

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

### Wednesday, 6 March 2024

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

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

**The SPEAKER** read prayers.

#### *Bills*

### **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES (ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Introduction and First Reading*

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (10:31):** Obtained leave and introduced a bill for an act to amend the Parliamentary Committees Act 1991 and to make a related amendment to the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1990. Read a first time.

#### *Second Reading*

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

That this bill be now read a second time.

The house, indeed the parliament and the state and, in turn, the nation, will be perhaps more cognisant of the circumstances in which this bill is brought to the parliament than it might otherwise have been in the ordinary course concerning the re-establishment with some, although not unrecognisably many, changes to what has been a longstanding standing committee of this parliament in the form of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Members will be aware that over the course of that committee's history it has had cause to engage in a whole variety of ways with Aboriginal communities throughout this state and with a focus on Aboriginal lands. One might think in this season that the last thing that ought to be necessary to do would be to come along to move to re-establish a standing committee of this parliament whose purpose and whose function it is to devote the resources of the parliament to engaging with Aboriginal communities in areas of key interest to them.

It is a paradoxical thing that, in the course of the government's moving to legislate for the establishment of what is described as the Local Voices and the SA State Voice, it found it desirable at the same time to dissolve that standing committee. It was done over protest and it was, moreover, done in circumstances where it was acknowledged that that very legislative step might have provided an opportunity to reform and enhance that committee and to provide any such legislated Voice with an opportunity as part of its work to engage with a standing committee of this parliament. But that was expressly rejected as a mode of operation for the Local and State Voice at the time—consciously expressly rejected by the government.

There is nothing mysterious about that. That was a course adopted by the minister in terms of framing the functions and nature of activities of the Local and State Voice to be legislated and, as I said in the debate in relation to that matter, 'Hang on, has this been thought through? Is it inadvertent?', and the response was no. In its conception, from the government's viewpoint, the Voice will somehow replace that committee function.

The follow-up question that many of us might ask—and I have certainly asked in the lead-up—is, first, 'How does the parliament devote its resources and capacities to engaging in an organised way, and how do individual members of the house and of the other place apply themselves to engaging with the Voice, let alone Aboriginal communities more broadly?', and the answer was, 'Oh, that will be up to individual members. Individual members are free to chart their own course'.

Well, okay, I regard that as an unmitigated retrograde step in terms of this parliament's commitment of resources and capacity in an organised way towards engagement with Aboriginal people. But here we are now in March 2024, and the circumstances of the introduction of this bill are further exacerbated by the fact that not only was the committee dissolved as part of the passage of the State Voice act—this was way back a year ago now—with the result that it ceased to exist at the end of June last year (we are getting on towards a year without the parliamentary committee) but, for reasons that are on the public record that have ensued over the bulk of last year, we also do not have a Voice, because the elections for that, which were supposed to happen in September, have been put off until a couple of weeks from now.

Not only that, but members might be surprised to learn, if they have not read about it already, that the South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council (SAAAC) that, as the Attorney-General's Department website I understand as recently as this morning is describing in summary, operated as the government of South Australia's peak advisory body on matters of Aboriginal affairs, programs and policy between 2006 and 2023, also ceased to exist on 30 June last year. It is described on the website as follows:

The Council ceased on 30 June 2023 in anticipation of the establishment of South Australia's First Nations Voice to Parliament.

It is not just the standing committee that is gone, but the SAAAC has been gone now for the better part of a year as well. That might be regarded as a broader remark in terms of where the government's delay and inaction (I think it is fair to describe it as that) in implementing what was legislated with more fanfare than we have seen in relation to legislation from this parliament, really without exception, for quite some time.

The reality is that as a direct result of the legislation we are left without a standing committee that speaks up, engages and diverts resources in the interests of improvement to Aboriginal people, and we are left without the South Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council, that peak advisory body, also for the better part of the year. Well, it is what it is. At best, we are drifting in the whole public space, even when applying the government's agenda—and I will have a word or two to say about how and why we have got to where we have in terms of the Voice in a moment.

Let us be clear about the merits of a standing committee, about what a standing committee can do that individual members of parliament cannot do, let alone members of relevant communities or subject matter interests. Standing committees of this parliament are bodies that all members should be proud of and dedicated to the defence, nurture, reform and improvement of over time. This is no exception.

The bill would establish—now with the broader remit—a standing committee to be titled the Aboriginal Affairs Committee. It would be established as a committee of the parliament—again, no surprise to anyone here, including those who have served on the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee. The committee is provided for, as the subject of clause 2 of the bill and as set out in section 15Q, to be a committee involving members of the house and of another place—very much in recognisable form to the structure of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Division 2 then sets out the functions of the committee. Again, members of this place will recognise many of those functions as being aligned with those of the previous Aboriginal Lands Standing Committee.

As I have done on more than one occasion, I take up, adopt and would amplify the sentiments of member for Giles (who has served with me on the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee) in this regard, in expressing sentiments along the lines that there ought to be reform, over time, of the scope and functions of the committee of this parliament that is dedicated to focusing on matters of Aboriginal interest. I am entirely with the member for Giles on that.

It is in that regard that I have taken the opportunity to consider what the range of functions of the Aboriginal Affairs Committee ought to be so that the remit is appropriately broad and appropriately permits engagement and, in the interests of Aboriginal people, provides all of those resources, powers and functions and can act in their interests.

The dissolution of the committee—to take up the sentiments of the member for Giles, as have been expressed from time to time—is at the very least a 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' measure when legislating for the new Voice. But, as I said in the debate, it is actually striking at the functional capacity of the Voice. Again, without relitigating that debate (the legislation has passed), it remains my view that any Local and State Voice that is to be elected in coming weeks and coming to exercise its functions will be markedly more functional, productive, empowered, engaged—call it what you like—if it has the capacity to draw on a standing committee of this parliament with which to work up matters of interest to Aboriginal people.

Because the committee has been jettisoned, we have now legislated a set of circumstances in which there is to be a number of elected bodies who, again—and it has been put as a virtue—are not to meet more than four times a year except with the permission of the minister, and in terms of the business of this place, the nature and extent of the engagement is to be characterised by, if a member wishes, coming along and having a contribution to a second reading debate on a bill and presenting a report from time to time.

The opportunity that is presented to engage with a standing committee of the parliament, by distinct contrast, is one that involves dealing with a group of members of this place and the other place that will meet generally as often as the house meets and will be able, as a matter of functioning activity, to grapple with a far wider range of matters than simply those things that make their way to being bills that are before the parliament but, rather, matters of concern.

As well as that, those members of the committee—of both places, remember, within the parliament—will be charged with responsibility to step up and be actively engaged themselves so that the parliament is more effectively in a position to work towards improvement and engaging with matters of merit.

As things stand, in the environment that we have been left with over the last year or so, where individual members are charting their own course, we are really in a much diminished way in this parliament able to engage and involve members in terms of having a better understanding of Aboriginal matters. That includes issues that can be conducted here locally, and it also includes that capacity in an organised way to get around to different parts of the state, to communicate with Aboriginal communities in an organised way and to bring matters to attention.

I cite, just as one basic example, my visit recently to the Davenport community in response to an invitation of a resident to go and to meet and visit, and I appreciate the opportunity to see for myself and get a sense of some of the issues that are keenly felt by residents in that particular community. That is within my shadow portfolio responsibility. It is an activity that I enjoy and it is something that will inform me in terms of the understanding of the priorities and issues.

How much more effective that can be when, as an organised group, those members of the committee can go and undertake a visit, can undertake work on inquiry, can require the adducing of evidence and can, in turn, present findings back to this parliament, as the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee did so effectively just in the course of its final two reports of inquiry before it was wound up in June last year: one on governance and one on heritage matters. There is more work to be done, and more wideranging engagement.

The functions of the committee, as it would be reinstated, go broader than those of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee, although they still include functions to review the operations of those key acts. I note that we look forward to a somewhat delayed 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary recognition, in particular, of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Land Rights Act, which ought to have happened in 2021 but has been delayed until now, in part because of difficulties with COVID. That is coming up, and the review of the operation of those acts remains a key matter.

It is also to inquire into matters affecting Indigenous Australians, to consider any other matter that might be referred to the committee by the minister and to perform other functions imposed on the committee under this or any other act, or by resolution of both houses of the parliament. So it is a pretty broadranging remit.

In the time that is available to me, I will mention as well that there is a related amendment to the Parliamentary Remuneration Act, which is to simply identify the proper name of the new

committee and the presiding member of what would be termed the Aboriginal affairs committee. It is a change that needs to be made, partly evidencing the government's haste in legislating the Voice in the first place. It is still sitting there, providing for the relevant arrangements for the Presiding Member of the Aboriginal Lands Parliamentary Standing Committee, which of course no longer exists. That is a change that needs to be made anyway, and I suggest that there is no better time for the house to move for the establishment of this standing committee. I commend the bill to the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Odenwalder.

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

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 18 October 2023.)

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (10:54):** I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....25  
Noes.....17  
Majority .....8

**AYES**

Andrews, S.E.  
Boyer, B.I.  
Clancy, N.P.  
Fulbrook, J.P.  
Hughes, E.J.  
Michaels, A.  
Pearce, R.K.  
Savvas, O.M.  
Wortley, D.J.

Bettison, Z.L.  
Brown, M.E.  
Close, S.E.  
Hildyard, K.A.  
Hutchesson, C.L.  
Mullighan, S.C.  
Piccolo, A.  
Szakacs, J.K.

Bignell, L.W.K.  
Champion, N.D.  
Cook, N.F.  
Hood, L.P.  
Koutsantonis, A.  
Odenwalder, L.K. (teller)  
Picton, C.J.  
Thompson, E.L.

**NOES**

Basham, D.K.B.  
Brock, G.G.  
Hurn, A.M.  
Pederick, A.S.  
Speirs, D.J.  
Telfer, S.J.

Batty, J.A.  
Ellis, F.J.  
McBride, P.N.  
Pisoni, D.G. (teller)  
Tarzia, V.A.  
Whetstone, T.J.

Bell, T.S.  
Gardner, J.A.W.  
Patterson, S.J.R.  
Pratt, P.K.  
Teague, J.B.

**PAIRS**

Stinson, J.M.

Cowdrey, M.J.

Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS REDUCTION (TARGETS) AMENDMENT  
BILL**

*Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 2 November 2022.)

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (10:58):** I move:

That this order of the day be postponed.

The house divided on the motion:

Ayes .....25  
Noes.....17  
Majority .....8

#### AYES

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

#### NOES

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

#### PAIRS

Stinson, J.M.	Cowdrey, M.J.
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Motion thus carried; order of the day postponed.

#### *Motions*

### **PATIENT ASSISTANCE TRANSPORT SCHEME**

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (11:06):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) recognises the importance of the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS) to regional patients that are required to travel over 100km for essential medical services;
- (b) notes that the accommodation allowance for the PATS scheme has not increased since 2014; and
- (c) calls on the state government to increase the accommodation allowance and all subsidies to be tied to CPI.

In 2013, I began my campaign to be the member for Mount Gambier. During this time, I was approached by a local resident called Fred de Bruin. Fred had undergone life-threatening heart surgery and had just had part of his Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS) claim refused and was seeking my assistance, as the candidate, to have his story heard.

Fred was seeking an accommodation payment for his wife, Heather, who I got to know very well over that period of time and since. Heather travelled with Fred to Adelaide as his escort while he underwent his procedure. He had discovered conflicting information in the PATS booklet and on the website regarding entitlements of patient escorts and was determined to fight for what he believed was right. If you ever met Fred—who has, sadly, passed away now—he certainly made sure of that.

