrogance that I have ever seen. If only the South Australian people could actually see the member for Mawson and how he behaves; how the Minister for Transport, Tom Koutsantonis, behaves; how the Treasurer behaves. If only they could see the sneering elitism, the disrespect that they show their constituents.

I wonder how the good folks of Kangaroo Island would feel if they could see the vile way the member for Mawson treats our parliament, our seat of democracy right now.

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

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: And there it is for all to see. This state is far worse off under this government 18 or so months into office. They are far worse off from a social point of view, they are far worse off from an environmental point of view, but more than anything else they are far worse off economically. After 13 individual interest rate rises driven by the inflationary spending of those across the aisle, with their mates in Canberra contributing to it, this has driven inflation. With every single interest rate rise that the members' opposite constituents and our constituents experience, they only have one party to blame: the Australian Labor Party and the South Australian Labor Party.

They spend Australians' and South Australians' money with arrogance. They head overseas, they go to Mexico, they pursue volleyball competitions, they spend their money and they keep their snouts deeply in the trough. It is repulsive. I wonder what the residents of Warradale would think of their behaviour, the residents of Aberfoyle Park, the residents of Golden Grove, the residents of Prospect, the residents of St Marys, the residents of suburbs and towns across our state if they could see what we see day in and day out: the waste, the arrogance and the repulsive behaviour of many of those others. As individuals, many of them are quite pleasant people but, as a collective, they bring disrepute into this parliament and this state.

South Australians now must find around \$20,000 more to pay their bills, to get by, to get through day-to-day life than when those opposite came to power in March 2022—\$20,000. Wages have not gone up by \$20,000. People's savings, if they had \$20,000, have now completely diminished. People in this state do not only worry about the monthly mortgage payments coming out of their bank accounts, if they are lucky enough to own a home and have a mortgage; they are fearful of opening their energy bills as well, they are fearful of filling up their car with fuel because of the price of it, and they are fearful of going to the supermarket.

The big question that I am posing to this house and to South Australians is: with the arrogant mob opposite, do South Australians feel better off now than they did in March 2022? I would suggest, without a skerrick of doubt, that they do not feel any better off. South Australians, because of state Labor, because of federal Labor, are far worse off. They are feeling pain day in and day out, and it is those opposite who have to look very close to home as to why that has happened.

ROADWORKS FUNDING CUTS

The Hon. D.R. CREGAN (Kavel) (15:15): Members will know that the federal government recently announced it would no longer fund the Hahndorf township improvement and access upgrade, Truro bypass works, the Woodside intersection upgrade and other important roadworks programs. Across Australia, 50 programs have been affected.

As a result, the proposed Mount Barker Freeway interchange duplication was cut. The Mount Barker interchange is failing. Within a generation, Mount Barker will be the largest city in South Australia outside Adelaide. The pressure on the interchange is plainly rising and there are many mornings and evenings where I see it myself, failing before our eyes, and where there are many unsafe traffic movements.

There are, in short, already significant safety risks. I understand the Department for Infrastructure and Transport has informed us that between 2016 and 2021, there were 31 crashes, 24 of which involved casualties at the interchange. It cannot be rightly said that this project and many others do not meet the relevant eligibility criteria for national infrastructure investment by the commonwealth.

Let me put it this way in the strongest possible terms: if a bushfire threatened Mount Barker, the intersection would be almost instantly overwhelmed by traffic. As well, the Verdun interchange works, Hahndorf township works and works for the proposed upgrade of the Onkaparinga Valley, Tiers Road and Woodside Road intersection have been cut. In my view, these are also vital projects.

The Hills has been let down by both major parties. First, GlobeLink was abandoned by the Liberals, and now the Hahndorf township project has been abandoned under Labor—you just cannot trust them. I welcome the commitment by the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport to keep state funding on the table for the interchange upgrade at Mount Barker and I appreciate the minister visiting the interchange with me to see it first hand.

I call on the opposition to also commit funding. It is a political joke to criticise the funding cuts but then not make a funding commitment of your own. You just cannot have it both ways. As an Independent, I will be equally harsh on any party that fails my community, as my community would expect me to be, whether that party is in government or opposition.

COUNTRY FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEERS

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:18): I rise to talk about volunteers in the Country Fire Service. I want to talk about a letter that was sent to a group officer. I have amended it slightly, but I quote:

Dear Group Officer,

You would be aware that I have received a report that advises you may have breached our code of conduct and therefore potentially Regulation 21 Fire and Emergency Services Regulations 2021 and have been asked to determine if an investigation should proceed.

Given the reports of your potential misconduct and your familial relationship with another CFS member being a Brigade Captain, I also believe you are unable to fulfil your responsibilities as a Group Officer until both matters are finalised.

As an alternative to a formal suspension, I am recommending to you that you apply for and take a leave of absence from the CFS until the matters associated with the suspension of your family member are finalised. The conditions of approval for a leave of absence are,

- you reply within one day from the date of this email with your request for a leave of absence. If this condition is not met, I will have no other option but to recommend suspension your membership.

During your leave of absence:

- All matters under investigation in relation to your family member remain a confidential matter and you must refrain from discussing these matters with members of the CFS or speak to any other parties about this matter.
- You are not involved directly or indirectly in any SACFS activities.
- You do not attend any SACFS premises.
- You immediately reassign any social media or any other administrator roles and responsibilities for electronic platforms with CFS branding.

Should you choose not to take the leave of absence option, I have considered the information provided and consider an investigation is warranted and will recommend suspension of your membership while this occurs, in accordance with Regulation 21 of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2021 (SA).

I recognise this may be a challenging time for you and therefore remind you of your access to our SPAM helpline on 08 8115 3950 if you require assistance.

It is signed off by the relevant regional commander. So guess what happened? What we had here was a very dedicated firefighter who after 32 years—32 years—of volunteer service chose to quit. I met this man the other day. He has left the CFS. They have lost his service forever and it is a real shame.

There is a letter from Minister Szakacs to the group captain on 19 November 2023, and this is part of that letter:

People who are subject to disciplinary processes should have their matters dealt with expeditiously and fairly. It is in the best interests of all involved, both the staff member themselves and organisation. That is why I have requested the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, Ms Erma Ranieri, to commence an examination into disciplinary regulations.

The minister goes on to talk about how he strongly supports CFS volunteers across this state.

From the CFS Volunteers Association—they first had some correspondence that said:

It is an exceedingly small minority within CFS who act inappropriately and once challenged react poorly. This is a very unhealthy attitude and is not reflective of the volunteer ethos and culture of CFS, of which so many are proud.

They obviously got some correspondence from some volunteers and then came out with some other correspondence, and part of it said that 'there is no dispute that the CFS disciplinary policy requires review'. It is a real shame that we have had to delay introducing the motion for a select committee in the upper house because neither the Labor government nor the CFS Volunteers Association, who

should be supporting the volunteers of this state, who want this select committee to go ahead, rule out that proposal. The volunteers association is working hand in glove with the government.

I just want to make a note about something that the member for Kavel, the Speaker, said recently. This is from *The Advertiser* of 23 November 2023:

Emergency vehicles can get stuck in traffic congestion on the bridge over the freeway. The local MP, Dan Cregan, said this week in the event of a bushfire the interchange would be overwhelmed 'instantly'.

My advice to the member for Kavel is to get that \$40 million that is not needed for that road safety work on that other roundabout in Mount Barker—and that is told to me by Mount Barker residents—and get that \$40 million put toward that vitally needed interchange. It is as simple as that. Talk to your mate, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport.

The SPEAKER: Two things: firstly, you can withdraw and apologise for describing me as a 'mate', which suggests there is an improper relationship between me and some other member of the chamber. It is a subjective standard. You can do it, otherwise you are going to get named. Second, that is a separate funding program—and I am making this by way of a personal explanation—and that issue has been explored with the minister and it is not possible.

Mr PEDERICK: I withdraw and apologise.

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

TORRENS TO DARLINGTON PROJECT

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (15:23): The Torrens to Darlington Project is a really exciting project and while I know there was a lot of focus on the tunnels, for my community this will make a difference in terms of the surface level traffic on South Road being significantly reduced as people from further south and further north choose to go in the tunnels. It is for this reason that the Urban Design Strategy that is currently open for consultation is really important. This is an opportunity to share ideas about what the surface level of South Road looks like. We want to hear about the connectivity between our communities, and what it looks like in terms of active transport for cyclists and pedestrians.

We want to hear from our community about trees, our commitment to an increased tree canopy along the corridor, as well as different green spaces. So, please, particularly my communities living along South Road in Clovelly Park, St Marys, Melrose Park, Edwardstown as well as Clarence Gardens, I would really love to hear from you about what you want this to look like. I would really love it if as many people as possible could take part in the Urban Design Strategy consultation process.

We are well and truly in graduation and school presentation season, which I absolutely love. I am having an absolute ball. So far, I have been to things at Hamilton, Unley High School, Mitcham Girls as well as Springbank, which have all been excellent. We are now heading to all the little primary schoolers. I cannot wait to congratulate some little year 6s, who are heading on to big high school. I just want to wish all the school leavers in my community all the very best with what comes next, as well as all the primary schoolers who are finishing up and heading to high school next year. I wish them the best of luck.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who work in this building, who deal with all of us—some of us are probably easier than others—and keep this place running. I want to give a big thanks to the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and all the house attendants. Thank you so much. I can see a couple around. Thank you to all our staff here.

Thank you very much to catering, everybody who looks after us by giving us breakfast at the bar in the morning, serving us food and keeping us well caffeinated as well as well fed, which is very important. Thank you to everyone in the dining rooms, the bar, the kitchen and the Blue Room—hi down there, or if you are up here; sometimes Karen, Nicky and Belinda come to visit. I really want to thank everybody, including protective security, too.

Hansard, thank you so much. If anybody in this building has yet to check out the Christmas decorations in both Hansard offices, you are missing out. You need to head on in. There is some incredible work that has been done by them. They are bringing the Christmas cheer to our building,

so thank you very much, Hansard, for doing that. There is even fake snow in one and a fire playing on the TV in the other. It is worth checking out.

Finally, I would like to thank my staff. My staff have been incredible. I am so lucky to have each and every one of them. To my office manager, Josh, thank you for always sending me a nice emoji whenever I finish speaking to give me that encouragement. I panic if I do not get the emoji, which just means that you are probably busy doing something else and not watching parliament, which is also fine.

Thank you so much to Alicia, who is always putting her heart into everything she does. Thank you to Sharon, who only joined our team recently but is doing an incredible job. I desperately hope you are a lot better soon. Thank you to Tara, who is my adviser for my work as the Premier's Advocate for Suicide Prevention. She is doing a cracking job and does all the regional trips with me, which she does despite having three children at home. She is happy to leave with me at six in the morning, so thank you.

Thank you also to Dawn, who does beautiful phone calls and has lovely conversations in our community. To my relief staff, Zara and Shellie, you are completely part of the team now, and also Elinor, who started helping out as well. I am so grateful to have incredible support. I never feel like things are not going well. I feel like you are all doing an exceptional job. I am so grateful to you. Your wellbeing is so important to me, and I hope I show that through the way I work. I really love you all. Thank you, and merry Christmas again to every one of you in this building.