Prompted by Fred's story, I set up a community meeting to hear firsthand residents' experiences with the PATS scheme. What became clear was that while PATS was an essential service for country residents, it was in drastic need of an overhaul and increased funding. I started a petition calling for serious reform to PATS which garnered over 2,000 signatures and was presented to parliament in early 2014. I was fortunate enough to become the member for Mount Gambier in March of the same year, and so began my now 10-year campaign to improve PATS for our regional residents.

I do not think anyone here would deny the crucial role that PATS currently plays. Last year, over 13,000 South Australians received financial assistance from the scheme. While improvements have been made in recent years, including a much-needed doubling of the fuel subsidy, what is clear from the stories that we regularly receive in our office is it is not enough.

The last significant independent review into PATS was conducted in 2013 by Dr David Filby. Some of the main themes to come from the numerous letters and submissions at the time were the need for increased fuel and accommodation subsidy, the administration of PATS claims, the lack of provision for escorts and carers, and the need for expanded coverage of services. I would argue that those themes are still very relevant today.

As I mentioned earlier, the fuel subsidy was increased last year and I do thank the health minister for that. But let us not forget it had been over 20 years since the previous change. In 2001 when the subsidy stood at 16¢ per kilometre, petrol averaged 87¢ per litre; 2023's average petrol price was \$1.91 per litre. While the subsidy may have increased 100 per cent, the cost of petrol has increased 120 per cent, so we could argue South Australians are getting less today than they did in 2001. That is why I state there must be an inclusion in the PAT Scheme that allows for annual CPI indexation.

This becomes even more apparent when we look at accommodation costs. It has been 10 years since the accommodation subsidy was last increased, from \$33 per night to \$44 per night, the lowest rate anywhere in Australia. A quick search of Adelaide's accommodation will show you that \$44 does not get you very far, maybe a tent somewhere. In comparison, New South Wales residents receive \$75 per night for the first seven nights, which then increases to \$120 per night from night 8 onwards. New South Wales also provides a \$40 per night subsidy for those staying in private accommodation, allowing them to contribute something towards their cost to stay with friends or relatives. There is no such provision in South Australia.

We also need to highlight that South Australia is the only state that requires residents—unless they hold a healthcare card or are pensioners—to pay for the first night's accommodation themselves. My electorate is approximately a five-hour drive from Adelaide. I am constantly hearing that residents are undertaking daytrips to Adelaide, which can often turn into 14-hour journeys, simply because they cannot afford the accommodation. At a time when our road toll is higher than it ever has been and we are constantly pushing the road safety message, we should be doing everything we can to encourage safe driving. It needs to be remembered that a lot of the people accessing the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme are in their 80s and beyond, and I do not think 14 hours on the road is a safe practice.

Wendy from Port MacDonnell contacted our office with her recent experience. She had submitted her claim form for two trips to Adelaide with a night's accommodation for her husband, who was escorting her while Wendy was treated in hospital. Her specialist had said that an escort was required to support Wendy while she travelled, yet her claim was rejected and the accommodation not paid. Without her husband's assistance, an extra night's accommodation for each stay would have been required, and as her second visit involved Wendy being under anaesthesia, she was unable to drive for a further 24 hours and would not have been able to leave hospital without a responsible person to take care of her.

Yet when Wendy appealed the decision, she was told, 'As the specialist has written support this is not a valid medical reason.' This strict interpretation of the rules surrounding escorts and support carers is not in touch with the needs of patients. How can we expect patients who are travelling long journeys for a hospital stay, often when they are extremely unwell or frail and elderly, to undertake these journeys on their own?

Paul and Gwenda from Mount Gambier recently submitted their accommodation claim for a stay. They have been using PATS for 10 years, as Gwenda suffers from MS. They used the booking platform Wotif, which they have done previously without issue, and provided the confirmation to PATS. Their claim was denied. When they appealed the decision, they were told it was not a tax invoice so PATS was unable to accept the receipt from Wotif.

After further investigation by my office, we discovered that Wotif is not registered for GST in Australia and is therefore unable to provide an appropriate tax invoice for PATS. How is the public supposed to know this information? The users of PATS, again—I have said before—are often elderly and can struggle to navigate online booking systems. The stress of having claims rejected due to perceived technicalities places further unnecessary anxiety on patients.

The bureaucracy and red tape around navigating the PATS system is at best frustrating and at its worst, I would say, dangerous. We are finding ourselves in a situation where people are not undergoing medical treatment as they cannot afford to do so or they are unable to navigate often complicated processes of submitting a PATS claim.

Just last week, Limestone Coast residents Pauline and John dropped into our electorate office. They wanted to detail their experience with PATS and how it had impacted them during Pauline's cancer journey.

Pauline was diagnosed with cancer in December of 2022 and subsequently spent 13 weeks, between January and April of 2023, in Adelaide undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Pauline filed her block treatment PATS claim after her treatment but had her claim rejected. We are currently trying to assist her with following up why this was the case.

Pauline and John were offered accommodation through the Cancer Council at Greenhill Lodge; however, Pauline was conscious of taking accommodation that others might need so elected to decline the offer as they were in the fortunate position of having family they could stay with. However, this decision also came at an extra cost. John was not always able to be in Adelaide, which resulted in Pauline having to take a taxi to her appointment, adding additional financial burden as there is no provision in PATS for taxi services.

Due to the nature of Pauline's treatment she has since suffered ongoing issues with severe hearing loss, loss of eyesight, a perforated bowel, burns, dental issues and more. This has meant regular trips to Adelaide to visit specialists that are not available to her in Mount Gambier. However, many of these appointments, such as her audiology and dental appointments, come under allied health and are not covered by PATS. These issues are a direct result of her cancer treatment, yet it is up to Pauline and John to carry the full financial burden of addressing these issues.

The next step in Pauline's journey is 40 days of hyperbaric oxygen therapy at the Royal Adelaide Hospital: 40 days away from her home and family and relying on the kindness of relatives while she is undergoing treatment. There needs to be further investigation into the expansion of PATS to allied health services, particularly if it is linked to a primary diagnosis such as cancer and treatment is not available locally.

Until her diagnosis Pauline worked as a nurse at our local hospital. It is now unlikely she will ever work again, and she has been unable to drive for the past 12 months. Her independence has been taken away and the physical, emotional, and financial effects of Pauline's cancer and subsequent treatment have taken a heavy toll on Pauline, John and their extended family. While they are grateful for the support they have received, they want their story told to raise awareness of how this affects everyday country people so that others do not face the same barriers. This is an example of how one diagnosis can take a hardworking family from financial independence to living week to week.

Patients using this scheme are doing so because they cannot access the services locally. They do not have the ability to return to the comfort of their own home at the end of a day of treatment in Adelaide. They are often in a motel room worrying about the financial implications of accommodation, travel and time off work when they really need to be focusing and should be focusing on recovery.

Our rural patients require increased support. I believe the government must introduce a practical subsidy to aid country residents in accessing the necessary medical treatment that is not available locally, without facing excessive financial strain. This subsidy should be regularly adjusted in line with CPI to keep pace with rising costs. Immediate action is needed, beginning with an increase of the accommodation allowance. It is unacceptable that the subsidy has remained unchanged for a decade and we must do better for the future health and wellbeing of our regional residents.

**Mr ODENWALDER (Elizabeth) (11:20):** I move to amend the motion as follows:

Delete paragraph (c) and insert new paragraph (c):

- (c) commends the Malinauskas Labor government for doubling the fuel subsidy and committing to annual indexation; and

Insert a new paragraph (d):

- (d) calls on the state government to continue to review further improvements to the PATS over time.

I move this amendment with the full knowledge and acknowledgement that the member for Mount Gambier has been pursuing this for a long time and is a tireless advocate for his community, but for the reasons I outline here, we are putting the amendment to the floor and we will see how the member for Mount Gambier feels about it.

The Patient Assistance Transport Scheme provides financial subsidies to patients who are required to travel more than 100 kilometres each way to access necessary and approved medical specialist appointments that are not available locally. The scheme is designed not to provide full reimbursement, but rather to provide a vital financial offset via a subsidy when patients have no option but to travel for specialist services.

Changes to the scheme are considered on a regular basis. For example, in 2023, significant improvements were made with the fuel subsidy increased from 16¢ to 32¢ per kilometre, a prosthetic and orthotic subsidy introduced and all Kangaroo Island residents becoming eligible for a ferry subsidy when travelling to the mainland. The accommodation subsidy provides \$40 (\$44 with GST) per person per night, with an additional \$40 per night for an approved escort. Non-concession cardholders are required to fund the first night of accommodation.

The Liberal Party have suddenly taken an interest in the scheme, despite a four-year term when they made no substantial reforms. Their rationale, cost of living, is particularly galling given global events drove up fuel prices in 2020 and they made no attempt then to improve the subsidy for regional South Australians. In contrast, the Malinauskas Labor government doubled the fuel subsidy in our first year, which is the first fuel subsidy increase in more than 20 years, with the subsidy last increased from 10¢ per kilometre in 2001.

There is a common theme here for the Liberal Party, who have still not released any of their own health policies, including any regarding the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme. While further reforms to PATS will continue to be considered over time, the Malinauskas Labor government is continuing to focus its investments in growing specialist services in regional areas, which will reduce the need for regional patients to travel and be accommodated away from home.

This includes infrastructure upgrades and workforce initiatives across regional South Australia, particularly for our larger regional hubs such as Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Naracoorte, Port Augusta and Whyalla, and our growing peri-urban cities of Gawler, Mount Barker and Victor Harbor. For those reasons, while commending the member for Mount Gambier for his motion, I seek support for the amendment.

**Ms PRATT (Frome) (11:23):** I rise to certainly support the original motion and pass reflections on the amendment that has been put. I thank the member for Mount Gambier for his advocacy on this issue and recognise that since his election, and before, he has been a consistent voice on this, as have all the country MPs who represent the Liberal Party in this chamber in this current term and previous terms.

I note that comments have been made in support of the PAT Scheme by members opposite, the member for Stuart and the member for Giles. I think country MPs generally understand what city



MPs do not, and that is that our inboxes and our electorate offices are flooded with representations from patients who are already sick. That is the battle they are facing, and here comes an administrative burden that they battle sometimes on a daily basis.

Regarding the government's amendment, comment has just been made that this scheme is not designed to provide full reimbursement, but it is a false economy for the government to suggest that they are investing in country roads and regional health services and that this is just a part payment, when the anecdotes that will come through today dispute that. There is a multimillion dollar backlog on our road maintenance.

There is a gentleman living in Balaklava who needs to make decisions about the safest and most comfortable route to the city. He can go west from Balaklava onto Port Wakefield Road and accrue or meet the threshold of 100 kilometres travelled, but the more direct route on the Nine Mile up Traeger Road, as the member for Stuart is familiar with, comes under the 100-kilometre threshold. He has a terrible journey and is suffering from comorbidities and there is no reimbursement or part-payment for his trouble. So, it is to be disputed that the government is investing where it needs to. It is certainly not investing in all elements of regional health.

Today is an opportunity to support a motion that brings attention to the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme, but also requires a thorough prosecution of the flaws in this system. We are seeing and hearing reports of unprecedented delays. There is an administrative burden, not just on individuals but on charities, not-for-profits and organisations that are part of the supply chain in providing accommodation to those who need it. I note just a sample of organisations like the Cancer Council, Cottages for Country Care, and Ronald McDonald House.

We are certainly getting reports from these organisations that, while they are providing an essential service, often not funded by government investment, they are carrying the moral duty of providing accommodation and wraparound services, but they are also penalised by the bureaucracy and red tape of this system. These organisations and charities that are providing accommodation services are seeing thousands of people come through their doors on a yearly basis, and carrying up to hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars, of reimbursement payments coming through.

The challenge back to the government, the minister and the Rural Support Service within the Barossa, Hills and Fleurieu LHN is to get on top of their paperwork. Every country Liberal MP has reflected on the number of complaints and distressed phone calls from people who are experiencing delayed payments. Late last year, the RSS said on radio, in recognition of these four to six-week delays, that they thought they would be getting on top of it within a couple of weeks. I am here to report to the house that that is not the case and it is a disgrace.

Just as an example, I have a resident, Allen, in Eudunda, who is still waiting on payments from late last year, and the human toll in prosecuting the success or the failures of this scheme will be told at length today, I am sure. The paperwork is cumbersome. This policy is littered with conditions that mean that it is engineered to reject and decline the applicants more often than they would be successful. I think the best example of that now is the very overdue attention on the overnight accommodation subsidy: \$40 is unacceptable in 2024. It does not come close to the commercial rate, and it needs to be addressed urgently by the minister and his department.

The government challenges the opposition to put a policy position forward. Well, listen to the speeches today, and I think you will hear the consistent cry for an increase in the overnight accommodation rate, an entire reform of this policy and its criteria for eligibility. What we should be seeing by comparison to other states is a cumulative approach to kilometres travelled.

Bob Moulton, of Melrose in the Flinders Ranges, has had to go to the media—in the member for Stuart's own electorate—explaining that for the renal dialysis he requires three times a week to keep him alive for the rest of his life, he has to travel from Melrose into Port Augusta. That is the most direct and local service he can access. But that is going to accumulate to 140 kilometres a week. Is he entitled to apply to the PAT Scheme for reimbursement? No, he is not. That does not happen in the city. These examples do not happen in the city.

We certainly would argue, as country MPs, country Liberal MPs, that the scheme does not go far enough. When you compare it to other jurisdictions, our overnight accommodation rate is the

lowest in the land. While we look at the 32¢ per kilometre rebate or subsidy, again it is a false economy. This policy really stipulates that we will be paying more to fewer people because the threshold that you have to meet is you have travelled 100 kilometres one way and, truly, that pushes people further out.

People further out than 100 kilometres are entitled only to this rebate, which means the further away you live, the more likely you are to stay overnight in the city. The member for Mount Gambier makes this point. Whether it is from the South-East or the West Coast, the travel time on the road—and it is not a debate about roads today or the quality of the roads, but it should be because it is part of the story—the further you have to travel, the longer you are on the road, the more unwell you are, the more likely you are to be requiring overnight accommodation, and that is if your appointment goes ahead. The stories that we have heard, the number of times that that appointment has been cancelled, that that surgery was delayed, and now you are unwell, stuck in the city without plans, left in limbo to find accommodation, and perhaps you did not travel the 100 kilometres, so you do not qualify for that subsidy anyway.

I think other opportunities to improve this scheme come back to the frontline of GPs who, while diagnosing and providing that primary care to their patients, have an extra duty that we are laying on them, and that is to promote, to be the comms agent and arm for the South Australian health department, so we are relying on our GPs to diagnose, consult, squish all of those assessments into their 15-minute consult, and promote a PAT Scheme to a resident who might never have heard of it before. I think the government needs to do a lot more to promote the existence of it.

The impact to regional health is high, and the figure could be as high as 30 per cent of patients who are in our city hospitals are from regional South Australia. If we are not going to see the government invest in regional services like it needs to, then the Minister for Health and Wellbeing should expect that our country patients are making their way to the city. They are part of a system that is struggling to admit and discharge patients. We certainly want to see more investment in our bigger country hospitals, so that where treatment is possible it can be provided.

A gentleman living in my electorate required one injection for cancer treatment a week for 18 months, but because he could not get that locally he had to travel to the northern suburbs, but it was under the 100 kilometres, so it is clear today, as I commend the motion, that this is an opportunity for reform. I commend the motion to the house.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (11:34):** I welcome the motion as a country member but I also welcome the amendment, because clearly we are stating that there needs to be further review and further improvement of the PATS system. Any local member in the country is going to receive a whole range of stories about PATS and how it needs to be improved.

There has been incremental change over time. During the Weatherill government, there was a 30 per cent increase in funding for PATS, with some improvement when it came to escorts and a number of other changes. Of course, this government has doubled the travel subsidy, which has made a significant difference to a lot of people. But accommodation is one of those things that still stands out as needing some adjustment, and that will be considered in the goodness of time—hopefully, not too much time.

Improvement is necessary, and the complaints about the flexibility and responsiveness in relation to PATS are accurate. They were accurate during the term of the previous government, a government that chose not to increase the travel subsidy, I would point out, when they had the opportunity to do so.

When it comes to responsiveness and flexibility, there needs to be improvement. There needs to be, sometimes, the application of common sense. Sometimes, people who are making decisions in Adelaide need to have a look at the map of South Australia and the main transport routes in the state so they do not say to someone in Whyalla, 'Your nearest professional is not in Adelaide but in Wallaroo,' but the person has to depend upon catching a Stateliner or a Greyhound bus, or whatever it is now, to get to that place. Often, Adelaide is a lot simpler.

There is always this tension in wanting to locate services especially in the bigger regional hospitals—preferably resident specialists and others—but that has been very challenging over the

last decade or so. We have seen a reduction of a range of specialists who are willing to live in regional communities, which I think is very unfortunate, but we still have visiting specialists to our major hospitals. There is an issue there with visiting specialists, and it is something that is incredibly important; that is, continuity of care.

You might have someone who has been seeing a specialist in Adelaide for many years who knows their case back to front, and that person is denied PATS because there is at least a relevant visiting specialist in a nearby community or in the community in which they live, but that visiting specialist has not had the background with that particular patient. So, sometimes there is that tension.

Another issue surrounding that is that you often get in regional communities—once again, usually the bigger regional communities where you have visiting specialists—a revolving door of specialists. I will come back to the importance of continuity of care, and I do not pretend that it is necessarily an easy one to address. We do want services in the country so people do not have to travel but, in making decisions about providing subsidised assistance for patients travelling to Adelaide, we have to take into account, and we should take into account, continuity of care because it is an important element.

The stories that people come to see us about are many and varied, and I think all country MPs have their dealings with PATS to try to get changes to decisions that have been made. In one tragic case in some respects—because it was a wrong diagnosis in a country hospital—someone was diagnosed with a hernia and operated on, even though the person said, 'Listen, I've had this small hernia for many years; this is not the issue.' The specialist insisted it was the hernia, and that small hernia was operated on. He came back to the hospital, still in distress, some months later and it was terminal pancreatic cancer.

This person also had a cardiac condition, and the level of communication between the visiting cardiac specialist from Adelaide and the oncologist in Whyalla was not great and a number of things happened. This person took himself off to see an oncologist and a cardiologist in Adelaide, both of whom would communicate effectively about the condition, and PATS knocked him back.

There were four visits to Adelaide and he was knocked back four times before he came to see me. This is under the previous government, but there is a continuity of these issues. I will give credit to Stephen Wade: when I wrote to him about this issue a change was made to policy so that for people with terminal conditions it became far easier to access PATS.

Clearly, a range of things have to be done, and sometimes when you look at the health budget you have to look at the wider context. This is where I get a bit dark with those opposite, especially with their federal colleagues. The ripping up of the federal-state health agreement by the Abbott government stripped billions of dollars out of the public health system, and that had an ongoing cascading impact. This was a system under stress even before COVID.

They did that to the public hospital system, which obviously affects regional communities as well—either the services in regional communities or the system relating to higher-end surgery and other specialist needs in Adelaide. Not content just to cut back on the public hospital system and the federal government's contribution, they froze the Medicare rebate, which had multiple impacts. It led to the partial collapse of bulk billing, so that meant that some of the most vulnerable people delayed seeing a doctor and often ended up in accident and emergency in public hospitals in a worse condition than they would otherwise have been.

The freeze on the Medicare rebate had another impact, namely, the number of graduates choosing to become GPs reduced very significantly. That was not the only factor when it came to graduates deciding to be GPs—a whole range of issues were at work. But the federal policies that were pursued over a long period of time by the Coalition had an incredibly damaging impact upon our health system.

When we look at the reforms needed at the state level, it has to be taken into account with the wider changes and what we do. I am incredibly confident that this minister understands these issues and that there will be a serious look at all the issues raised, both here today and on an ongoing basis by individual members. At some point we will arrive at a point where we make some of the necessary improvements.

Those of us in the country know that there are mortality and morbidity gaps compared with the metropolitan area. I always argue that you need to pull apart those figures—you cannot just look at aggregate country figures and aggregate metropolitan figures. Some is the result of socio-economic determinants, and these issues impact on that, but clearly some of it is about access to services, distance and remoteness.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:44):** I rise to support the original motion by the member for Mount Gambier, in regard to the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme:

That this house—

- (a) recognises the importance of the Patient Assisted Transport Scheme (PATS) to regional patients that are required to travel over 100km for essential medical services;
- (b) notes that the accommodation allowance for the PATS scheme has not increased since 2014; and
- (c) calls on the state government to increase the accommodation allowance and all subsidies to be tied to CPI.

There are many people—about 30 per cent of the population—who live outside Adelaide, and many of those live outside the 100-kilometre limit to access the PATS scheme.

With the redistribution of boundaries there are not many in my electorate who can access the scheme; parts of Mannum are really the only places that are eligible. It is 100.2 kilometres from Adelaide to Mannum, and I have had correspondence from people who have said, 'Well, we miss out by half a kilometre, or a kilometre, five kilometres.' It all depends on exactly where you live, either in the town or on the edge of the town or in the surrounding areas. It is a bit of tough love for those who do not qualify, but I guess you have to have a boundary somewhere.

It is interesting to note that up to 30 per cent of the people in Adelaide hospitals (and this reflects on the 30 per cent of the people who live in the state) are country people, so there are many people who have to travel to Adelaide for various services, whether it is specialist services or cancer treatment, a whole range of specialist services that cannot be accessed in the country. Sadly, it has got to the stage where it is very hard to attract even general practitioners to some country areas, even though a lot of the time you get people—and it does not matter whether it is in health or whatever sector—who, when they travel to the bush, suddenly realise how good it is and end up staying there and setting up their life there.

If you look at the extremities of the state, as the member for Mount Gambier already put it, Mount Gambier is five hours south of Adelaide. If you want to go further out, right out to the Western Australia border, Border Village in the member for Flinders' electorate is 1,254.9 kilometres. Innamincka, up in the north-east corner, is 1,024.3 kilometres. In some of those areas people might have access to enable them to fly in, but it is certainly a long drive—and some of them would absolutely drive to get the health services required. Just in regard to flying, it is great to see that all-weather airstrip up there at Innamincka, on bitumen.

In regard to what PATS supports, it obviously supports transport and accommodation when people fit the eligibility criteria to access those necessary medical specialist services that are not available locally. That is notwithstanding that there are visiting specialists who come out; there are certainly visiting specialists who come out to Murray Bridge, but it should be noted that Murray Bridge is only about 75 kilometres from the city, so it does not qualify anyway.

The scheme is funded by government and administered by the Rural Support Service through the six regional local health networks. We had an election commitment, before the last election, to ensure that the fuel allowance rebate would increase by double to 32¢ per kilometre.