BAROSSA HOSPITAL

Mrs HURN (Schubert) (15:28): Having pushed hard for progress on a new Barossa hospital under both the previous government as a Liberal candidate and now under this new government, I was really pleased to hear some news about progress at a recent health advisory committee meeting. Just the other week, I was at the AGM of the health advisory committee, of which I am a member, and I was advised and really delighted to hear that the final draft full business case of a Barossa hospital has now been given the tick by the board of the Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network.

The full Barossa business case in its draft form is extraordinarily comprehensive, and I would like to list off a number of the items that are in that draft full business case. We have a clinical service plan, functional design considerations, a proposed master plan and an indicative cost report. There are change management strategies, workforce strategies, a stakeholder communications plan and a financial impact statement, so indeed quite a comprehensive draft for a business case.

Of course, the previous Liberal government started this progress. We did undertake some really detailed planning work. We put money in the budget not just for this final plan but also for the purchase of the land and the start of the early works. This was actually the very first time in the history of the state that money had been put in a state budget specifically for the purposes of a brand-new Barossa hospital. I am really pleased to see that the foundation that was laid before the state election is progressing to the point where this draft business case will soon be considered by Infrastructure SA, so that it is welcome news.

The Liberal Party had intended a much quicker time frame. That has been fleshed out by the former Liberal health minister Stephen Wade on multiple occasions, but any and all progress is welcome when it comes to the delivery of this project. The next big test for the government will of course be the next state budget, because once this is through Infrastructure SA the next step is making sure that we actually put money in a budget to start building the hospital. We should really be expecting to see a funding commitment for this in next year's state budget.

As I have already mentioned, the former government had put money in the budget for the land as well as the early works, but we do need money in not just next year's state budget but the budgets beyond to get this hospital actually built for the community. With 25,000 people estimated to be moving into Concordia, which is in the Barossa Valley, over the next decade, having a brand-new Barossa hospital is not just critical for the Barossa and the surrounding region but extraordinarily important for South Australia as a whole.

Labor, we know, seems to be able to find massive pots of money—often undisclosed pots of money—for events. When I look at a project like a brand-new Barossa hospital, this is something

that is not just a critical piece of infrastructure for my community in the Barossa Valley and the region more broadly but a critical piece of the health puzzle that we need to solve to be able to get on top of the pressure we are seeing right across the health system.

Beyond the boundaries of Schubert, I think it is fair to say that health remains a number one concern for people. We saw at the election that this was what so many people in South Australia voted for. People still want to know what is going on inside and outside their hospitals at the moment, so I just thought I would reflect upon a couple of things.

Ramping I have spoken about on a number of occasions not just in this house but right across the state and with the media. SA Health data shows that people are more likely to be ramped under this Labor government than they have been at any other point in our state's history—any other point in our state's history—despite the Premier and all those opposite promising their local communities that they had the plan to fix ramping.

In fact, 60,000 hours—that is how long South Australian patients and paramedics have spent stuck outside their hospital since the election. Looking at that record, Labor are on track to deliver more ramping in two years than the former Liberal government did in four years. That is just the start, because there is a litany of errors in health, whether it is the workforce or the cochlear implant program, and we will continue to hold this government to account for the rest of this year and well into next.

BLACKWOOD CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (15:33): Tomorrow night, Santa rolls into town to the Blackwood Christmas Pageant. It will kick off at 6.30 and the streets will be lined with local kids and their families. In what will be its 59th year, the pageant is much loved by our local community. In fact, I remember as a small child the excitement of seeing Santa.

This year, the pageant, run by the Lions Club of Blackwood in conjunction with my electorate office, is bigger and better. With 55 floats, it is set to be a wonderful evening. Entries from local community groups, business, schools, emergency services, bands, as well as the inaugural Waite Women in Sport float, are set to wow the crowds. I am proud to support the Women in Sport float, with girls and women from across our sports teams proudly inspiring more girls, both young and old, to consider taking up sport, pursuing a career in sport or just enjoying the social aspects of sport.

The pageant meanders from Gulfview Road, culminating at the Waite Street Reserve and this year, in exciting news, the Christmas fair is back. Organised by the Rotary Club of Coromandel Valley, it will provide a festive environment for local kids to welcome Santa after his long journey from the North Pole, all the way down the main road of Blackwood and to the fair. A huge thank you to all of the volunteers involved in these events. Their dedication to our community is very much appreciated.

The festivities do not stop there, though, with the upcoming Christmas Tree Festival. Thanks to Pauline Dodd and the Blackwood Action Group, and all the other volunteers, Tiwu Kumangka (our new community centre) will come alive with Christmas couture trees decorated by local business community groups and individuals, which in some cases can be purchased by the public with funds going to local charities. There is also a Christmas shop with handmade gifts available—a beautiful event bringing the joy of Christmas to our community.

Directly after that, on Saturday 9 December, Christmas carols will ring out at Kingswood Oval, with kids' activities, craft stalls, roving entertainment and a Christmas market. Singers and bands from our local schools and community groups are set to sing up a Christmas storm. Hopefully, the weather will be kind this year after it did get rained on last year, and I hope everybody enjoys that event. On Christmas Eve, the Blackwood Hills Baptist Church at Hewett oval will also have carols until you cannot sing anymore. There is so much festive joy to share.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish my community a very happy and safe Christmas and a very, very safe new year. I would like to thank my office staff: Daniel, Matt, Rachel, Francis and Peter. The amount of work they get through is astounding. Their commitment to my community is very much appreciated, and I know from all the letters and gifts and cards I receive they are well renowned throughout the district.

Also, a thank you to all the volunteers who help me in my role with letterboxing and envelope stuffing, including Judy and even my mum, Millie, who spend hours stuffing birthday cards and letters into envelopes; and to our volunteer JPs, who give our office staff some reprieve—Doug, Mike, Bevan and Geoff—we really appreciate your help.

Finally, I would like to thank my son, Finn, and my family for the understanding of the work I am doing, their support and love, without which I would not be able to live. Merry Christmas to all here in parliament. Hopefully we can end the parliamentary year on a positive note and I hope everybody stays safe over the break.

Parliamentary Procedure

SITTINGS AND BUSINESS

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (15:37): I move:

That the house at its rising adjourn until Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 11am.

Motion carried.

Motions

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY COMMISSIONER'S INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF HARASSMENT IN THE PARLIAMENT WORKPLACE

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (15:38): By leave, I move:

That upon the completion by the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the House of Assembly of the third progress report on the Equal Opportunity Commission Review of Harassment in the South Australian Parliament Workplace, the report be deemed to be laid upon the table of the House of Assembly, and the Speaker is hereby authorised to distribute the report.

Motion carried.

Bills

VETERINARY SERVICES BILL

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading (resumed on motion).

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:38): I rise to make a few concluding remarks in regard to the Veterinary Services Bill 2023. I do take my hat off to the community of veterinarians. My heart goes out to them for some of the difficult cases they need to deal with and also with the serious effect of suicide on this sector. It is true that, apart from obviously looking after the health of animals, vets have in their possession the instruments to put animals down, and sadly they can be used the wrong way, so my thoughts go out to veterinarians. We need to make sure they have the supports in place so that they can do their work well.

I know they cop a bit of flak about the charges, especially with regard to pets, certainly with respect to large animals; it gets a bit exponential as animals get bigger. Essentially, a vet is not just a vet; they are a small business. It does not matter whether you have two in a group, one in a group, or it might be several, they must have all the equipment.

So, if you are a single operator, you must have the X-ray gear and all the other machines and equipment that are needed to work with animals. As has been said before, there is a vast array of animals and birds, etc. that vets need to be equipped to work on from the smallest animal right through to the large animals.

I take my hat off to the work that was done out at Roseworthy several years ago putting in the equine centre there, and large animals can be operated on in that space as well. I think there have even been some dead seals dissected there over time to see what they actually died of. I have had a long campaign to have some control measures put in place with regard to long-nosed fur seals, but sadly we have not had too much traction—

An honourable member interjecting:

Mr PEDERICK: In a managed way. I would urge no-one to go down that path because it is a minimum \$100,000 fine.

I support this bill. I support where I believe the amendments are going with the make-up of SACAT and the measures to go in place there. I just want to say that our veterinarians do such great work right across this state. They need their support. Yes, it can be expensive at times and people make some very heartfelt decisions around their animals.

Being a farmer, and I will not go into the detail, I am a bit more blunt. Sometimes you have to put an old mate down—an old sheepdog or something like that—and it is one of the hardest things you have to do on the land. I can recall at times I just have not been able to do it for an old mate. You just ask your neighbour and they oblige.

I do support the bill and hope we can get it through today in the limited time we have. We wish all the veterinarians wealth, health and happiness and, in closing, wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Brown): Very kind of you, member for Hammond. Are there any further contributions on this bill? If the minister speaks he closes the debate.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (15:43): I will speak very, very briefly. I would like to thank the members for their contributions. The member for Newland and the member for Chaffey made very fine speeches. The member for Hammond made a very fine speech as well, and I have learnt a thing or two from their contributions that I should have known before. With that, I commend the bill and we will go into committee.

Bill read a second time.

Committee Stage

In committee.

Clauses 1 to 78 passed.

Clause 79.

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION: On behalf of the Treasurer, I move:

Amendment No 1 [Treasurer–1]—

Page 46, lines 20 to 29 [clause 79(1) and (2)]—Delete subclauses (1) and (2) and substitute:

- (1) For the purposes of section 22 of the *South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2013*, there will be—
 - (a) a panel of assessors consisting of—
 - (i) veterinarians with primary registration or deemed registration; and
 - (ii) veterinarians (however described) registered under a corresponding law but who do not provide veterinary services or engage in other conduct as a veterinarian in this State; and
 - (b) a panel of assessors consisting of persons who have expertise that would be of value to the Tribunal in proceedings under this Act (being persons who are not veterinarians and who do not work in an area relating to, or have a material interest in, veterinary services).
- (2) Subject to this Act, in exercising its powers for the purposes of this Act, the Tribunal will, unless the President of the Tribunal determines that the Tribunal is to be constituted by fewer than 3 members, be constituted by 3 members of whom—
 - (a) 2 will be selected from the panel of assessors referred to in subsection (1)(a); or
 - (b) —
 - (i) 1 will be selected from the panel of assessors referred to in subsection (1)(a); and

- (ii) 1 will be selected from the panel of assessors referred to in subsection (1)(b).

Mr WHETSTONE: I agree to this amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (80 to 99), schedule and title passed.

Bill reported with amendment.

Third Reading

The Hon. N.D. CHAMPION (Taylor—Minister for Trade and Investment, Minister for Housing and Urban Development, Minister for Planning) (15:47): I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**PASTORAL LAND MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION (USE OF PASTORAL LAND)
AMENDMENT BILL**

Second Reading

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 28 September 2023.)

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:48): I am a little underprepared, but I will continue my remarks. As I recall, I was talking about some of the pastoral lands. Some of the rhetoric that came from the minister was about power generation and wind turbines in some of those pastoral lands. I want to put on the record that I think that one of the great disappointments in our great landscape has been the introduction of structures such as poles, wires and some of that infrastructure that has been put on our vast pastoral lands. Some of that infrastructure has been necessary and some of it has been an overreach.