The Labor opposition scorned us at the time. It took Labor another seven months to announce in a city paper that they would double the scheme. That is welcome—it is a bit too late, but it is welcome. That was for appointments from 1 January 2023. No other improvements have been made since. Instead, we on this side of the house, especially those of us in the regional areas, continue to receive plenty of feedback that the processing of reimbursements is delayed by many weeks at times.

The accommodation rate for the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme is the lowest of the state and it is leaving many people out of pocket. A lot of these people have to stay—and I know this firsthand from talking to some country patients—for some cancer services. They have to come in the night before because they need to be there first thing in the morning, so there is obviously an accommodation cost to take up.

This is where the issue is. With not enough money being invested into country health, it certainly makes sure that more country patients have to come to Adelaide to see specialist doctors. I salute other members on this side of the house who have championed the cause for country patients.

The eligibility criteria includes that you must live more than 100 kilometres away from the nearest treating specialist, that you are a permanent South Australian resident, that you are receiving treatment claimable under Medicare, and that you have claimed any benefits from a private health fund first, if applicable. Under the scheme, there is a requirement for a medical specialist pathway to be accessible for a subsidy and this means that the person must have an appointment with a recognised medical specialist under the PATS subsidy scheme.

Health professional appointments such as allied health, general dentists, nursing professionals and GPs are not covered in this scheme, but approved services include the Pregnancy Advisory Centre, BreastScreen SA, chemotherapy services, prosthetic and orthotic clinics, radiology services (provided they are referred by a GP or an approved medical specialist), renal dialysis, clients that have been admitted to country hospitals, and inpatient rehabilitation services. That is the list of eligible treatments. There are some other subsidies around the accommodation allowance and there is some assistance with private medical travel.

In 2022, the Cancer Council of South Australia, together with other local South Australian charities, asked the incoming state government to increase the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme for accommodation from \$40 a night to \$100 for singles, and from \$80 a night to \$115 for couples. Certainly, when it comes to seeking further reform in this scheme, there is no more credible voice than the Cancer Council of South Australia.

I want to note the incredible work that the Cancer Council do in this state and their recent upgrade of accommodation to make it more comfortable for those patients who already are outside the comfort zone of their own home. A lot of these people are older patients who are unhappy enough that they have to be in Adelaide, and certainly organisations such as the Cancer Council make it the best they can for people to access those vital life-saving services. I commend the original motion.

**Mr ELLIS (Narungga) (11:54):** I rise to support the original motion as it was put by the member for Mount Gambier, but, in so doing, I would like to make it clear to the house that that does not mean that I necessarily disagree with the content of the amendment. Certainly, the doubling of the fuel subsidy is a good thing, committing to annual indexation is a good thing, and continuing to review further improvements to the PATS is also a good thing. But I do object that the amendment attempts to remove 'calls on the state government to increase the accommodation allowance' and committing to it being tied to the CPI. I think that is a pivotal part of the motion as it was originally put, and I will be supporting that original motion due to the fact that that disappears in the amended one.

I imagine that, over the course of the debate this morning, we will have quite a few similar stories that are told by different regional members, which goes to highlight how widespread this problem is, if I can call it that, and how many constituent complaints we all get as regional members. I know that, in my almost six years as a member, it has been a consistent theme in our inbox: people who are having difficulties with PATS, either in accessing it or in understanding the wisdom as to why some applications are approved and others rejected. I know that this is a problem across the state.

I also know, and I think it should be noted, that it is a difficult problem for the administrators to have. The complexity in trying to create a solution that suits all is a difficult one. There will always be people who find themselves in the grey area, and trying to come up with a solution that will service all those people who find themselves in unique scenarios is a difficult thing for those administrators to do. Having said that, I do think that there is greater room for those people to understand that there

could be flexibility applied on a case-by-case basis, so that some of those people who contact our office with obvious shortcomings in the way their claim has been assessed might find themselves funded and being able to access better health services, like their counterparts in the city do.

I also want to make clear from the outset that it does pain me a little bit that we have to have this debate about PATS consistently. I would much rather be having a debate about how we can get services into the country rather than making it easier for people to get from the country to the city. It is a double-edged sword. I quite often tell constituents, when they come into the office, 'I'm more than happy to support you and do my best to try to get this claim approved or overturned so that you can be refunded, but my primary goal, as the member for Narungga, will always be to try to ensure that our local health services are increased and improved so that fewer people have to go to Adelaide.'

It will have a dramatic effect on ramping, it will have a dramatic effect on congested hospitals in Adelaide and it will have a wonderful effect on our regional communities. It will encourage people to move there and stay there when they might become more old and frail, and it would really make for a livelier community. So, in supporting this motion, I do want to make clear to my constituents who may be listening that my primary goal, as the member for Narungga, will be to increase and improve our local health services so that fewer people need to access PATS and get to the city.

But until that happens—and hopefully it happens soon; we are working away assiduously on it—we do have a flood of people contacting our office with different PATS concerns. I will take this opportunity to communicate a couple of those to this house and to try to make sure that their concerns are on the record, so that in passing this motion, hopefully in its original form, it might trigger some action and improve these concerns.

The first one I want to share is directly applicable to the motion as it was originally put. A constituent of mine from Moonta Bay has had to have scans or appointments over two separate days in Adelaide, so they decided to make it easier for themselves and take their caravan down. They decided to stay at the Adelaide Showgrounds. That is a wonderful facility, a really comfortable facility, but it certainly is not the Ritz or anything flash like that. They set up their caravan there—

*Mr Pederick interjecting:*

**Mr ELLIS:** They might have caught the tram or might have walked down to the Goody and had a schnitty; who knows? They decided to stay there—presumably, without putting words into their mouth—because it would have been a relatively cost-effective option for them to stay there. However, as we have already established in the course of this debate, the PATS allowance is only \$44 per night, and my understanding is that that is only for one night. So these wonderful people from Moonta Bay were out of pocket \$69 per night. They were given an allowance of \$44, so they were out of pocket some \$100 or so, or slightly less.

It would have been better for them to have stayed in Moonta Bay and to have travelled up each day and claimed the travel allowance, as opposed to the accommodation allowance. Clearly, that is an undesirable outcome: having people drive back and forth twice on two consecutive days, racking up some 600 kilometres, rather than encouraging them to stay in town and get their treatment and then come home. It is a perverse outcome where the accommodation allowance is so poor that it encourages people to travel many multiple times along the same road.

Further to that, this constituent informed me that 18 years previously when her stepfather was accessing PATS, the subsidy was \$40 per night, so in that 18 years, in her view, that has gone up \$4 over that whole time. That is a reasonably insignificant rise, I would argue, and certainly one that I think should be dramatically increased and hopefully this motion brings about that change.

Another concern that we have quite frequently in our office is the timeliness in which these claims are assessed. I have to say in the case of this accommodation at the Adelaide Showground, the claim was made on 5 November last year and finally paid out on 2 February this year, so it is a three or four-month process, admittedly over Christmas, and we will give those people a bit of a break for family Christmas time. But it took a three-month break over Christmas to get that subsidy paid out, which I would argue is too long as well. We have had other complaints like that. Phil Hedger has had a processing time complaint and so on.

Further, and this has been raised by previous members, we frequently get complaints where people who are required to travel multiple times per week inside that distance of 100 kilometres but who rack up more than that over the course of the week are not being reimbursed. Peter Janssan, who lives in Kadina, has complex issues relating to an allergy to cancer treatment and is required to travel to Adelaide, but PATS will not pay as they think he should be travelling to Pirie every week, which is the wrong way. He would much prefer to drive 1½ hours to Adelaide as opposed to one hour to Port Pirie.

Then we have a gentleman in Snowtown who is required to travel to Port Pirie for seven days every fortnight for the rest of his life for injections he cannot receive anywhere else, who does not qualify for special consideration because the trip from Snowtown to Port Pirie is only 79 kilometres each way. So it is just 20 kilometres under that mandatory 100 kilometre limit and, of course, travelling seven days a fortnight every week for the rest of his life, he will certainly rack up that 100 kilometres pretty quickly. I would contend that this would be a prime example of something that could be considered outside of that rigid set of rules as a special circumstance that might call for a reimbursement regardless.

So I put those couple of examples on the record. I certainly support the original motion as it was put by the member for Mount Gambier. I look forward to seeing the passage of this motion through the house, hopefully in its original form, and it certainly is an area that we could well do to improve. I know that successive governments have tried their best but it seems to me that obvious improvements could be made. Another one is that if you have a visiting specialist at Wallaroo Hospital PATS will not pay you out to go to a more timely appointment in Adelaide because you have that visiting specialist who has an open appointment in a number of months' time.

It is all about the timeliness of service as well, making sure that if there are better options in Adelaide, more timely options in Adelaide, those people who need that service can attend. So more improvements could be made. Increasing the accommodation allowance would be a wonderful start and here's hoping this motion brings about that change.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:02):** I would like to make a contribution and support the member for Mount Gambier's motion because I think it is pertinent that we do bring to the attention of the current government just exactly why the PATS system is an important support mechanism through the health system. I do want to make the point: why has the Government Whip, the member for Elizabeth, who lives in North Adelaide, come in here to make an amendment?

**Mr Odenwalder:** Highgate.

**Mr WHETSTONE:** Highgate. I beg your pardon. Highgate. How can the government be taken seriously when we have an inner city MP coming in here to amend a regional issue which is so important to every person who lives in a regional setting? The PATS system has had a lot of complexities. Sadly, we continue to talk about the same issues, that is, the way it is assessed and the way that it is dealt with in a timely matter. The only thing that has not changed through the assessment of the PATS system is the public servants. It is the bureaucracy that continues to be the same, and obviously to push back on some of the claims and the current situation that we find ourselves in, living in a regional setting. As the member for Narungga so eloquently put it, we as regional MPs would like to see better health services in our electorate.

In regional South Australia, we continue to see the demise of services. The ability to attract health professionals into a regional setting is, I think, one of the critical shortfalls within the health system. The current government have a focus on the city, and they continue to do that at every turn.

We have to understand that we do have limited access in the regional setting. We acknowledge that, but the PATS system is there to support those who are having to travel significant distances. As we have already heard, the member for Giles has a faraway electorate, just as the member for Flinders does. We look at a lot of the regional settings where people have to travel multiple hundreds of kilometres to get to their health professionals.

In most instances, we see those people travelling under stress. Whether it is for a health appointment, whether it is for routine maintenance or whether it is for treatment, sadly, for cancer or

for a debilitating illness, it does come with considerable stress. It comes with considerable time lost if you have to leave your workplace and be away from your family.

A lot of people living in the city do not understand the complexities of having to travel away from the comfort of your home, the support of your family and also the support of a small regional community, which in many instances is supporting those people who are, for instance, travelling for cancer treatment.

It does come at cost. It comes at significant expense, and when we talk about visiting a doctor it needs to be dealt with with some level of continuity. For many who are travelling those long distances, a companion is in many instances a vital tool of support. They are also a vital part of the support process when you are going for medical treatment.

In the great electorate of Chaffey, probably one of the most consistent inquiries that my office gets is about the health system, whether it is PATS, a lack of health services in our local area or a better understanding of how they can gain better support for health treatment. It is something that my office and I spend a considerable amount of time on: dealing with them, giving them information and giving them comfort, so that we can actually get the best possible support mechanism.

In most instances, it is PATS. The Patient Assistance Transport Scheme is a scheme that has been long questioned, as I have said, by the decision-makers within the halls of power, that is, the public servants. I think successive governments need to have a better understanding of exactly what their shortfalls are when we are looking for the support mechanism.

Obviously, I would say that the former Liberal government did make commitments to doubling the fuel rebate. This has been a topic of conversation for a very long time. When I came into this place in 2010, one of my first constituent inquiries was about a PATS claim. The PATS claim was put in, but it took many months to actually settle that claim because of the complexities of, 'No, you can't have it,' because of certain issues.

Travelling distance was never an issue in Chaffey, but the companion has always been, the amount of support, the accommodation and the fuel. Some people who come down to the city for health do not have vehicles. They have to catch buses and trains, public transport. By doing that, if they are looking for accommodation, they are always looking for the cheapest accommodation. You are not going to find that next to a hospital. You are not going to find that in the CBD. It is going to be a little further out of the way, and that comes with complexities of travel to get to that appointment.

As many regional MPs have said, if you are coming down for an appointment one day, there are complexities around the travel time. Sometimes—most times—doctors are behind time. If you are looking to get back within a day, it is very difficult to logistically make that happen and so sometimes it might take two days. It is not just about the travel; it is about the time away from your workplace. That comes at a cost, because a number of people who travel are doing it regularly. Sadly for them and their families, ongoing treatment continues to chew up sick pay or holiday pay. If you have an agreement with your employer, it only stretches so far.

I would like to think that the member for Mount Gambier's motion does get a high level of support. Obviously, we understand that the government have the numbers and they will move their amendment. I am hoping that we will divide on it, because every regional MP will use that as a conversation piece, that they are representing their people but the government have denied them the opportunity and the access to a better support mechanism when they are seeking intervention to address the costs and the emotional stress of attending.

The accommodation allowance for PATS is well overdue. As I understand it, in South Australia the PATS accommodation rate return is the lowest in the nation. Why does that have to be? Why are regional South Australians penalised by the expense, as I have said, and to the detriment of the emotional support that they need? Why has there not been an increase since 2014? Regional communities continually are marginalised. Living in the regions is tough enough with the tyranny of distance. I would say that a lack of government support within the health services is now marginalising South Australia more and more.

I do want to compliment and thank the Cancer Council here in South Australia and Ronald McDonald House, which I paid a visit to only last week to understand the great service that



they provide for regional families that are travelling down to Adelaide while their children are having treatment at the Women's and Children's Hospital. I was really taken aback by the level of support that they give and the home away from home environment they provide to regional South Australians when they are travelling long distances for long periods of time. I am not talking about one or two days; I am talking about weeks, months and even longer, when they travel down to Adelaide for those poor children who are having extended stays down here in Adelaide for their treatment. I commend the member for Mount Gambier's motion to the house.

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (12:13):** I rise today to speak on this important motion. It pertains to what is probably one of the most important aspects for my community of Eyre Peninsula and the West Coast, and that is regional health delivery and, specifically, the important role played by the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme, known very well by regional South Australians as PATS.

Obviously, the ideal for health delivery is for it to be as close to home as possible, but we who live in regional South Australia know that at times it is necessary to travel to get to that health care, especially specialist care. This is why it is so important for us to have a properly functioning and funded Patient Assistance Transport Scheme to reflect the additional challenges and the additional costs which regional people are facing when seeking medical care.

Health patients from my electorate in particular rely on an effective PATS system, as the specialist health delivery within my community is very limited. Thus, those patients have to travel significant distances, usually to Adelaide which is 500-plus kilometres away—and that plus is a big plus because some of my electorate is hundreds of kilometres further than that—to receive important medical care.

I want to highlight the inconsistency in the policy around the nearest specialist stipulation and how it actually plays out in the real world. With hundreds of kilometres between regional areas, sometimes this policy actually results in perverse outcomes for regional South Australians. I have had community members from Ceduna told that instead of catching a flight to Adelaide to see a specialist, instead they would only be funded to drive hundreds of kilometres to go to either Whyalla or Port Lincoln to receive care. Sometimes it just does not make sense.

I firmly believe that there needs to be a greater clinical understanding of medical challenges when making decisions around PATS applications, not simply making them on a bureaucratic or a financial basis. People tasked with making decisions around applications need to better understand the clinical and personal risk of such travel, and this needs to be a policy direction change.

Towards the end of last year, the health minister responded to a question during question time saying:

...if there are issues in terms of the processing time—

for PATS—

then we will look into that with some urgency and take what appropriate action needs to happen.

I am here to say once again that my office has received a significant escalation in community concerns on the extended response times to their PATS applications, with reports of patients waiting several weeks or up to several months for any response from their PATS applications. These are individuals and families who are left out of pocket several hundred dollars, or up to thousands of dollars each, waiting for their PATS applications to be approved.

After assistance from my office to work through a follow-up process for many patients, they received correspondence from PATS officers admitting that, indeed, the wait time for processing amounts from several weeks to several months. I also have many constituents who are waiting for multiple PATS claims to be returned, with further upcoming medical visits necessary soon. As I said, we are talking about several hundred dollars for each one of those claims and if you multiply that for patients who have several claims outstanding, you can see why this has become a significant issue for individuals and families.

This is real life, these are real people and these are real costs that they are facing. With the cost of living being a significant issue for our community at the moment, some are seriously considering whether they can afford the significant up-front cost of travel which is necessary for that

treatment. They have to fork out the dollars and then wait for that process to get some of those dollars back. This is not me being alarmist; this is me reflecting stories which I am regularly hearing from members of my community. There is obviously a considerable backlog of claims at the moment within the PATS system, and the reasons why still have not been explained to us by the minister.

I want to share in this place the story of the Chandler family as an example of one of the many constituents facing challenges, and it is one close to my heart. Levi Chandler passed away in his home at Cummins on 20 January, just short of his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, lovingly surrounded by his friends and family, especially his parents, Marty and Tanya, and his sisters, Luka and Stella. Over his extended cancer treatments, Levi and his family had to travel significantly back and forth from Cummins to Adelaide, which is near on 700 kilometres one-way. They had to face many different interactions with the PATS system, having incurred significant travel costs. When they contacted my office, they had thousands of dollars of outstanding claims for which they were waiting for payment.

You can imagine being in the shoes of a family such as the Chandlers, having to deal with government bureaucracy down to the finest detail with phone calls and emails trying to justify costs to someone at the other end of the line who seems to be only taking a bureaucratic perspective on these claims—at a time when this family, and many families around our state, are going through significant challenges with a member of their family. Unfortunately, and tragically, Levi lost his battle earlier this year.

As I said, these are real people. They are forced to go over and above what should be expected, working through a bureaucracy that does not seem to be managed appropriately. What I do know is this is a significant issue for my community. I am imploring the minister to allocate more resources. It needs to be done.

This processing should not be taking this long. We should not have hundreds of thousands of dollars outstanding. These PATS arrangements are in place for the most isolated people of regional South Australia, and the government should be doing what it can to expedite this delayed process. There are hundreds of thousands of dollars of outstanding costs. It is putting individuals' and families' personal finances at risk, as well as the accommodation service providers which we have heard about which rely on this for their ongoing operations—organisations such as the Cancer Council and Ronald McDonald House Charities.

The accommodation allowance at the moment sits at only \$40 per night—\$40 per night. That is only \$40 to cover families staying in Adelaide. You cannot even get into a backpacker's for \$40, so you can see it is only just touching the edges of what the cost is going to be. On top of this, the \$40 is only paid on the second night and subsequent night stays as well, not on the first night. To travel from my electorate it is pretty difficult to get a daytrip in to see a medical specialist, even if you are flying, so staying a night is more often than not absolutely required.

It is clear to see this dollar figure simply is not enough and it is costing our regional communities. We need to have a PATS system that recognises that crucial medical services do not get delivered into our regional communities, so we need to have the support for those in regional communities who need to travel. It should be as effective as possible to suit the needs, it should be at a level which better reflects the cost to our people, and it should be administered in a more expedient and responsive way. Our regional community members deserve better.

**Mr BELL (Mount Gambier) (12:21):** I really want to thank all members who have made a contribution to this very important private member's motion. I think the member for Flinders summed it up beautifully: whilst this motion talks about accommodation and increasing that part of the PAT Scheme, as well as tying it to CPI so that the dollar amount increases, there is actually a lot more that needs to be reviewed with the Patient Assistance Transport Scheme.

We have heard today that some of those are around the time it takes to be reimbursed. Maybe there does need to be a time frame put on it and then some type of consequence for that—whether it is a percentage interest payment on top or what, I do not know, but there should be a very strong message that these claims need to be paid within 14 days or some reasonable amount of time. In terms of the forms and the bureaucracy that surrounds that, surely it can be streamlined in today's modern age where it is basically a click or a photograph and a send, so that that part of it puts the least amount of stress on people.

These people are not using this scheme to make money, they are using this scheme because they have to access specialist services that people in the city take for granted. When you are accessing those services you are going to be definitely out-of-pocket yourself, but quite often you will not be returning to the comfort of your own home that night—or for some people facing cancer treatments, for many nights—whereas again for our city cousins, whilst they still go through the same journey of treatment, the conditions are extremely different.

This is about fairness and equity. It is about recognising again that these specialist treatments are quite often at a very serious level—a life-altering level—and we need to do everything we can to make sure that that journey is as smooth as possible for regional residents and communities. I think this can go just a short way, but I am also very cognisant of the fact that a lot more work needs to be done. So with those words I commend the original motion to the house and thank all those who made a contribution.

The house divided on the amendment:

Ayes .....20  
 Noes.....15  
 Majority .....5

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

Basham, D.K.B.	Batty, J.A.	Bell, T.S. (teller)
Brock, G.G.	Cowdrey, M.J.	Ellis, F.J.
Gardner, J.A.W.	Hurn, A.M.	Patterson, S.J.R.
Pederick, A.S.	Pratt, P.K.	Tarzia, V.A.
Teague, J.B.	Telfer, S.J.	Whetstone, T.J.

**PAIRS**

Stinson, J.M.	Speirs, D.J.	Szakacs, J.K.
Pisoni, D.G.		

Amendment thus carried; motion as amended carried.

**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (12:29):** I move:

That this house—

- (a) condemns the outcome of the federal government's 90-day infrastructure review;
- (b) condemns the axing of the following five key infrastructure projects in South Australia:
  - (i) Hahndorf township improvements and access upgrades, including the \$45 million Mount Barker interchange;
  - (ii) Truro freight route;
  - (iii) Onkaparinga Valley Road/Tiers Road/Nairne Road intersection upgrade at Woodside;
  - (iv) Old Belair Road upgrade at Mitcham; and

- (v) Main South Road upgrade between Myponga and Cape Jervis;
- (c) condemns the federal government for removing \$399.6 million in federal funding for the above listed infrastructure projects; and
- (d) urges the state and federal Labor governments to reinstate the infrastructure projects originally planned.

By way of background, federal Minister for Infrastructure, Catherine King, announced on 1 April that she was ordering this 90-day review into around \$120 billion worth of 10-year or so infrastructure pipeline projects, with a focus on road and rail projects. This would assess the costs of projects with allocated federal funding.

Labor's 90-day review was released around day 195, which was 16 November 2023, announcing various projects would not be going ahead and also proposing that further projects may have 50:50 funding with states, no longer being the 80:20 arrangement. The federal government announced that the commonwealth would no longer provide that arrangement of funding.

Consequently, we also saw that five key projects got funding cuts, and they were the Hahndorf township improvements and access upgrades, including the \$45 million Mount Barker interchange, which is desperately needed in South Australia; the Truro freight route; the Old Belair Road upgrade at Mitcham; the Onkaparinga Valley Road/Tiers Road/Nairne Road intersection upgrade at Woodside; and the Main South Road upgrade between Myponga and Cape Jervis.