My contribution here is that we will listen to the pastoralists and we will listen to the Pastoral Board to make sure that there is not that overreach with infrastructure that will invade and distract from one of the great landscapes of the world. In most instances, the pastoral lands can be a beautiful thing and a sight to behold. When we see landscapes absolutely littered and almost destroyed by poles, wires and infrastructure, sometimes that is the fault of the legislators and sometimes that is the fault of investment into our landscape, but I think it needs to be much more carefully considered and it needs to be much more carefully planned and thought through for the betterment of the state's future.

Here we are talking about the pastoral lands and the act. As a former minister responsible for pastoral lands and the Pastoral Board, it pains me to think that we have legislators, a government, that is looking to continue to invade those great pastoral lands with that invasive infrastructure.

Without further ado, I have made my contribution. I think it would be only fair to say that the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation (Use of Pastoral Land) Amendment Bill and the amendments should pass. We need to make sure that we protect our pastoral lands and use them for the best attributes that they pose on our great landscape.

Ms CLANCY (Elder) (15:51): I rise today in support of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation (Use of Pastoral Land) Amendment Bill 2023. This bill seeks to deliver on yet another election commitment that we took to the people of South Australia in 2022, this time to confirm that pastoral leases can be used for carbon farming and conservation.

The bill seeks to amend the objects of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989 to confirm that pastoral leases can be used for conservation and carbon farming. Carbon farming refers to the management of land or agriculture, which maximises the amount of carbon stored and minimises the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, playing an important role in global efforts to address climate change, land degradation, food insecurity and the rising threat of extinction.

Should the bill be passed, the minister responsible for the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act would be allowed to adjust the definition of carbon farming activities as carbon farming markets evolve. As the Deputy Premier has already advised, our government would consult on any proposed changes to this definition, which would happen through regulation.

The bill also seeks to preserve the role of the Pastoral Board of South Australia in relation to the approval of non-pastoral uses of pastoral land and formally recognises past decisions of the Pastoral Board approving the use of some or all of a pastoral lease for non-pastoral purposes. Successful passage of the bill would clarify that land assessments would consider the purposes for which the land is being used for all leases and clarify the required qualifications of potential Pastoral Board members nominated by the Conservation Council of South Australia.

The current threats to global biodiversity could be soon, if not already, classified as a crisis. Australia has the highest mammal extinction rate in the world. Around 12 per cent of our own native species in South Australia are threatened with extinction. The most recent available data published by the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in their Global Assessment Report suggest that as many as one million species worldwide are threatened with extinction. That is more than 40 per cent of amphibian species, almost a third of reef-formal coral, more than a third of all marine mammals and as much as 10 per cent of insect species.

We know that human activity is the largest contributor to species decline. In fact, human actions are said to have significantly altered as much as three-quarters of the land-based environment and two-thirds of the marine environment. Even if for a moment we put aside the moral obligations of sharing this planet with the other species that call it home, we have an obligation to future generations to immediately work to address this crisis. Threats to biodiversity also threaten global food production and exacerbate the impacts of climate change.

While governments, businesses and communities are slowly beginning to focus on the threat posed by climate change, we must also understand and work to reverse this alarming trend of biodiversity loss if we ever want our children to inherit a sustainable environment. South Australia rightfully has a proud history of protecting our environment. Previous state Labor governments were responsible for the greatest growth in national parks and the creation of statewide systems of wilderness protection areas and marine parks. We have a really strong system of protection of our important biodiversity, but there is more work to be done and we must continue to encourage other jurisdictions to protect biodiversity and immediately begin to address these threats.

The Malinauskas Labor government is taking biodiversity protection and restoration incredibly seriously. Recently, in one month alone we saw more than \$1 million in Green Adelaide Grassroot Grants be awarded and the announcement of more than \$2.2 million in funding to reduce the threat of invasive buffel grass and its destructive effect on remote landscapes and communities. Our most recent state budget included \$27.1 million in investments to protect and preserve our state's unique natural environment and biodiversity. This investment includes establishing BioData SA, which will overhaul the data held by the state and guide decision-making on protection and restoration programs.

The bill before us today continues our government's work and begins to deliver on our plan to support landholders to protect nature. In November last year experienced pastoralists, land managers and conservationists were among nine new appointees to South Australia's Pastoral Board. Delivering on another state election commitment, the Pastoral Board now reports to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, with an additional \$1 million in funding over four years to be administered by the Pastoral Unit to support timely land condition assessments.

The Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989 covers more than 40 per cent of South Australia's land area, including 323 leases comprising 219 stations over an area of 40 million hectares. With approval of the Pastoral Board, 21 of these existing pastoral leases are wholly used for conservation and five are used for carbon farming. However, in recent years legal uncertainty has arisen about the board's ability to approve non-pastoral uses.

Successful passage of this bill would confirm the Pastoral Board's ability to approve a range of uses of pastoral leases. It would empower Aboriginal people, regional communities and other lessees to manage pastoral lands in a variety of ways. These changes confirm that significant

environmental benefit offsets and heritage arrangements under the Native Vegetation Act 1991 can be implemented on pastoral leases—tools which provide leaseholders with opportunities to receive funding for conservation activities on their lease.

The Pastoral Board's powers in relation to the management of pastoral lands and current leases will not change. All leaseholders will still need to actively manage their leases, which remain subject to the obligations of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act. Any new request to change the use of a pastoral lease will be considered by the Pastoral Board on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the act and the Pastoral Board's revised guidelines.

When the Pastoral Board approves a change in use of lease, that change will remain in force unless the lessee seeks further change. Pastoral stakeholders have been reassured that all pastoral leases, regardless of whether primary use is pastoral or conservation, will still require assessment and active management to consider broader impacts across the pastoral zone.

In closing, I would like to thank the range of organisations with a close interest in pastoral land management who helped inform this bill through consultation, particularly the Conservation Council SA, SA Nature Alliance, SA Native Title Services, First Nations of SA, and the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia.

Thank you also to the Pastoral Board, Primary Producers SA and Livestock SA, who coordinated further discussions with pastoralists. All your contributions are appreciated and play an integral role in bringing comprehensive reform and legislation to this place. I also want to thank the Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate, Environment and Water and her team for their efforts in bringing this bill before us and their ongoing leadership in continuing South Australian Labor's proud legacy of fighting for our environment.

We are proud of our legacy, but there is always more work to be done. We must continue to do everything we can in this place and call on other jurisdictions to immediately work to address the ongoing impact of climate change and threats to biodiversity, not just for ourselves but for the next generation. I commend this bill to the house.

Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (16:00): I rise to make some reflection about where we have got to in terms of the rangelands, the magnificent pastoral country of South Australia, and what are I think opportunities now for, firstly, the express recognition of those conservation purposes that are engaged already in a fairly extensive way through the pastoral country and also to contemplate, more particularly, some of those activities in terms of the carbon farming and those aspects that, without amendment to the act, might otherwise have been beyond the description of what constitutes activity that is compliant with a pastoral lease.

I will not reflect on the recently debated Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Bill, except to identify the fact that we are here in this bill making provision for the permission of what is defined to be conservation purposes on the one hand and carbon farming on the other as additional permitted uses. I make the point that carbon farming in particular in the bill is included as a kind of work-in-progress concept. It is not even defined in the bill beyond the means by which the minister will in the future go about consulting with a view better to defining what carbon farming is.

Secondly, the concepts of conservation and carbon farming in their conceptual stage, as it were, are put in the context of a non-exhaustive list of such activities because we see in clause 3(2) that we are now to contemplate not only those defined and to be defined terms but other purposes of which carbon farming and conservation purposes are just cited as examples. The board is going to have what appears to be a capacity to consider a range of activities that might broadly be analogous or similar to or achieving, broadly, aims that might be seen as in line with those terms.

Those pastoral leaseholders out there, let alone the rest of the South Australian community, will therefore be particularly aware that, in the circumstances of this bill, we are seeing the broadening of the permitted use of pastoral land by pastoral leaseholders to encompass those wider activities, including for the purposes of generating income and moving therefore into broader engagement with the economy. I will come back to some of the pastoral leases for which these provisions will have particular benefit, and that will serve to illustrate the sorts of things that are going on in the state already.

What it does not include for the benefit of those pastoral leaseholders is the capacity for pastoral leaseholders to engage in the renewable energy investment opportunities that the government tells us are coming full bore in our direction. In fact, those opportunities, and the management of how that might best be done alongside traditional pastoral activities, indeed alongside some of these activities, is expressly excluded and made the subject of another piece of legislation under which pastoral leaseholders in particular, and freehold landholders as well in certain circumstances, will be expressly excluded from the opportunity to participate in those activities, except that those activities in some cases will be more or less compulsorily applied to their pastoral lease holdings.

Those who are following this debate might, if they have not already, take a particular interest in the contents of the hydrogen renewable energy legislation because one needs to compare and contrast the range of activities and the benefits that flow as the result of them. That is in circumstances where we see an evolving environment of investment appetite for a variety of different energy uses. We also have seen a developing interest in the philanthropic and other economically motivated conservation purposes for pastoral land and, indeed, the opportunities that carbon farming might present for the benefit of the environment, for the benefit of pastoral leaseholders and for all of us as South Australians.

So let's all be clear about watching how this develops. It is incredibly important. In fact, it is fundamental to the health of the environment in the rangelands, the pastoral country of South Australia, that we see thriving communities, expert managers of pastoral country managed in such a way that there are means by which it is possible to avoid overstocking, pushing the country harder than it can manage because that is a sole source of income where other opportunities might be available. It is important that we make sure that we understand the needs of those pastoral communities, those expert pastoral leaseholders and the sorts of things they would engage in, in order to make sustainable those pastoral operations. It is vitally important.

The board, in line with clause 3 of this bill, will have a clear power now, a clear remit, to consider approving those uses of pastoral land that might include wholly conservation purposes and, as we have seen in its sort of conceptual stage, the activity of carbon farming. I spell all that out in that somewhat ponderous way to just make clear that we should be very wary that there is not, in the course of seeing these two parallel pieces of legislation, an injustice visited upon pastoral leaseholders.

We have heard the Minister for Energy and Mining in this place providing a range of assurances, and we have also seen the Minister for Energy and Mining really, to my mind, put the pastoral leaseholders of the state on their warning in terms of the range of property rights that this government considers pastoral leaseholders to enjoy or not. I commend the debate in that regard.

So here we have the capacity by this permissive legislation for the state to see, to the extent that they were not already, the permitting of conservation activities that might now thrive into the long-term future. South Australians will be familiar with the already well-known pastoral leases that are used in different ways wholly for conservation purposes, and those have been operated in a number of different ways and for shorter and longer periods of time. I understand that of the 320 or so, 323 I think, pastoral leases in South Australia, there are 21 leases that are in that category broadly already. For illustration purposes, I reflect on and celebrate three of them.

Firstly, I mention Arkaroola, one of the smaller ones. Arkaroola, for those who have visited in recent times, is a place that you do not go to by accident. It is a really remarkable part of South Australia, an extraordinarily unique part of our natural environment, sitting as it does out there at the Gammon Ranges. We know the legendary history of Reg and Griselda Sprigg, pioneering exploration and adventure in the north of South Australia and through the Simpson Desert that goes all the way back to the 1960s.

Their then young son, Doug Sprigg—I think he was about seven years old when he was first brought across in, I think, the first motorised crossing of the Simpson Desert back in the early sixties—grew up part of the family's endeavours to preserve and enhance Arkaroola. Doug has taken on the custodianship of Arkaroola and lives and shows off and maintains Arkaroola to this day. He is now one of the modern legends of northern pastoral conservation. I thank Doug and recognise him

for his unique experience, his expertise, his generosity and his spirit for the north of our state. Arkaroola is continuing to do that very valuable work of informing and welcoming people to the north in the Gammon Ranges.