As I have pointed out to this house before, the people especially of Hahndorf and the Adelaide Hills have absolutely been taken for a ride by Labor. It also confirmed why the government has moved to a bandaid solution for places such as River Road, which my friend the member for Heysen and I have visited many times with residents who are so frustrated by both state and federal Labor governments. We know what we need up there is a properly funded bypass.

All these projects would have contributed to South Australia's positive economic output. We know that Adelaide is the only city, it is said, where the number of hours lost to traffic congestion has actually increased since 2019. One figure shows a 16 per cent increase versus a 27 per cent fall amongst other peers.

In 1997-98, it was said that the speed across the day in some parts of the city on average was around 43 km/h. In 2021-22, that was 35.5 km/h. We are seeing that traffic is grinding to a halt in parts of the city. We know that Adelaide has the third slowest average travel times per 10 kilometres. Only Sydney and Melbourne had worse performances in the data that I have been shown. Several articles have alluded to this. Recently, one article in InDaily stated: 'Slowdown: Adelaide's traffic grind revealed in new official data.'

The Truro freight route is an extremely important project, and we all thought that was going ahead until the federal government announced this savage cut. We know that the Truro freight route, once upgraded, would improve road safety for all road users through Truro and the Truro Hills, resulting in improved road infrastructure to support the Sturt Highway's function as a key strategic link between Sydney and Perth, enabling future PBS level 4A heavy vehicle use to increase the efficiency of long-distance freight.

It would allow for heavy vehicles to use a new alignment on the Sturt Highway to divert freight traffic from the town centre. It would transform the amenity of Truro to make it a key destination and gateway to the Lower Barossa—and what a beautiful part of the world that is. I have had the pleasure of visiting there many times with my friend the member for Barker and also the member for Schubert, and many other colleagues. What a fantastic bakery there is in Truro. I especially like popping in there.

*Mr Odenwalder interjecting:*

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** Always after a workout, member for Elizabeth, of course. If we upgraded this freight route we would also improve the liveability of Truro and surrounds as a place to live, work and do business. We know that several works were proposed and were committed to. There would be a 1.5-metre wide centre median, there was provision for new overtaking lanes, two westbound and one eastbound, and provision for new connections to the new Sturt Highway at nearby places as well.

After the 90-day review was handed down, it was interesting because you saw premiers and you saw ministers—in some cases Labor premiers and Labor ministers—literally condemning the federal Labor government. But you did not see that here in South Australia. You heard literally crickets from this Labor premier and these Labor ministers. Why is that the case? It is absolutely unbelievable.

For example, I looked at a recent article that was published by *The Australian* newspaper, where New South Wales Treasurer, Daniel Mookhey, said that 'the commonwealth's decision had blown \$1.4 billion in the state's budget'. He went on to say:

It's clear that NSW and its government has been talking to the commonwealth but they haven't been listening...

We saw criticism in other Labor states. For example, we saw Queensland actually accusing the Albanese government of dishonesty after Ms King originally claimed to have the backing of the states to carry out the new plan.

It is absolutely unbelievable what we have seen from this Labor government. How could they stand by while literally millions and millions of dollars were cut from South Australia? It is just a joke. When the federal Labor government made these savage cuts we saw federal Labor ministers, state ministers, state premiers and also federal ministers condemning these cuts, but we just have not seen the same sort of backbone by those opposite.

That is really disappointing because politics aside—and there is a fair bit of politics that goes on in this chamber, let's face it, sometimes even from the Minister for Education—these were projects of merit, and these communities are now going to suffer because of the petty politics of those opposite and their mates in Canberra. It is just not good enough, and that is why we are here today condemning these actions of this federal Labor government and this state Labor government. It is not good enough. South Australians especially deserve a government that is going to stand up for their interests, and that has not happened in this case.

We, on this side of the chamber, will continue to advocate for South Australian infrastructure projects, projects that are of merit, projects that stack up economically and projects that result in busting congestion, because we know that South Australia is the third most congested city in Australia at the moment. It is not good enough. What we need are more resources devoted to these congestion-busting projects, not resources being diverted from them. It is very disappointing that, when we saw other premiers around Australia condemning this federal government, we literally heard crickets from this Premier and this infrastructure minister. I commend the motion to the house.

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (12:39):** The federal government's 90-day infrastructure review revealed a stark and disturbing picture of the future of infrastructure investment under the Morrison government: projects underfunded and projects without proper business cases, a genuine mess. While we may agree that the resulting project cancellations are disappointing, particularly the interchanges on the South Eastern Freeway, there is no doubt that a review of the infrastructure pipeline by the commonwealth was warranted. The findings speak for themselves.

There are several problems with this motion, including that the member for Hartley does not appear to be aware of the views of the rural Liberal backbench on the issues raised. He calls for the governments to reinstate the infrastructure projects as previously planned. I repeat: as previously planned. He is apparently unaware that a number of members of his own party have been writing to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, indicating that in their opinion the Marshall Liberal government's plans for Truro were vastly inadequate, and that significant changes would be required.

I assume that those Liberal members will be voting against the member for Hartley's motion today, to avoid now looking like hypocrites to their constituents. Will they support the party line or will they support their constituents' wants and needs as expressed in writing to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport? Whatever their actions today, their silence on the project while the Liberals were in government is condemning enough.

The motion also fails to note that the federal shadow assistant minister for infrastructure and transport, Tony Pasin—

*Members interjecting:*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have been pretty lenient for those members on my left. If I hear another squeak out of you during this discussion, you will be leaving the chamber, and that includes the member for Hammond who I have heard a number of times. Member for Waite, you will speak uninterrupted.

**Ms HUTCHESSON:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The motion also fails to note that the federal shadow assistant minister for infrastructure and transport, Tony Pasin MP, has refused to guarantee a new federal Liberal government will even fund the Truro bypass when asked to do so on radio—refused.

*Members interjecting:*

**Ms HUTCHESSON:** GlobeLink. The motion demands that federal Labor do what the federal Liberals will not. Pure, unadulterated hypocrisy from those opposite.

In counterpoint to Mr Pasin's failure, the Malinauskas government has clearly indicated that it stands ready to fund the Truro bypass, and interchanges at Mount Barker and Verdun, as soon as the commonwealth funding is made available. The Malinauskas government stands ready to fund its portion of the Onkaparinga Valley Road, Tiers Road, Nairne Road intersection upgrade at Woodside.

And, in regard to the Old Belair Road in Belair—a project that was put on hold whilst an independent review was carried out by Infrastructure SA—the review found that it was not justified and had a rapid benefit cost ratio of 0.9. Any BCR score below one means the costs outweigh the benefits. They said:

Ultimately, the proposed junction treatment represents a capital expenditure of over \$15 million to address traffic issues primarily caused by 240 vehicles per hour in the morning peak...

Infrastructure SA found:

The proposed roundabout would have resulted in the potential loss of 148 native trees, which have unique environmental value and are of significant interest to our community. Based on the design of the current roundabout solution and the associated impacts, both in terms of costs, benefits and disbenefits, and the possibility of other non-infrastructure and infrastructure options that could minimise impacts and traffic issues at this junction, this Review finds the investment as currently proposed is not justified and further options to potentially reduce demand at the junction should be explored.

It was not justified. We will be opposing this motion, and whilst it is disappointing that the list of projects were cancelled by the federal government, the Malinauskas government stands ready to fund its portion of these projects. But, on the basis of the misinformation and lack of information contained in the motion, we oppose the motion this morning.

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (12:43):** I rise to speak in support of the shadow minister's motion condemning the Labor government's infrastructure cuts in South Australia. It is very clear we are big losers here in South Australia from this infrastructure review on a number of fronts, but of particular concern to my local constituents is with respect to the scrapping of the Truro freight route.

I have described the Truro freight route in this place before as being a very important project in and of itself, and I do want to leave some time this afternoon for others in this place to speak about why this is an important project in and of itself. It is also a very important first step in a wider project, and that is a Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass that would see trucks off our local roads in the eastern suburbs like Portrush Road and Glen Osmond Road in my own electorate.

We know that over 650,000 heavy vehicles come down the South Eastern Freeway every year, and we also know that the large majority of them choose to come down Portrush Road at the bottom of the freeway. Indeed, 80 per cent of B-doubles come down Portrush Road. It is Highway 1; it is what it is set up to do. Quite frankly, it is absurd that it is Highway 1 and that a truck wanting to travel from Melbourne to Perth needs to thunder down Portrush Road through my electorate, through the electorate of Dunstan, past schools like Loreto College, Seymour College and Linden Park Primary, past nursing homes, past shops and past residential homes—all things that do not mix well with B-doubles.

It is an issue for road congestion, but it is also a really important road-safety issue. It is an accident waiting to happen. Indeed, unfortunately it is an accident that has happened. There was a huge crash at the bottom of the freeway not long after I was elected to this place. Thankfully and

miraculously no-one was seriously injured or killed in that crash, but we will not always be so lucky. Indeed, we have not always been so lucky. I think that was the fifth major crash at that intersection since 2010 and, sadly, some of those have involved fatalities.

I acknowledge we have talked and talked about the need to get trucks off our local roads for many years now and we have talked and talked about plans for a Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass, but what the Truro freight route represented was the first time there was actually some money on the table. In 2021, there was joint funding by state and federal Liberal governments to see a Truro freight route—an important project of itself, but also an important project for my constituents in the eastern suburbs to get trucks off our local roads. Regrettably, that is what we see scrapped by the Labor government and, regrettably, I think that will mean we are going to see trucks thundering down Portrush Road for the foreseeable future.

We know that if there is no Truro freight route, there is no Greater Adelaide Freight Bypass and there is no plan to get trucks off Portrush Road. The Liberals and I will keep fighting to get trucks off Portrush Road, even if the Labor Party will not.

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (12:47):** I, too, rise in support of the motion put forward by the shadow minister for transport and infrastructure, the member for Hartley, Vincent Tarzia, and I would like to reflect on the savage cuts that have been made by the federal Labor government.

Last year, when the federal Minister for Infrastructure, Catherine King, announced that there would be a 90-day review, we were perhaps a little bit naive in expecting that would take 90 days because, of course, it ended up taking much longer than that. After that infrastructure review, what we know is that 81 infrastructure projects were cut right across the nation.

Indeed, five key infrastructure projects here in South Australia were taken off the table to the detriment of not just people in my local community but people right across the state. In fact, what we know is that Labor has slashed \$399.6 million worth of funding for South Australian road projects, stretching from Cape Jervis all the way to Truro. The impact of these cuts, as I said, will be felt not just in my local community but right across South Australia.

It will not surprise you that I will be spending the time that I have focusing a little bit on the Truro freight route. As the member for Bragg has pointed out, this was a project that was funded in 2021 by the then federal Liberal government and the then state government here in South Australia: \$202 million to get trucks out of the main street of Truro. There was a plan in place to reach the goal that the locals in the area had of getting trucks out of the main street. If we look at some of the facts and figures, there are obviously thousands of vehicles that travel on the Sturt Highway each and every day and, in the main street of Truro, there are over 600 B-doubles and road trains that come absolutely steaming through that main street, essentially splitting the town of Truro in two.

Much like in the member for Bragg's electorate, it means that not only is the town of Truro split into two, but we have businesses trying to navigate these 600 B-doubles and road trains each day, we have young kids trying to get safely to school and needing to cross over this thoroughfare, and frankly we have people living in the main street also having some quite serious issues in terms of cracks in their houses, and the like.

You can imagine that the implications of having hundreds of thousands of vehicles each and every year come thundering through your main street are pretty easy to grasp. Not only do we have cyclists and motorists navigating these B-doubles and road trains, but we have school kids and local residents trying to get from A to B.

I have invited the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure here in South Australia to come and join me in Truro so that he can see firsthand the impact that these road trains and B-doubles have, so that he can see firsthand how difficult they are to navigate on a daily basis. I am yet to have him take me up on that offer, but I hope that in due course the minister will join me in my electorate, like he did with the member for Kavel, so that he can see firsthand some of the impacts here.

There are a number of other things in relation to the Truro freight route that I would like to get on the table. Not only do we now have significant road safety concerns that will be ongoing for the local community as a direct result of the Labor government taking money off the table for this freight route, but we have a main street in total disrepair. Locals would like to see the main street—

Moorundie Street in Truro—resurfaced. I have also contacted the Minister for Police about some of the speeding concerns through the main street as that is something concerning my local community.

Also linked to the Truro freight route, when that was first announced by the Liberal government, was \$1 million to beautify the town, the townscape and the streetscape. I have tried to seek clarification as to whether that \$1 million is still available for my local community but have not yet received that clarification. I will continue following that up, because I do think it would be an absolute shame if not only the Truro freight route was cut but also if the \$1 million to help beautify the town was also cut.

Beyond the road safety implications for locals, I also want to get on the record that—and my colleagues the member for Hammond and the member for Chaffey will also no doubt speak to this—truckies do not want to be in the main street of Truro either. Truckies carting the fantastic produce we have from right across South Australia do not want to be dodging little kids and elderly people in the main street of Truro.

We had a plan in place to get these trucks, these B-doubles, these road trains, out of the main street of Truro and on to the Sturt Highway, essentially out of the town. As a direct result of the Labor government cutting that funding, there is now no plan in place, which is why I support the member for Hartley's motion, where we are urging the government to reinstate that funding so that projects like the Truro freight route can finally be delivered.

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:53):** I, too, support this motion by the member for Hartley in condemning the outcome of the so-called 90-day review. Let us remember that this review took close on 200 days, with the outcome of the federal Labor government cutting \$400 million from vital road funding in this state. We have heard the member for Schubert and others tell us about all the issues with the Truro freight bypass, and there are major issues.

I have travelled up and down that road many times, and you see how tight it is for the citizens of Truro to go back and forth, for people to access schools and shops—to just to go about their daily lives without heavy freight passing through the town. Here was a sensible outcome to bypass the town with that freight bypass and get those heavy loads off the road. There is already a lot of work being done with anything bigger than a B-double going around that bypass, coming up from Murray Bridge through Mannum, Sedan and the Halfway House Corner on the Sturt Highway, which is keeping a lot of freight out of the city—but more needs to be done to make it more attractive for that freight to go around there.

Just briefly, because I know there are others who want to speak, I also slam the government for not standing up, as well, for the Hahndorf bypass. Hahndorf is a car park. It is a great place to visit, and that is why people go there. It is a fantastic place to visit, but it is literally a standing car park.

What the government did by putting trucks up River Road put local communities at risk, and they had to cut down many, many trees—and for what? Just take the sensible option and put that bypass in at Hahndorf, and get that intersection in at Mount Barker, so that people can actually get in and out of there in a timely manner, for the many thousands—many thousands—of people who have to travel around that area at times.

The essential steps should have been taken. Yes, there might have been some compulsory acquisition, but that is why it is called compulsory acquisition. Sometimes the greater good has to be done. It got done on the freeway: it went straight through Alexander Downer's property, straight through, so that we can access Adelaide with some decent roads from the bush—and you notice that when you come from regional areas.

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (12:55):** I will make a brief contribution to support the member for Hartley's motion. It is an important motion, because these five key infrastructure projects now being shelved is a monumental blow, not only to the productivity of roads here in South Australia but also to road safety.

None of these projects are in my electorate, but the Truro freight route greatly impacts the people of the Riverland and the Mallee; not only for freight but also for travelling from the Riverland to Adelaide. Being able to use this freight route would give a significant safety upgrade and



productivity gain for the many, many hundreds of trucks—some 700 per day—and the four and a half thousand vehicles that travel through Truro every day. They would see the benefit of a project like this.

It is very, very concerning when we have, I think, a political manoeuvring exercise; a 90-day review, as the member for Hammond said, turn into 200. I put a petition in to this chamber with over 10,000 signatures calling on the government to prioritise this freight route at Truro. It must be put back on the burner so that we can actually get the productivity going, get the trucks off Portrush Road, make our highways safer and make South Australia a better place to traverse on a regional highway; safer and with productivity gains. It is an essential part of the road network here in South Australia.

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (12:57):** I rise too to commend the motion. I would have thought that the government would have been wholeheartedly in support of the motion as well, on behalf of all South Australians, to ensure that \$400 million of funding is there and delivered.

The abandonment of the \$200 million of federal money going to the Hahndorf bypass is the single biggest component of what is being abandoned. How dare the government come along and say these projects are unmeritorious, as the 90-day review has said. All South Australians know that these projects are of merit, they are important to the state.

What South Australians need is to have an active and capable voice of advocacy in their corner, but the last people they are going to turn to is this insipid state Labor government, that comes into this place and says, 'Oh well, we'll put money back into the budget, maybe, if the federal counterparts maybe see their way clear but, ah gee, they've done some careful work and they know things, this federal government.' They are not standing up, as the member for Hartley has identified, like state Labor Premiers in other states are willing to stand up and call this out, and say, 'These are important projects for our state.' So we have seen this sort of double insult.

References have been made, including by the member for Hammond just now, who has seen it for himself, as has the member for Hartley, joining me on River Road. The poor residents of River Road have had to suffer this ignominy of making it up as you go along, this hodgepodge, 'We'll send it this way', and then next minute there is this announcement that, 'We're not doing the bypass at all.' We have had to see people literally at the front of their quiet road all of a sudden having all these trucks going by being drawn into this national debate that the state Labor government is not willing to take up to federal Labor.

It is a disgrace that the state Labor government has not been willing, so far, to speak up on behalf of all South Australians. In terms of supporting this motion, the least it could do is support the motion of the member for Hartley and then take up the cause nationally.

Debate adjourned.

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

*Parliamentary Procedure*

### **ANSWERS TABLED**

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

### **PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table:

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

Government Response to Standing Committees—Environment, Resources and Development Committee: Inquiry into the Urban Forest—Interim Report

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

SA Health—Coroner's Findings into the death of Bodhi Leo Searle—Report on Response to—January 2024

By the Minister for Planning (Hon. N.D. Champion)—

Trade and Investment, Department for—Early Commencement of the Ancillary Accommodation and Student Accommodation Code Amendment—Report

*Ministerial Statement*

**KANGAROO ISLAND KOALAS**

**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) (14:07):** I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE:** This week we have all been shocked by the horrific images of koalas in blue gum plantations on Kangaroo Island being injured as a result of timber harvesting operations by the plantation managers. This is simply not acceptable.

The Department for Environment and Water has previously engaged with Kiland Limited and their plantation managers to discuss the process for felling their plantation estate. I am advised that plantation managers have adopted a protocol that involves having spotters locate koalas prior to felling and retaining trees holding a koala with the surrounding eight trees. I am also advised that this is the standard protocol used to manage koalas in plantations in the Green Triangle region that crosses south-western Victoria and the South-East of South Australia.

Concerns were first raised with the Department for Environment and Water regarding the implementation of its protocol back in 2021, and several comprehensive investigations were undertaken. However, no evidence of noncompliant activities could be found on those occasions. The appearance of this distressing footage would suggest that this evidence does now exist, and the department is pursuing access to the original footage to inform its investigations. Let me assure you that the government takes this matter incredibly seriously and, in response, is implementing the following five actions:

1. Department for Environment and Water investigators have reopened their investigations and are on the ground on Kangaroo Island at this very moment, seeking additional evidence. This will include meetings with members of the KI animal network and the vet who treated the injured koalas in the footage. The investigators will also be liaising closely with the RSPCA investigators who are also currently visiting the island.

2. In coming days I will be making a new regulation under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 that will increase my capacity to manage the impact of the felling of blue gum plantations on Kangaroo Island's koalas. Following that, I will be seeking to make an amendment to the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972 that will enable me to make a new regulation that will require any activity that is likely to interfere with and harm a protected animal to only be undertaken when it is in accordance with a management plan approved by me as environment minister. This will include the ability for me to stop an activity that is not occurring in accordance with an approved management plan.

3. On Monday, I will be meeting with the chief executive of Kiland in Sydney to both express my concern and discuss strategies that can help prevent the situation from ever happening again.

4. The Department for Environment and Water will boost its compliance activities by increasing the number of unannounced inspections to the blue gum plantations on Kangaroo Island; and

5. This to underpin these efforts—and noting that this has ramifications for all plantations inhabited by koalas across the nation, not just Kangaroo Island—government officers will

raise the management of koalas during plantation felling at the National Koala Recovery Team board meeting being held today in Brisbane, with the intent of seeking a national best practice approach.

No animal, national icon or not, should ever be treated in this way. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the member for Mawson, who deeply understands the importance of this matter to the Kangaroo Island community and has been working with me closely on this matter. In finishing, I would actively encourage anyone with access to any evidence that could potentially support the department's investigations to contact the Department for Environment and Water or Crimestoppers at [crimestopperssa.com.au](http://crimestopperssa.com.au).

*Parliamentary Committees*

**LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (14:11):** I bring up the 39<sup>th</sup> report of the committee, entitled Subordinate Legislation.

Report received.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

**VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call questions without notice, I recognise today in the gallery His Excellency Mr Monday Semaya Kumba, South Sudan's Ambassador to Australia.

I also see in the gallery Zofia Jurczak, Joanna Jurczak and Louis Anthony, who are visiting from Poland, guests of the Leader.

I see, too, in the upper gallery, year 12 students from Immanuel College, guests of the member for Morphett.

And I see in the Speaker's Gallery Michelle and Deanna Wallis, members of the Wallis family, who founded the Wallis Cinema and continue to operate it throughout the state, including in my community.

Welcome to parliament. It is a delight to have you with us.

*Question Time*

**SA HEALTH STAFF**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (14:12):** My question is to the Premier. Is the government considering workforce incentives to attract and retain GPs and nurses leading into the state budget and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Karna—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:12):** Thank you very much, sir, for the question from the Leader of the Opposition. The truth is that we are providing incentives for the workforce across SA Health. Already we have been very successful in terms of attraction and retention of staff. In our first year in office we increased the staff FTE, across our clinicians, of 550 extra staff, full-time equivalents, above attrition, and that breaks down to nurses, doctors, allied health professionals and ambulance officers. That is a really welcome achievement. We are looking forward to the results that we see in the next few months of our second year in office as well.

We have continued to add to the staff of our workforce because we know how important that is to making sure that people can get the treatment that they need. It's because of the funding that's been provided through the state budget, of increasing the health budget across those forward estimates of some \$4.4 billion, that we have been able to hire those additional staff and we have been able to have incentives put in place.

Previously, there were no incentives to be able to help attract, across the system, those staff coming from interstate and overseas. We have put in place incentives of up to \$15,000 to make sure that we can provide the support for people who are moving to this state and also the support for people who might be even moving from the metro area to take up jobs in regional areas as well. We

know that that's right across the country, where a lot of the workforce issues are in terms of our regional hospitals and regional health services as well.