There are two significant pastoral properties that are owned by Nature Foundation of South Australia. I have been a member and involved in Nature Foundation of South Australia now for many years and have been involved in different ways as a volunteer, contributing to its governance, and have had the opportunity in that way to see the model under which Nature Foundation of South Australia follows a model of environmental management. As the name 'foundation' suggests, it starts with the acquisition of properties of all different kinds. Nature Foundation of South Australia has now properties spread throughout the state—some of them small, near metro landholdings, some of them held for particular environmental significance and focus—and among them two of our state's large northern pastoral lease holdings.

The first in the north is Witchelina. Witchelina is to the immediate north-east of Lake Torrens and is really, to any view beyond those used to that country in South Australia, of epic proportion. It is a really vast area of land, and it is a key example of what can be done to apply knowledge and to learn and to encourage visitation and engagement with that country in circumstances where it otherwise would be really very remote, unvisited and largely unproductive. At the time Nature Foundation of South Australia took it over, it had been run very hard indeed, and not only the land but also the infrastructure—house, shearing shed and so on—had been really very thoroughly run down.

The beauty of Nature Foundation is that the members of Nature Foundation include such a wide range of people with interest and expertise in the natural environment, including farmers and station owners, environmental experts, builders, mechanics and those with health backgrounds. You name it, there is an aspect of expertise to be able to draw upon among the membership and the active volunteers of Nature Foundation.

What Witchelina has seen in the time of Nature Foundation of South Australia's ownership is the most fascinating recovery of grazing land, the result of removing grazing for an extended period over areas that had been overgrazed. That is fascinating for farmers and pastoralists, those who run that country, to be able to test out what occurs when you apply those practices. There has been tremendous work done in pest eradication.

The size and destructive capacity of some of the wild cats that are captured and destroyed at Witchelina is really truly remarkable. In turn, that leads to the capacity to be able to share knowledge, as well as the wideranging visitation that is now possible at Witchelina by school groups and those in need of support and an opportunity to go somewhere together and to be in a place where one can enjoy natural beauty and learn and thrive in an educational way. That has been one of the tremendous opportunities for Witchelina.

And just so at Hiltaba in the Gawler Ranges. I was very fortunate with two of our children to have a very quick visit to Hiltaba earlier this year on the way over to the West Coast. Hiltaba has its own extraordinary beauty—not quite so vast as Witchelina—but, again, a place where the natural beauty of the environment can be coupled with an appreciation of its pastoral history, its carrying capacity, the measures that were taken (some of them heroic) to be able to capture and store water for the purposes of running stock and, in turn, a wonderful opportunity for visitation, education and so on.

The capacity that the bill will now formalise for those activities is to be welcomed, and I just emphasise that in taking these measures, whether by this bill or by another one previously, we ensure that we are promoting the best use of our pastoral country throughout the state.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for King—and may I wish you a happy birthday as well.

Mrs PEARCE (King) (16:20): Thank you very much. I also rise to speak in support of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation (Use of Pastoral Land) Amendment Bill 2023. Landholders, whose families have worked the land for generations, know that caring for the land means having a healthy environment. It is pleasing to see over recent years there are more and more people wanting to protect a patch of bushland for future generations. In fact, I have a friend who takes

great pride in working in pockets of his parents' farm to help encourage conservation within their realms. It has been absolutely great following the progress of this project through his social media.

I grew up on a farm myself and, while we had cattle and crops, we also took great pride in protecting as much of the land as we possibly could. We would remove parasitic vegetation that threatened native species, we kept waterways and areas of open space free from grazing so that it could support all the native flora and fauna to thrive, and we would never take more than we needed from the land. In fact, I remember quite fondly my dad would find people sneaking on the property to pinch a bit of firewood, and he would get right onto it because we knew that the logs and the branches form an important part of the ecosystem and we could not afford to lose too many.

I appreciate that others give money to non-profit organisations to buy up land or enter into leases to help restore nature, and that there are big challenges: pests and weeds, overabundant native species, loss of vegetation, and the increasing pressure of climate change means it is getting harder to keep ecosystems healthy and productive. It is a big part of why we made a commitment to support all these landholders with practical incentives to support their efforts for a sustainable country.

A huge component of delivering on our election commitment to confirm that conservation and carbon farming are permissible on pastoral leases is addressed thanks to these amendments. These amendments have been informed through consultation with a range of stakeholders, with close interest in pastoral land management, such as the Pastoral Board, Livestock SA, Primary Producers SA, the Conservation Council SA, SA Nature Alliance, SA Native Title Service and the First Nations of SA.

Significant work has taken place on this bill to confirm the Pastoral Board's ability to approve a range of uses of pastoral leases, including the conservation and carbon farming which has been in place on the ground for over 30 years. The Pastoral Board of South Australia is responsible to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water for the administration of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989, and a pastoral lease allows for the occupation and use of Crown land for the use of grazing or raising livestock, with over 323 pastoral leases covering over 40 per cent of our state. Currently, there are 21 pastoral leases being used with the board's approval for conservation, and five leases being used for carbon farming.

Conservation activities cover undertakings such as conserving and restoring natural ecosystems in the rangelands, including biodiverse revegetation using species native to the area, erosion repair and feral animal control. However, there remains some level of uncertainty about the ability of the board to approve non-pastoral uses of land because of some of the inconsistencies in the Pastoral Act.

These amendments will provide certainty to the ongoing efforts being made by lessees, Aboriginal people and regional communities to manage the pastoral lands in a variety of ways. These changes confirm that Significant Environmental Benefit (SEB) offsets and heritage agreements under the Native Vegetation Act 1991 can be implemented on pastoral leases. It will give the Pastoral Board full certainty that they can continue to exercise their power to approve non-pastoral activities with previously approved non-pastoral uses remaining in effect.

New applications will be considered by the board on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the act and the board's revised guidelines. These tools provide the leaseholder with opportunities to receive funding for conservation activities on their lease and ensure that they can continue to have flexibility in how they use the land and flexibility to diversify future undertakings subject to the approval of the Pastoral Board. For example, as the demand for carbon farming projects are expected to grow in demand, land managers can tap into this growing market and receive a new source of income through carbon farming projects that can be contracted out to the Australian government or to private investors who are seeking to offset their emissions.

At present, carbon farming initiatives in Australia require registration with the Australian government's Clean Energy Regulator. Applicants must consult native titleholders where relevant and seek consent of the minister under the existing laws, and with the passage of this bill before us this will also remain unchanged. It will not impact the economic viability of our pastoral industry. It will however support leaseholders to manage their land with flexibility, with economic viability

remaining an object of the act. We have seen for more than 30 years at this point that pastoralists and conservationists can work side by side across the rangelands, and we expect this to continue for many more years.

With this amendment the current lease will not change nor will it change the Pastoral Board's powers in relation to the management of pastoral lands. Leaseholders will still need to actively manage their leases and remain subject to the Pastoral Act obligations, which include requirements to maintain fencing and watering points unless conditions are varied by the Pastoral Board. While the previous government sought to introduce 100-year leases, a removal of stocking limits and ceasing on-the-ground assessments on the land, our government will not be pursuing such proposals. Instead we are confirming what is currently taking place across the rangelands.

I understand that pastoral stakeholders have been reassured that all pastoral leases, regardless of whether primary use is pastoral or conservation, will still require assessment and active management considering broader impacts across the pastoral zone. We are committed to protecting our rangelands and understand that when managed well they are more than capable of being utilised for primary production.

Coming into government we reaffirmed our commitment to maintaining these precious and fragile lands, which cover more than 40 per cent of our state so that they can continue to be used long into the future while ensuring they are managed sustainably. This bill before us is another step we are taking to ensure a prosperous future for our rangelands, and I commend this bill to the house.

Mr BASHAM (Finniss) (16:27): I rise also to speak on the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Amendment Bill. This is certainly something I have a lot of personal interest in that goes back many, many years. I have had many friends over my lifetime being very directly connected with the pastoral zone, and one of my closest friends from school days grew up very much in the pastoral zone.

I very much enjoyed going to visit Commonwealth Hill Station where his father was the manager at the time. Mark Burden was the manager's name. Dominic, his son, also worked on that station with his father and it was a pleasure to go there. It is a fascinating property. Certainly it has enormous history. When it was in its original form Commonwealth Hill Station was bigger than England, just to put it into perspective for people. It is very interesting that one property could actually be bigger than a significant country like England.

It was of great interest going up there and seeing particularly the money that had been spent there during the time that wool was pound for pound. The woolshed was an enormous building built of stone, and it is a lovely building. When I was there, it was probably about 50 or 60 years old, but it looked like it was going to serve another couple of hundred years the way it had been built; likewise with the homestead. It is a very large homestead of over 100 squares and a beautiful home built to survive the hot environment, with enormous breezeways through the middle of the house and covered verandahs. You could easily sit outside on the verandah on a warm summer's evening very much enjoying that life.

My limited working experience on the station was with my friend Dominic. One day, while I was up there I went out and helped muster. I remember we were sent out with two plastic bread bags, one full of sandwiches and the other full of cake; each of us had that, and that was our food for the day. I had never seen so much food in all my life. Effectively, it was lunch, morning tea and afternoon tea, and we were going to be back for dinner, and I thought, 'What am I going to do with all this?' We packed it on our motorbikes and headed out.

We probably rode for about an hour and a half before we got to the paddock we were going to muster. When we got there, we started mustering and, because I was not familiar with the country, it was decided the best way to do it was to ride out from one of the fence lines and we would take it turns. If we found some sheep, we would bring them back to the fence line and take them towards the water, where they were to be collected. We were out there for about 12 hours and found four sheep, so it was not an overly productive day mustering—spending 12 hours and finding four sheep between two of us—but that is the life of the station. It is very challenging.

It is a beautiful environment. It is a very challenging environment. The environment is very sensitive as well. The station owners, the managers, do their utmost, and have done their utmost, to make sure that the natural environment is protected in the way they manage it, very much making sure they do not overgraze because it takes so long for that country to recover if you take it too far. I think that is something we have to be very aware of as we go forward, that is, how we manage this country.

I think there are huge opportunities. When I was the minister responsible, I was very keen to look at the future in this space and how it could be managed. Using new technologies, using satellites to assess the tonnage of organic matter growing on any particular part of the property I thought was going to be a fantastic way to make sure we protected that environment going forward because it can be done in real time and it can be done instantly. Currently, inspecting those properties by traditional means going out and taking photos and comparing them with previous photos to see whether it has changed; whereas you can take satellite picture anytime a satellite is flying overhead and use it to see and assess what sorts of changes are going on.

It is important that we continue to think about the future in this area and how we might be able to manage this country, whether we look at completely different technologies that could be used to enhance and protect the area by using virtual fencing to make sure that we keep cattle and sheep out of particularly sensitive areas so that we can protect those areas. We can use the technology to improve the management of this country to make sure it is productive for the pastoralists but also very much protecting that sensitive environment. It is a fascinating area.

Some of my other memories of my first visit out to Commonwealth Hill Station include going out with Mark Burden, the manager, on a water run, checking water and travelling around the property, which also involved visiting the fencing contractor—and I use that term quite loosely. He was in charge of maintaining the dog fence for the MacLachlan properties through that zone and he would work his way along. Our job was to drop off his supplies.

Interestingly, I thought his supplies were food but no; his beer was what he was most desperate for because he had run out, and on those cold winter evenings he apparently needed a few beers to keep him in the right direction and make sure that he was heading down the fence line as necessary.

The dog fence is such an important part particularly of the sheep industry through that pastoral zone. Work was done by the previous government, investing with the federal government, to make sure the fence was brought up to a sufficient level of protection to keep the dogs on the northern side and allow the pastoralists to use their properties south of the fence, and it is pleasing to see that work continue. It is such an important part of the management in the zone.

The gentleman who was actually doing those repairs was very much a hermit character who very rarely saw people. He had been two months without anyone to talk to, so he was up for a little bit of a chat, particularly when he realised we had cartons of beer for him. He certainly opened one straightaway. It was interesting for a teenager to have that experience out there.

One of the other interesting things that I remember from my time there was when I was with my friend Dominic, who would often do water runs too. I went out with him one day—it was a bit icy and cold one morning—and he wanted to check the depth of one of the dams. He had actually taught his dog to go swimming on command. If the dog walked out into the icy cold water of the dam and kept walking, he knew there was not enough water left in the dam so they would need to shift the sheep out, but if there was depth there the dog would go for a swim.

He would yell at the dog. 'Bogey' was the word to go for a swim and so the dog would go for a swim. This poor dog would turn around and look back at Dom as if to say, 'You have to be kidding me. It's minus two right now and you want me to go in the water.' The dog was very obedient and would go for that swim. It certainly was an interesting way to see how the pastoralists were able to manage in that environment.

The interesting things are the challenge of this environment and protecting it. The use of new technologies is, I believe, a real key. Whether it be the technologies to protect those sensitive areas through the virtual fencing, or whether it be satellite technology to see what is growing there, I think

there is huge potential to make sure this wonderful environment is there for the future, both for pastoralists and for the conservationists.

I also think it is important that this amendment bill does what is necessary to protect those properties that have gone fully down the conservation path. Certainly, as minister, we had some Crown advice that concerned me about what could be triggered through this process, whether those properties that were already operating down that path could have been at risk of triggering compensation under native title. It was really hard to pull that apart and try to work out how best to achieve it.

I think carbon farming is certainly a great opportunity to supplement the income, particularly in the pastoral zone. It is a challenging zone in which to run a farming enterprise, a grazing enterprise, so to have something that gives you a bit more constant income would certainly be of benefit to that area. It is really pleasing to see that there is support for carbon farming in this zone.

It was mentioned by the previous speaker, the member for King, that there was an intent to take it to 100 years. No, it was never 100; yes, it was 99—but it was very much to make sure that the pastoralists had the ability to enter into long-term contracts to make sure they were actually able to take full advantage of the carbon farming. It was nothing more and nothing less. It was just to give them the ability to enter into those long-term contracts. There was concern that if they did not have that sort of tenure they would not be able to get access to the better carbon farming benefits of being able to enter into those long-term arrangements, so it was very much that we went along that path to make sure we are able to achieve that outcome.

It is important that we continue to make sure that this pastoral land is protected. It is certainly a very large proportion of South Australia: it is 40 per cent of the state, approximately. There are many pastoral families that continue to farm this area and graze this area, as they have for many, many years. We have the McBrides, represented here by the member for MacKillop. Certainly, he has a long family history.

The MacLachlans are another family that has huge long ties into this space. It is interesting to see that there have been some changes within the structures of the MacLachlan business recently, with the two sons deciding to break away and go out on their own, breaking up the Jumbuck Pastoral company business into smaller bits and allowing them to manage it under their own names. It will be interesting to see how they take it forward.

We have also seen other families get involved in South Australia from other states: the Hancock family, for example, have come into South Australia over recent years. We do have some amazing long-term families that have done a wonderful thing in managing these zones for many, many years. Like all farmers generally, they operate the land to protect the land for the future, the reason being that is the best way for them to actually get good output from that land.

It is pleasing to see that we continue down this path in making sure that we achieve what is necessary, but we do want to make sure that we have the right structures and we do want to make sure that there is the conservation but also preserving the use of the land for pastoral purposes. It is a great part of our history. It is a great part of the economic structure of our state to make sure that there is a productive income coming in off that land. Pastoralism has done it well for many, many years.

As I said before, we do need to make sure people can diversify their incomes and make sure they have the ability to protect themselves, particularly during those drought years. 'Drought years' in pastoral country does not mean one or two; it could be a decade. We have a challenging time in making sure that the pastoralists are able to diversify their income. Carbon farming is certainly going to give them that ability to do so.

Likewise, I commend those businesses and enterprises that have done a complete conversion, who have decided they want to protect those lands as conservation properties and invest in those properties as conservation properties, often making them available for other people to see and managing those lands in a particular way.

This pastoral zone has certainly been changed over many years. The establishment of water points to operate those pastoral countries has changed the native wildlife as well. There are certainly

a lot more kangaroos, for example, in the pastoral zone that would not naturally have been there, apart from the man-made watering points that have been installed into this zone.

It certainly was important that we were able to make sure that, with all the changes that were being made, as I raised before, we did not trigger a native title compensation payment due to a triggering of native title over these properties. It is important that we did not put this impost onto these conservation properties, that we did not want to inflict a cost onto them because they had chosen to go down this path.

I am very much pleased the minister has made a commitment to make sure that is not going to be a problem and that we are able to actually continue down this path of making sure that native title would not be triggered and there will not be that unintended consequence. It is certainly something that, as minister, as I said, I had to battle with, trying to work out how best to take this forward.

Getting back to those early days of visiting that pastoral land, it is the sheer distance that certainly is the most interesting and challenging and how much changes in that time as you travel. As you head north of Port Augusta in particular, there are many significant changes in the landscape as you go. It is intriguing to see what is good country and what is bad country.

I very much remember there was one property that was a bit overgrazed and you could certainly tell that as you drove through it, which was disappointing, but that is why I think it is so important that we move to these new technologies where we are actually able to react much faster. We are actually able to see with satellite technology that a particular property or part of a property is under stress so we can instantly have people step in and say, 'Just hang on. Something seems to be wrong here. You might just need to back off that particular area.'

I think it is important that we continue to make sure the opportunities are there for the pastoralists. I really encourage the government to continue to look at any of those future opportunities to invest in this space, and whether we can help those pastoralists engage in and adopt those new technologies. They are being used elsewhere around the country to help manage the properties themselves, so give the pastoralists the tools to see what is happening on their property.

There is very much the opportunity to bring that back into part of the regulatory regime to use those tools to actually help make sure they are protected and delivering great outcomes for those pastoral zones. With those few words, I thank you for the opportunity to make comment on this bill. I think it is an important bill for such a large proportion of our land mass.

Mr TELFER (Flinders) (16:47): I rise today to make a contribution to this important amendment of the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989. It is something that we as decision-makers should not do lightly. As has already been spoken about when debating this bill, the pastoral lands in South Australia make up a significant proportion of the land mass but also make a significant economic contribution to our state by what they produce and by the small businesses, the bigger businesses and the individuals who are involved in the management and utilisation of these pastoral lands.

As I said, we should not be walking into making an amendment to this pastoral act lightly. I know that anyone who has the opportunity to visit some of the vast pastoral lands across northern and western South Australia in particular really do gain a different perspective on life outside the ordinary bubble of where the majority of our population live, which is in this place.

The people who are involved often have vast experience, vast history and vast knowledge about the diverse nature of this land, and the diverse range of rainfall, vegetation types and land types that cut across their pastoral land. But they also know how to manage these lands in a way which continues to keep the production that is existing and has been existing for decades, if not centuries.

The knowledge that is built in within these businesses, in particular, is pretty incredible because it is a unique skill set which has been developed over time. As I said, anyone who has had the opportunity to be able to visit these pastoral lands and see the space, the distance, the isolation which has to be dealt with, truly, I believe, does come away with a greater respect for the people who are involved in this.

In looking at some of the changes which are being put forward in this bill, obviously the scope of the amendment is very discrete and will allow the holder of a pastoral lease to be able to use the land for purposes other than pastoral purposes. The amendments will allow pastoral land to be used for conservation purposes and other appropriate purposes, which specifically in this bill include carbon farming.

It is a pretty important amendment to a pretty important piece of legislation because, of the 323 pastoral leases here in South Australia, there are already 21 which are used wholly for conservation purposes. The lessees range, as I said, from individual families, smaller businesses and bigger businesses—ASX-listed corporations—involved in a significant percentage of the land mass of South Australia where the vast majority of people probably have not ever set foot or even experienced the life in those pastoral lands.

It is going to be a fascinating first step and I hope it is done in a way which is conscientious and is not the thin edge of the wedge being pushed into our pastoral lands. I hope that some of that knowledge and experience that is within those managers of that pastoral land is not lost through some of the push that is being made.

I do think there is an opportunity to set up a framework for pastoral leaseholders to be able to have another income source, and have a way to be able to droughtproof, for want of a better word, some of the business and operations that they have, because we know that the extremes that we face in South Australia are no more pronounced than in the pastoral areas of our state—some of the driest, most isolated, hottest parts of our state where some of the most incredible characters live and run businesses.

I have been looking closely at this bill and, as I said, I am interested in particular in some of the proposed changes around the carbon farming opportunities. Carbon farming is a concept which we are still gathering information about, and we are still developing what concepts are going to be workable within the space. The definition given within this bill is:

...carbon farming means land management activities that avoid or reduce carbon in the atmosphere or sequester carbon in the landscape, as defined in the regulations.

That is a broad concept and a broad term you can understand. The way in which carbon farming and the awareness of both vegetation and soil carbon capture is developing at the moment continues to be a great challenge for science, for business and for decision-makers because at the moment it is an inexact science, and we cannot be certain about the way in which it is going to develop over future years and future decades. In putting this terminology in particular into the legislation, I think it is really incumbent on us as decision-makers to know the scope of what this may actually entail and for business and industry to be able to appropriately develop some of these measures and do so in an effective and sustainable way.

As I said, we have to be cautious that decisions and changes that are being made do not undermine existing businesses and do not undermine existing sectors that have been sustaining our state's economy for such a long period of time. The production that comes out of the pastoral lands on a per capita basis is pretty incredible. There are not a lot of people who live in the north and west parts of our state on these pastoral lands, but the amount that they contribute to the economy, the jobs that are involved and the wise way in which they are managing those lands cannot be overestimated.

Already mentioned in this place in some of the contributions from other members are some of the incredible properties that are included within these pastoral lands and those businesses that are involved in that. I know that the process to amend this bill commenced several years ago, and that work was done across terms of government, during the previous term of government and with the reform agenda at the time. It was quite broad, looking at the potential of modern pastoral lands into the future, ranging from the terms of the pastoral leases to the need to allow the lessees, as we are talking about in this bill, to diversify their income sources, including the opportunity to use pastoral leases for conservation purposes and allow carbon farming.

This work has been worked towards for a long period of time. I know the government at that time were aware that a question had been raised about whether pastoral leases that were used specifically for conservation purposes were consistent with the objectives of the act at the time. To

see this advanced gives some certainty that those uses that were starting to appear and now happen within our pastoral lands have a scope and a capacity to be able to be operated.

It provides clarity and reassurance to those lessees who are involved in these things that these activities, which they now conduct, are legitimate, that they are not inconsistent with the act. They are able with more certainty to progress some of the opportunities beyond and including, as I say, some of the carbon farming opportunities, which are developing not just here in this state but across the country.

While the opposition certainly has spoken in support of this bill, there are aspects where I know, if this reform succeeds, there will be the potential for a degree of dilution in the pastoral estate in South Australia. This is something that, as I said, we as decision-makers in this place need to make sure that we are aware of because in reality, when you are creating legislation, you must have a mind to where an end point might be for the scope and the range of the framework that that legislation develops.

We know there is nothing in this bill that indicates a target or an upper limit to the proportion of the pastoral estate that could be converted from productive pastoral use into conservation use. As I said, this does speak to the need for us to be aware of the food production needs of our state and our country and to make sure that, as decision-makers, we are taking into account all the different aspects and all the different potential impacts that could happen from legislation that we put forward. The economic activity that is driven from our pastoral lands, as I have said, both the domestic market and the export market, is pretty incredible.

We have to be aware that decisions made around the transition of leases from production into potential conservation do not dilute the ability of pastoralists to continue to have their voice heard on potential changes to regulation and management in this place due to there being a lower number of pastoralists. At the moment, 90 per cent of our pastoral estate is currently used for pastoral purposes.

It has been interesting to see the way that this legislation and its changes have developed over years and to see the input the pastoral sector and the livestock sector have had, in consultation, I am sure, with both sides of this chamber, to make sure that opportunities are maximised for pastoral leaseholders and that the risks are minimised, because there are potential advantages for pastoral leaseholders, but also there are aspects which could potentially add additional risks to existing business—existing productive business—which is based within our pastoral lands.

As I am on my feet in this chamber today, can I personally commend the wise and consistent way in which our pastoral lands have been managed by our pastoral leaseholders. They do so in a way which has a mind to future generations, not just future generations of their business or future generations of potential pastoral leaseholders looking to utilise the business opportunities within those pastoral areas.

Like any other land managers around our state, farmers and pastoralists are some of the greatest environmentalists we actually have in our state. The land management techniques which are put in place by the people who are responsible for their farms, for their pastoral lease, are pretty incredible. The awareness that they have around the management of topsoil, the minimisation of water erosion, the management of stocking rates and the way that can potentially impact the vegetation and the way that a mismanagement could impact or harm the future of the soil and of the vegetation cannot be underestimated.

As a regional MP who sees firsthand the efforts and the time that gets put into soil management, vegetation management and overall land management by these land managers, farm owners and pastoral leaseholders, I think it is something that needs to be commended and recognised in this place. As someone who is involved in a primary production business, I know that the passion with which farmers and pastoral operators deal with their land management cannot be denied, because they are the ones who have the firsthand involvement in what future outcomes will be for these parcels of land.

With that, I will finish my remarks in the recognition that, as decision-makers, we need to make sure that the decisions we make around changes to the pastoral land management act, and

now the conservation aspect, should be done in a conscientious way and in a way that has an eye on the future of our state, both economically and environmentally.

Mr BATTY (Bragg) (17:03): I, too, rise to speak on the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation (Use of Pastoral Land) Amendment Bill 2023, which is a very important bill seeking to overcome and resolve what is essentially a legal uncertainty about whether the Pastoral Board has the ability to approve the non-pastoral uses of pastoral land and, more specifically, to facilitate the use of pastoral land for a variety of conservation purposes, including, most importantly in this bill, carbon farming.

I want to say at the outset, and acknowledge at the outset, just how important our pastoral landholders and our pastoral rangelands are to our state. They cover a vast area. Indeed, over 40 per cent of the state is covered with pastoral leases. There are more than 300 individual pastoral leases, which cover some 40 million hectares of land, so it is a vast area. It is also a huge economic contributor to South Australia.

As well as being a very important economic driver to our state, I also want to acknowledge at the outset the very important role our pastoralists play as environmentalists. As others in this house have acknowledged, it is our pastoralists who are often best placed to be custodians of the land they are on and it is our pastoralists who we see undertake a wide range of conservation activities that are beneficial to all right across the state. I think this bill really does acknowledge the enormous contribution that our pastoral lessees make not only in driving our economy but also in the sustainable management of our lands.

It then goes on to resolve this legal uncertainty about whether the Pastoral Board can approve our pastoral lessees, our great conservationists, being able to undertake this conservation exercise. It does that through a series of fairly narrow and discrete amendments to the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act 1989. Those amendments include to facilitate the use of pastoral land for conservation purposes and also for other appropriate purposes which, importantly for present purposes, include specifically carbon farming.

This bill also seeks to insert a definition of carbon farming into the act as well as a definition for conservation purposes. Importantly, the bill requires regulation to be developed in relation to carbon farming. Those regulations will be required to be developed in consultation with a very wide range of stakeholders, including the Pastoral Board itself—but not just the Pastoral Board—and environmental stakeholders, such as the Conservation Council of South Australia, First Nations representative (including the Aboriginal Corporation) and, importantly also, representatives of pastoralists, including Primary Producers SA and Livestock SA as well, so a wide range of consultation for the regulations to ensure that a wide range of interests are taken into account.

This bill will also update the objects of the pastoral land management act to ensure that it can include the use of pastoral land for conservation purposes and also, when that occurs, to allow the lessees of pastoral leases who are using pastoral land for a purpose other than a pastoral purpose to obtain an exemption from the Pastoral Board from the need to provide an annual statutory declaration as to the stocking levels on the pastoral land.

The sum of all this seeks to clarify that we can be using our pastoral leases to undertake activities that are not strictly for pastoral purposes. What that really does is codify or validate activity that is already occurring right across South Australia.

As I mentioned before, South Australia has approximately 40 million hectares of pastoral land, that is, 323 pastoral leases. Of those 323 leases, there are 21 presently that are already being wholly used for conservation purposes—the very purpose this bill is trying to address.

Of those 21, they are managed by a wide range of lessees. There are many examples, whether it is Arkaroola being managed by the Sprigg family, Arid Recovery by BHP, Kalamurina by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC), and Witchelina by Nature Foundation. It is 21 right across the state already being wholly used for a purpose other than a pastoral purpose, indeed for a conservation purpose, and it is a very important purpose.

If we just take a couple of these examples, Kalamurina, which is managed by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy—and I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr Tim Allard from the Australian

Wildlife Conservancy earlier in the year to get an update not only on this project but also on the work they are undertaking right across the country.

I also had the pleasure of engaging with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy during my time in the United Kingdom, and I can tell you that the AWC has a very big brand name in the UK. There is a lot of love for Australian biodiversity in the United Kingdom, just as there is a lot of love here. We did a lot of work with them, particularly in the fallout of the bushfires of 2020 and 2021.

It was useful to talk to Tim Allard and others from the Australian Wildlife Conservancy about their various projects, including Kalamurina which is one of these pastoral leases, which is a vast desert wilderness covering a huge area of South Australia at 679,000 hectares, and of course it is at the intersection of three of our central deserts.

It spans 140 kilometres from east to west. It has spectacular dune fields, a network of freshwater and salt lakes as well, and importantly is a very big hub for biodiversity. It provides a refuge for a variety of desert wildlife, including the crest-tailed mulgara, the dusky hopping mouse and the regionally endemic Lake Eyre dragon.

The climate at Kalamurina is harsh. It has very little annual rainfall and summer temperatures that frequently exceed 45° Celsius. It requires very active management to conserve that land, to protect that wildlife that we see at Kalamurina. That management program is informed by data collected by AWC and focuses in particular on the reduction of feral animal numbers.

Unusually for Central Australia, it is also effectively weed free so that is not as much of an issue there, but what we see at Kalamurina is an example of one of these 21 pastoral leases being used for a conservation purpose. That is already occurring here in South Australia, and this bill seeks to validate and confirm that action.

Another of those 21 pastoral leases is Witchelina, which is managed by Nature Foundation, and similarly it has been a pleasure to have been able to engage with various office holders from Nature Foundation during my time as the shadow assistant minister for the environment. I want to commend them for the great work they do right across South Australia, including at Witchelina, which is a former pastoral property which comprises an amazing outback expanse extending from Lake Torrens in an area larger than Kangaroo Island.

Once again, we see Witchelina being home to a wide variety of wildlife, biodiversity, flora and fauna that we are seeking to conserve, whether it is the thick-billed grass wren, the wedge-tailed eagle, the spinifex hopping mouse, the plains mouse, the river red gum and coolibah woodland and the blue bush shrublands. What we also see at Witchelina, when wet, is the creeks and waterholes being arid zone refuges for ducks, sandpipers and a whole range of other waterbirds. Once again, Witchelina, like Kalamurina, is a pastoral lease already being used for a very significant conservation purpose.

It is already happening on 21 leases right across South Australia. I have spoken about two of them. They are actions we should be encouraging. I understand the genesis for this bill, though, is concerns that have been raised that these leases, as they are currently operating under the current act, might not be complying with the current provisions of the act, and it is this bill that seeks effectively to clarify and validate the legitimacy of those very important activities.

They are important because, as I said, they are good for biodiversity. They are also very good for emissions reductions. It was the previous Liberal government in December 2019 that released one of the most powerful visions for climate action of any South Australian government in history. That was developed with input advice from Professor Ross Garnaut and included 68 actions across seven focus areas—everything from energy, the economy, transport, and importantly to agricultural landscapes and habitats. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

PUBLIC SECTOR (MINISTERIAL TRAVEL REPORTS) AMENDMENT BILL*Final Stages*

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (BUDGET MEASURES) BILL*Final Stages*

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY (INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER) AMENDMENT BILL*Final Stages*

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVES (REVIEW) AMENDMENT BILL*Final Stages*

The Legislative Council agreed not to insist on its amendments to which the House of Assembly has disagreed.

*Adjournment Debate***VALEDICTORIES**

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (17:20): I rise to speak on indulgence. We have reached the conclusion of the parliamentary year. That provides a rare opportunity to reflect not so much on the work of a government but more on the work of everything that allows us to be able to do everything we undertake in our respective roles in this job.

There is an extraordinary volume of people who put in so much effort that allows us to do the work that we do as members of parliament, more broadly. When we get to the end of the year, it always provides a moment to decompress and pause and to reflect on how lucky each and every one of us is—all 47 members of this place—to have the assistance of not just one another but a great group of South Australian public servants who undertake that work.

From my perspective, the one group of people I am in a permanent state of gratitude to is my parliamentary Labor Party caucus colleagues. It is a privilege to serve as the leader of their political party with the support of caucus colleagues or party room colleagues, and that is a privilege not lost on me. I am very grateful for their support and their solidarity.

I want to thank each and every one of them for the work they are doing within their respective electorates with their constituents. Being a member of parliament, before any of the other duties that we respectively perform, is a big task in and of itself. Servicing approximately 25,000 constituents and all their concerns is a diverse challenge. It can vary in nature but it is substantial and comes at significant cost to the individuals who have to perform those functions. I want to thank all my parliamentary caucus colleagues but also the important EO staff who underpin them doing their work.

With respect to the parliament itself, on the rare occasion the mind wanders during the course of a parliamentary debate, one cannot help but sympathise with the work of our Hansard officials. I say that because how they undertake their work without forming judgement on each and every one of us is beyond me—unless, of course, they do form judgement on each and every one of us.

One can only imagine being a fly on the wall around the kitchen table of our Hansard staff, 'these muppets' or whatever language is used, I do not know. You should not laugh too hard because that would be a verification of my suspicions, but we do thank Hansard for their work and their patience. How you do it day in, day out is truly beyond me.

From there, I thought I would thank you, Mr Speaker. Your job is not easy. Your job is to independently arbitrate over the proceedings of the house, which I think you have done with great

diligence and commitment and great balance. The very fact that you will not get uniformity of agreement around your various judgements probably speaks to the fact that it occurs with a degree of independence. So we thank you for your work, Mr Speaker.

To other members within the house who make it all function, we are incredibly grateful. It is a difficult job. To the Clerk, Rick, and David as deputy, we thank you for your contribution to the proceedings of the house, along with all of your diligent staff, including the Serjeant-at-Arms. Can I acknowledge David Woolman, who does so much work behind the scene with his team within the parliament and has done so over many, many years, along with other administrative and corporate staff. We roll in on sitting days then we roll out when the house adjourns, but the work continues for the parliament staff and we are very, very grateful for it.

That thanks also extends to the library and the extraordinary character and icon of the parliament, Dr John Weste. Every time I see John engaging with members of the South Australian public, it fills me with a sense of warmth that here is someone who is so passionate about the work the parliament does, the building itself and the studies and what his team does. That could only have a positive and infectious impact on the members of the public's perception of the work that the parliament does. I want to thank John and all his team. I know that the library is a particularly useful resource for MPs, particularly in opposition. I got a really big appreciation of how useful it could be in that role. So I thank him for the work that the library does.

Then there is the Blue Room and all the catering staff, people who look after us in the most meaningful of ways by ensuring that we are not too 'hangry'. I want to thank the staff in the Blue Room, a great company: Karen, Belinda and, of course, there is Nicky, who is a constituent of mine. She lives literally one street over from me, so she gets to hear when I am yelling at the kids. She never raises her voice, as we all know, so there is nothing to worry about there! There are also all the protective security staff, the team in the cellar, and everywhere else. We are very grateful for their work.

In terms of within the parliament, there are various officer positions that exist. I do not want to name them all, but I do want to thank the whips. There is obviously the Opposition Whip, which is a thankless task, and also the Government Whip. They have to work together to keep the show running. I want to thank the Opposition Whip for working with the Government Whip in a way that I understand is very, very collaborative.

Particularly to the Government Whip: he has done an outstanding job. It does not often get recognised, but we all have our wants and needs and various requests, and the member for Elizabeth has just gone about it with a great degree of effect. I know he has a great team behind him, so I particularly want to acknowledge Billy and Shaylee as well, but I do hope that the member for Elizabeth gets the opportunity to spend some time with his family over the Christmas break with a degree of satisfaction that the government has been able to rely on his service in driving our agenda through in a seamless way. We are very, very appreciative of it.

There is also the other somewhat thankless task—officers in the building or in the parliament or in the house—and that is the Leader of Government Business and the Leader of Opposition Business. They are not easy jobs. Making countless points of order is something that the Leader of Opposition Business has a degree of enthusiasm for and, dare I say, is particularly effectual at on occasion. I thank him for his contribution.

I do want to thank the member for West Torrens and the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, the Leader of Government Business and, dare I say, the Father of the House, for his ongoing stewardship of this forum that he has become familiar with over—how long a period?

The Hon. A. Koutsantonis: Twenty-seven years.

The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS: Twenty-seven years. I do want to thank the member for West Torrens and his beautiful family for their ongoing support, both here in the chamber and privately as well. It is of great value to me and I do appreciate it.

To my cabinet colleagues, they have all dedicated themselves to their respective portfolio responsibilities with real vigour and energy—I do appreciate it. We have a cabinet which occasionally will have robust discussions, which I think is absolutely healthy and to be encouraged, but everyone

has been across their portfolio in a way that I am very appreciative of. I do not have to worry about ministers doing their jobs at all really. They do it with great effect and are able to function because of the work and the way that they dedicate themselves to the task, which is unquestionable in each and every instance.

The staff who support ministers—all the chiefs of staff, the media advisers and everyone else in those teams, the policy advisers and what have you—again are often unrecognised. If they are in the media, it is probably not a good thing, but their work is mission critical. That is also particularly true in my office, the Premier's office. I am really well supported by a group of people who believe in the work they are doing and provide me a lot of support, starting with my Chief of Staff, Mr John Bistrovic, and deputy chiefs of staff, Cheyne Rich and Sonia Romeo; senior policy adviser, Cat Perre, and a number of other advisers who sit around her.

The EA is like a mission-critical position, and Ann Duff, my EA, makes it all tick somehow—I do not know how most of the time, but she is able to pull it off. To all the media adviser team I am eternally grateful. Their hours are countless and often around the clock. To Adam, Pam, Nick, and the digital team of Minh and David and Harry and Wendy and Andrew, who helps write speeches in my office, I am very grateful, along with other policy advisers. I desperately hope I do not miss out on anyone.

Then there is all the corro staff and the office manager team, including Jess and her whole team: Paul, Angela, Kate, Victoria, Andrew, Monica and Anne-Marie. Again, we get endless amounts of correspondence and we are able to respond to it as timely as we possibly can, principally because of their hard work.

To the broader Labor family who underpin the work we do: again, we thank you. We have a number of them here in the parliament tonight. Most of them dedicate themselves to the cause on an entirely voluntary basis. We stand on the shoulders of giants in that regard, and the same is true with the trade union movement.

To the opposition, I would also like to thank them—mostly. It is such a hard job. Your task is really difficult. I know sometimes it can be endlessly frustrating. We can sympathise with you on that, having experienced it not too long ago but, as frustrating as it is, it is also really important. We expect to be held to account in a robust way. You have gone about that diligently. Politics is a really tough business.

The way we are set up is adversarial by nature. It can make people who would otherwise be acquaintances or even friends theoretical enemies. I think on occasions that is unfortunate, but it is necessarily the way it works. We have to be professional and appreciate that, if we remain professional in appreciating that, we can understand and appreciate the role and the fact that you have to perform it and do it to the best of your ability.

My particular acknowledgement goes to the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition I am sure—in fact, I know—shares all of our view that Christmas is a time to reflect and to think about how we are all relatively lucky. I would like to wish the Leader of the Opposition and his family a safe and merry Christmas as well, along with the remainder of the opposition members more broadly.

The Public Service: we get a bit of attention in our roles, but the over 100,000 people who are in the Public Service virtually get no attention unless they are maybe in significant positions of leadership. They just get on with the job. They do not sit around worrying about the politics; they just get on with servicing the community and they do it very well. COVID was just the most stark example of how much the state and the country rely on the work of public servants, and COVID really did elevate that in people's consciousness.

As COVID has abated, it runs the risk that we can get back to where we were before and not necessarily appreciate it. I do not want to list all the professions that exist within the Public Service; you know who we are talking about. All I would say is that it is not always just the ones we regularly recognise in emergency services and what have you. There are a lot of people who sit in non-uniformed roles, non-frontline service delivery roles, that are equally as important. Their work might

feel more humble on occasions, but it underpins the way the whole system ticks, and I want to wish every single one of them a safe and merry Christmas.

The final observation I will make is that we all have families. We have our parliamentary families. In my case, I might particularly rely on the Deputy Premier for guidance on some issues or the Treasurer or the Leader of Government Business or any of my cabinet colleagues for particular issues and you develop relationships in the course of that, but all these relationships, as powerful and as important as they can be, do not ever compare with the relationships that we have with our own families at home or elsewhere.

Christmas is a time to reflect on family and those really important things in life. We have been witness to some tragedies in our state recently which puts top of mind just how fragile life is, how precious it is and how in the blink of an eye things can be taken away from us that we value most. We all collectively hope and hopefully commit ourselves, at this time of the year, to valuing those things that are most precious and most valuable, and I sincerely hope that many people across Christmas are able to do that.

The final acknowledgement I would like to make is with people who might not be able to do that. There are people in our community who are doing it tough. More often than not we tend to talk about those in economic terms—the cost-of-living crisis, people doing it tough, people in need—but we should particularly think about not just those who are in economic difficulty but also those people who are just genuinely lonely and might have a hole in their heart because they do not have the capacity to share a moment like Christmas with a colleague, a loved one or a close confidant.

So for those in our state who might be suffering from a degree of loneliness or a lack of companionship, maybe we should all try to make an effort to reach out to them over Christmas, too, if we can find a way of doing that in our busy lives. I hope everyone has a safe and merry Christmas. We live in a beautiful state in an amazing country, and we have been reminded of that frequently in recent months. Long may that continue because of the work of this parliament. Merry Christmas.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (17:38): On indulgence, I would like to add to the Premier's remarks at the end of this parliamentary sitting year. I think all of us who come here to work owe a deep level of gratitude, a debt of gratitude to the many people who make this place happen. We wander in when the bells ring. In my case, being the Leader of the Opposition, I have a permanent office here, as some of our upper house members do; others have offices in electorates and elsewhere. We really just appear here to do our jobs for a moment and a huge amount of work goes in behind the scenes to make this place what it is, to make it the seat of democracy here in the great state of South Australia.

We throw the term 'great state' around a fair bit and say what a great place it is to live. We have the Hills, the sea, the regions, food and wine, great people and all that, and it is actually true. We look around the world today and we see so much conflict, pain, suffering, tragedy, natural disaster, man-made disaster, poverty. Yes, we have poverty here, but not really anywhere near to the extent of some places in the world. We see famine. We see difficulties every time we turn on our TV.

While there are individual challenges and tragedies in this state—some of those have been in the forefront of our minds over recent weeks in this state, perhaps more than normal—we are all exceptionally lucky to be able to call South Australia home. No matter which party is in power, government here, democracy here, is something we ought to celebrate. Today, we can celebrate it; in fact, every moment we are in here, we celebrate it because we undertake our tasks, we undertake our jobs, we undertake democracy in this state in a way that ought to be celebrated and in a way that ought to be mirrored to other places in the world because we do it pretty well here.

I am thankful every single day that my mum and dad chose to move here 21 years ago today. It is an incredible place to call home. It is an incredible place to do my job, and I think everyone here would agree with that sentiment. This building, this institution, what it represents and what happens here must be celebrated. We have to cleave onto it. We have to do all we can together across this chamber, and in the other place as well, to make sure that its traditions are upheld and that the things

that make it great continue. Many of the things that make it great are held in the hands, hearts and minds of people, not just parliamentarians—far from it—but the people who work behind the scenes to make this institution, or institutions if you see the houses as separate, work well.

I want to list a few of those names. I will not cover everyone because there are many tens if not a couple of hundred people who work here, but here are some of note: Mr Rick Crump, the Clerk of the house; Travis Freckleton, Executive Assistant to the Clerk; David Pegram, Deputy Clerk; Josh Forkert, the Clerk Assistant and Serjeant-at-Arms; Ms Michelle Martin, the Manager of Corporate Services; and in the other place, Mr Chris Schwarz, the Clerk of the Legislative Council, and Mr Guy Dickson, the Deputy Clerk and the Usher of the Black Rod. They are just some of the people who make this place tick.

Often, when I do tours of parliament—and we all do those—people know where I sit; my name is here. They know where the Premier sits. But they ask me, 'Who sits in these chairs?' I say, 'People who know what they are talking about'—people who know how this place works and how to make it work, people with an expertise that, when you add it altogether, stretches back for many decades in an accumulative sense. I think it is worth acknowledging and celebrating that it is the people who sit in these chairs around us, not the chairs of elected members but the chairs of the officials of this parliament, who ought to be recognised and celebrated at the end of this parliamentary sitting year.

The Premier mentioned that great institution of the institution, Dr John Weste, and the passion that he brings to his role in running the parliamentary library. If I have a school tour or a group going through the parliamentary library, I have my fingers crossed that we will bump into Dr Weste, if we have time, because he has an incredible amount of knowledge and passion. It just depends whether we have time or not to get in and out quickly enough to be able to hear about the Queen's mock turtle soup that she had here when she had her state dinner during her first visit to South Australia in the 1950s.

Dr Weste knows about the Queen's mock turtle soup. It almost feels sometimes that he was there and he tasted the stuff—and we have all heard it. He is an institution. He is a great man and he has brought that library to life. It is the Parliament Research Library that many of us have access to to learn about lots of different things, but his knowledge of this building, the people who have served here and really the history of this state is immense and just bloody impressive.

I wish to thank Mr Andrew Cole, a constituent of mine, for his role as Leader of Hansard, and Mr John Clarke, Deputy Leader of Hansard. Mr David Woolman, whose role it is to keep this building ticking along, I think has had a few more challenges this week than normal with all that bad weather we had earlier in the week and water appearing in parts of this building where it should not appear. They were non-traditional leaks from this building—normally you get leaks out of this building; those were leaks coming into the building—but he and his team had their work cut out this week. They have their work cut out day in and day out.

When you are managing an old building, an ancient building in some ways, a building which of course was plugged together as two halves, sometimes when you do that it does not work very well, and it comes with particular challenges to keep this building beautiful, to give this building the wow factor, and so David Woolman and his team must be mentioned especially for the work that they do to make this beautiful building what it is.

Kent Nelson, Chief Finance Officer, and Mr Peter Evans, the unit manager of PNSG are two people who also make some of the things happening behind the scenes tick along. Creon Grantham, Catering Manager: I think I was once told that in the state you have the opposition leader, you have the Premier, you have the Governor and then you have Creon. That is the order of precedence as to how this state runs. When you run a function in the Speaker's dining room, it certainly feels like that sometimes. But Creon does a great job to keep this place ticking along.

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

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: My deputy leader certainly appreciates him. You will probably have to host events on my behalf now because I will not be allowed to for saying that. Catering is complex here, and Creon does a great job in making sure it all goes well. Looking to the Blue Room, we have

Karen Steindorf, Belinda Adlington and Nicky Irons, who all serve us there. We have our protective security staff and a range of others who make sure that this parliament is what it is, and we are grateful for their contribution.

People say that Leader of the Opposition is the worst job in politics, perhaps the worst job anywhere. I do not necessarily agree. I just see it every day as a privilege. It takes me about half an hour each day when I wake up to realise I am the opposition leader, and I think that is because I have to pinch myself to realise I occupy such a significant position. There have only been 44 of us since this state came about. Twelve are still alive, most of them are Liberals—that says something—but it is a unique job. Many of the 12 I would rely on for advice and support along the way, largely because many of them are Liberals. It is a unique job with unique pressures but a unique opportunity as well.

It is my deep desire that my team and I do this job well because the system of democracy, our Westminster system, really requires us to step up and put forward an alternative vision for the state and to challenge the government along the way. It might look messy sometimes and it might look messy in question time, and it might look messy when I do my grieves after question time, but actually it works. It works pretty well most of the time, and we should be incredibly grateful for the system of democracy that we have inherited. We have our own particular takes on it along the way, but it works well and it delivers for this state.

I want to thank my leadership team who help me do my job well: the deputy leader, the member for Morialta; the Hon. Nicola Centofanti, the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council; and the Hon. Jing Lee, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council—a leadership team who serve me exceptionally well.

I want to thank my shadow ministers and my entire parliamentary party. There is not one of them I do not call a friend, there is not one of them I do not respect and there is not one of them I do not want to do the very best that they can do in both serving their constituents and also fulfilling their roles on the front bench.

My job/our jobs are made so much easier by the staff we have around us. The Premier listed staff members who rally around his team and ensure that each day they can do their jobs serving the state. On our side of the house in the Liberal Party we have the same. We have people, many of whom do not do it for the money—they could probably get paid better elsewhere—but they turn up day in, day out because they are passionate about a community, they are passionate about an ideology and they are passionate about working hard for the state of South Australia.

I want to pay particular tribute to my Chief of Staff, Ryan Smith. I tell Ryan about 75 per cent of his pay is to absorb all my nonsense and the other 25 per cent is actually to produce the goods. Being the Chief of Staff is a really difficult job, and they are at the end of the phone from first thing in the morning to last thing at night, making sure that I am equipped and my team are equipped to do our jobs well.

I want to thank Ben Harvy for his role as my media director; Elise Baker for her role in the media team; Erik Ruehl; Natalie Duenn, who is on maternity leave—and we congratulate Natalie for the birth of baby Sunny recently; it was not an easy journey for Natalie over the last couple of years, and we are just so heartened that she and her husband, Jo, have baby Sunny in their arms today. I want to thank Stuart Peevor, who works with me and Nicola Centofanti; Pia George; Julian Robertson; and Samuel Murison. Samuel is headed overseas to Oxford or Cambridge.

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

The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS: Oxford—I knew it was one of the fancy universities over there; he is very smart and he is going to do good things at Oxford University. We have Lucy Huxter, Patrick Moller and Stuart Brennan. There are also staff who work across offices in the opposition: Caitlin Organ, Dawid Jurczak, Liam Hindshaw and Jonah Edwardes.

I think it is really important to pay tribute to my electorate office. When you are the Leader of the Opposition—and I know the Premier would certainly agree with me—your ability to get to your electorate office, your ability to undertake some of the activities that other members of parliament might take for granted is that bit more limited, and my electorate is incredibly important to me.

I am only the Leader of the Opposition because first and foremost I am the member for the seat of Black, but I could not be the member for the seat of Black if it was not for the team down there in the electorate office at Hallett Cove who open the door, welcome people through, answer all the phone calls from people who phone there who really should phone here, and divert them here—the process of diverting them here might take a minute, five minutes, an hour—that is just part of the job down in the Hallett Cove office. I want to thank Jana Kranixfeld for her role as my office manager, Ben Freeman for his role assisting Jana, Rachel Koch and also Blake Darer. They do the most magnificent job in keeping everything running well.

The Premier mentioned the Public Service. While the Public Service is largely there to serve the government of the day, they also have a role in assisting the opposition. They provide us with briefings and they run our state. I really want to take this time to thank the Public Service, particularly those who are more intimately involved in the day-to-day process of cabinet and the Cabinet Office but the broader Public Service and the frontline Public Service.

Many of us will have a break over the Christmas period, but there are many who will not: police officers, firefighters, paramedics, doctors, nurses and many others. Those public servants will not necessarily be having a break over Christmas; many of them will be rostered on. They will be there to keep us safe, they will be there to catch us when something goes wrong in South Australia. There will be bushfires this summer—there is no doubt about that, there always are. We hope they are insignificant, but they will happen. There will be public servants out there fighting them and there will be public servants picking up the pieces thereafter.

There will be public servants who are trying to keep us safe on the roads. We have talked too much about the road toll in this state over the last couple of weeks, and hopefully we will not be talking about it too much over the next four weeks—but we may well be and there will be families impacted, but there will be public servants there trying to help people and breaking news to people. Those public servants deserve to be at the absolute forefront of our minds every day of the year, actually, but at Christmas time it is that little bit harder.

I will close by again saying what an incredible state we live in. I do not feel there is any animosity between me and anyone in this building. We disagree; there is a level of adversity between us in the battle of ideas, but there is no real animosity. There are certainly no hate. I do not believe there is even any great dislike. I call the Premier of South Australia a friend. There are other places in the world where he and I could not be in the same room because it would not be safe for us to be able to do so. He and I can have a coffee and we can talk on the phone about things that matter from a strategic point of view for our state. That is a great thing about our democracy, and let's hold onto that. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas, a great new year, and I look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: I understand there is some additional business and therefore it may be necessary for a minister to move that the house sit beyond 6pm. I do recognise that we are all very anxious to resolve matters as speedily as possible.

Sitting extended beyond 18:00 on motion of Hon. A. Koutsantonis.

The SPEAKER (17:57): It has been traditional for me to make a number of remarks, but because we are so close to time I simply want to amplify those remarks that have already been made and to say that this is the only occasion which we have, as a parliament, to recognise those who assist us. We are deeply grateful. We require the assistance of a small and specialised cadre of the civil or Public Service. They build up vast knowledge, they maintain that knowledge and they deploy it for our benefit—but actually they deploy it for the benefit of the people of our state.

Those people sit in front of me, above me, at the head of the chamber and right throughout this building. There are more than 150 people who come to work here every day. Their sole purpose is to assist us and to assist our democracy. There are many others who come into this building—I think on occasion there are up to 230 people here gathering when we sit. As I say, their careers are dedicated to our state, to assisting us in our roles, and we are so deeply grateful. The Premier and

the opposition leader have rightly mentioned many of those people today and, as I say, I amplify their remarks.

This is also, on indulgence of the house, an opportunity for me to briefly thank my personal staff: Airlie, Lukas, Nicole, Kayla and, by relief, Lauren. They assist me. Also working very closely with me, of course, are Rick, David and all of the house staff. They put up with me; I am sure it is not an easy task, but they do not show any immediate frustration. No doubt they take that frustration elsewhere. Thank you. Really, it is a service that cannot be overlooked.

To both houses and to both parties in this house and in the other house and to the President, of course, of the other place and to his staff, it has been a pleasure working with you all, particularly the Premier and the opposition leader.

Can I particularly mention the Leader of Government Business and the Leader of Opposition Business, with whom I work very frequently. This year, I think it is right that we emphasise the work of the whips who have achieved behind the scenes quite significant and useful reform. Their relationship maintained by the both of them is actually essential to everything we do.

I bring my remarks to a close there because we are right on 6 o'clock and, despite the extension, I am hopeful that we might resolve our business very close to 6 o'clock.

Bills

VETERINARY SERVICES BILL

Final Stages

The Legislative Council agreed to the amendments made by the House of Assembly without any amendment.

At 18:00 the house adjourned until Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 11:00.

*Answers to Questions***AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT**

In reply to **the Hon. J.A.W. GARDNER (Morialta—Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** (2 November 2023).

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs): I have been advised:

The increase is attributed to the following:

- There was one additional Senior Management Team (SMT) member in 2022-23. This was a new role, the Chief Governance Officer (CGO), which began from mid December 2022. (Noting a new Chief Finance Officer (CFO) was recruited in December 2022, with the incumbent CFO becoming the new CGO at that time).

The increase can also be attributed to various transitional salary costs, leave entitlements cashed out, pay increases, and required superannuation contribution increases.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

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The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Tourism, Minister for Multicultural Affairs): I have been advised:

Requirements for these board appointments are outlined in the Public Corporations (Adelaide Venue Management Corporation) Regulations 2013. Processes relating to this are publicly available at <https://www.dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/boards-and-committees>.

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