We will continue to look at everything that we possibly can do on that front. In fact, we have recently signed a new agreement with the AMA and the Rural Doctors Association, covering doctors who work for our country hospitals and provide care both in the emergency department and inpatient wards in our hospitals. Part of that has been to expand the sign-on bonuses for GPs who are now working for our country hospitals as well, offering a whole range of new areas where those sign-on bonuses will be available for people for the first time.

We are also continuing to do work in relation to nursing. Part of the enterprise bargaining agreement in relation to the last nursing and midwifery enterprise bargaining agreement was to consider additional work that we can do in terms of regional areas as well. We are continuing to do that work, and that is being considered by the government and also in relation to paramedics as well.

There is no doubt that there are obviously challenges when it comes to workforce right across the country, but we can see that the work that we are doing is starting to pay results. That is in stark contrast to where we were previously, where in fact what was happening just a few years ago amidst the middle of COVID was making nurses redundant. There were packages going out, positions being made redundant—hundreds and hundreds of nurses amidst the middle of COVID being made redundant in our system. That is the exact opposite of what we want to do.

The first thing that we did on this front upon coming to office was to say that we are no longer making our frontline staff redundant. In fact, we want to grow the workforce, make sure that people have got the staff available to get the care that they need.

#### **GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:16):** My question is to the Treasurer. How many general practices in South Australia have successfully signed up for the payroll tax amnesty, and how many will be required to pay it retrospectively?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:16):** My recollection—I will have to check the exact number—is that we had I think 280-odd registrations for the RevenueSA process, which I have previously advised to the house. As I have made it clear in the questions that I have answered on numerous occasions in this house, we have made it clear from day one there will be no retrospective application of payroll tax. Not only will there not be retrospective application of payroll tax but an amnesty was provided by the government so that those practices that would be liable—bearing in mind that there are some practices which are not liable—once they are registered, wouldn't have to pay payroll tax until 1 July this year. This is one of the most generous arrangements that has been put in place by any jurisdiction around the country.

#### **GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:17):** My question is to the Treasurer. How many general practices in South Australia are currently paying payroll tax, and how many additional practices will be captured after the amnesty ends at the end of this financial year?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:17):** I think, on questioning about this last year, I advised the house that there were some GP practices which were already registered with RevenueSA and paying payroll tax. My recollection off the top of my head is that those payroll tax collections run into the millions of dollars, but I am happy to check the exact details and come back to the house.

#### **GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:18):** My question is to the Treasurer. Has the Treasurer received advice or modelling regarding any additional revenue the new treatment of payroll tax on contractor GPs will generate for the state and, if so, how much is it?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:18):** My understanding is that I haven't. This is not an issue about identifying cohorts of businesses to generate additional revenue. This has been an issue which has been raised as a result of a court case in another jurisdiction. One of the

jurisdictions, New South Wales, along with South Australia and a range of other states, since 2008, for more than 15 years now, has had harmonised payroll tax arrangements. The court case made it clear with regard to the particular business that was the subject of that court case about how the contractor provisions applied in payroll tax in New South Wales and, hence, subsequently across other harmonised jurisdictions.

This is not a process we are going through in an effort to try to identify businesses to pay additional payroll tax to generate additional revenues for the state. It's simply about making sure that we have a payroll tax regime which is being applied equitably across all taxpayers.

As I made clear to the house in my previous answers on this issue late last year, it is impossible for a government to maintain a regime where some businesses, even within the same profession, are paying payroll tax and are legally obliged to pay payroll tax, and other businesses which are similarly legally obliged to pay payroll tax are not paying payroll tax. That's the issue we are grappling with. We have worked very hard here in South Australia to make it as easy and as reasonable as possible for those businesses that have discovered their sometimes longstanding payroll tax liabilities to come into compliance with the law and to give them a long period of time to do that, without applying retrospective taxation obligations to them.

I am particularly grateful for the approach from the royal college that represents general practitioners here in South Australia, and also the AMA. This is not an issue that anyone is enjoying dealing with, but we are dealing with it as reasonably and as fairly as possible to make sure that we are maintaining the equitable treatment of all businesses that are obliged to pay their payroll tax obligations.

#### GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:20):** My question is to the Treasurer. Are allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists and dentists, impacted and captured by the changes to GP payroll tax coming into effect at the start of the next financial year?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:21):** There are no changes to the payroll tax regime which are coming into effect. The only thing which is changing is the understanding by some businesses that they may be liable for payroll tax, that they likely have been liable for some period of time for payroll tax—

*Mrs Hurn interjecting:*

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN:** —I understand the question; I am going about answering it—and the time that we have given them to come into compliance. Are other businesses liable for payroll tax? Well, it depends on those particular businesses. Payroll tax doesn't apply to businesses that only have a small number of employees because it's likely that the taxable wages of that business fall below the tax-free threshold, but if they are a larger business with a larger number of employees that have a larger amount of taxable wages, as defined in the Payroll Tax Act, then they are likely to be liable for payroll tax.

Indeed, the advice that I have from RevenueSA is that there are not only allied health and physiotherapy type businesses which are currently paying payroll tax but, as I said in my earlier answer, there are already some GP practices which are paying payroll tax. That, again, emphasises the challenge that governments around the country, including here in South Australia, have: how do we try to bring people into compliance with their pre-existing payroll tax obligations and do it in a way which gives them fair warning and a long runway to come into compliance with these, and that doesn't immediately upset their businesses from day one—which is what is being proposed in some other places around the country—and do it in a way where we are providing as much time, effort and resources as we can to help them understand and work through the issue.

#### GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:23):** Supplementary to the Treasurer: were allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists and dentists, eligible to apply for the amnesty which ended in November last year and, if not, why not?

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer) (14:23):** Because it hadn't been raised as an issue in the same way that it had been raised in the context of general practitioners. There are many, or there are a number, I should say—I can't give you a figure off the top of my head, but I am advised by RevenueSA that there are a number of dental practices in South Australia that have been paying payroll tax.

Of course, there are likely to be a number of smaller dental practices which are not paying payroll tax, either by virtue of the fact that they don't have enough taxable wages to require payroll tax to be paid or in the event—as has been represented to me by the industry representatives of dentists—that they might not have been aware of these payroll tax obligations. The request that they have made of me in the discussions that I have had with them is that they are not going to be subject to any retrospective payroll tax application.

I indicated to them in a meeting I had with them that, again, we have to be equitable in how we deal with this and it wouldn't be reasonable for me to provide, in effect, an amnesty for GPs up until 1 July while seeking to apply retrospective taxation obligations to dentists casting backwards, and I am in the process of formally communicating that to them to put their minds at ease about it.

#### **GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX**

**Mrs HURN (Schubert) (14:24):** My question is to the Minister for Health. Has the minister requested any modelling on the potential impacts that GP payroll tax changes could have on ramping and pressure in our hospitals? If so, what was advised?

**The Hon. C.J. PICTON (Kaurua—Minister for Health and Wellbeing) (14:25):** As the Treasurer has comprehensively answered already, this is obviously an area of his responsibility, and he has been working with the RACGP and the AMA on this issue. Of course, there is no change in terms of the state government's laws around payroll tax.

We do recognise that obviously primary care has a significant impact upon the rest of the health system. Primary care is, and has been for a number of years, a significant issue. That's why at national cabinet both the Premier to the Prime Minister and I to the federal health minister have been raising concerns in relation to primary care, GPs and bulk billing more broadly. We can see over the past 10 years the impact in terms of availability of bulk billing and getting access to a GP has caught issues.

The key driver behind that is the Medicare rebate that's provided by the federal government has not kept pace. This is something that has been raised by the key medical groups and that we continue to advocate on. We appreciate the work that's been done by the federal government already on this front. Already they have tripled the bulk-billing incentive. That has had some impact, but I think the anecdotal reports are that there are a lot of GP practices that haven't changed their bulk-billing arrangements since that incentive came in.

We have also seen the introduction of the Medicare urgent care centres, of which there are five across South Australia: four in metropolitan Adelaide and one in regional South Australia in Mount Gambier. We are hearing positive impacts in terms of people being able to access care for things that they might otherwise have had to go to the emergency department for. That obviously links in with other initiatives that the state government has, including the additional 24-hour pharmacies that opened this week, as well as hospital avoidance centres, with the new one opening this week at the Repat site, for the SALHN CARE site, with two more of those to come as well. No doubt, any investment that we continue to advocate for in primary health care is certainly important.

#### **UPPER SPENCER GULF PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (14:27):** My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier update the house on recent public meetings in Upper Spencer Gulf?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:27):** I want to thank the member for Giles, along with the member for Stuart, who is also the Minister for Local Government, for, in effect, hosting us in Upper Spencer Gulf last week for probably one of the most engaging public-facing exercises that this government has experienced.

It was genuinely extraordinary to see the level of engagement from communities in Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and surrounds coming along to those forums at the beginning of last week. It was standing room only. Over 500 people registered for the Whyalla forum, for instance. I thought, 'How many are actually going to turn up?' They virtually all did.

What was most heartening was that the quality and depth of the questions coming from members of the community about what are largely complex subjects demonstrated not an interest but genuine engagement about the future of their communities and an appreciation of the fact that their standard of living, the prospect of their communities into the future having a healthy existence, was very much dependent and connected to the policy effort that is underway by this government with respect to how we capitalise on the decarbonisation of global industry and translate that into economic opportunity and prosperity for the South Australian people. Those forums very much speak to the reasons why the government has a comprehensive policy.

Across the three or four days that we were up in the Spencer Gulf, the government was able to announce substantial policy in this regard. We have talked about the Northern Water project, and we appreciate the bipartisan support that has been offered from the opposition regarding the Northern Water project as it progresses. We also note, however, there still remains ongoing cynicism from those opposite regarding the hydrogen project. What we will see happen—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** What we will see happen over the course of the immediate months ahead of us is that, on the Lincoln Highway, we will see a thousand people get to work on building the world's largest hydrogen electrolyser and power plant, and the rest of the world is taking notice. One of the announcements that we were able to make during the course of the economic summit was that none other than one of the largest technology companies in the world, one of the biggest engineering houses in the world, General Electric, will be building a 100 per cent green hydrogen-fuelled turbine that will be delivered to the Upper Spencer Gulf in that world-leading program. On top of that, we signed a partnership—

**The Hon. D.G. Pisoni:** Will it bring power prices down, though?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. Koutsantonis:** You couldn't; you didn't.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —with BHP, who will be co-designing with the state government on a brand-new technical college at Port Augusta. We build that technical college in Port Augusta quite deliberately because we see Port Augusta as being a hub—a hub for upskilling the workforce that will be required to capitalise on that opportunity both in Pirie and in Whyalla and the surrounding communities. BHP will be designing the courses that see us unlock huge volumes of copper that we know exist in the Gawler Craton to produce copper which is, of course, the critical mineral to end all critical minerals around electrification that the world so desperately wants and desires. We thank BHP for that partnership.

The other reason, to be candid about it, why we choose Port Augusta is we see a community that hasn't had the investment that it deserves when it comes to getting access to those skills. We want kids from lower socio-economic communities—

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** —we want children from Indigenous communities in the Upper Spencer Gulf to be able to get access to working in those industries of the future, because when they choose to do that they don't just get jobs: they get high-quality, well-paid jobs that put them on a path of prosperity for the rest of their lives. The State Prosperity Project is about improving the futures of the next generation of young South Australians to participate in the industries of tomorrow.

We know that coal is going out of fashion globally, we know that hydrocarbons will not be used in the same volume in 20 years' time that they are today and we know that the extractive industries that this country currently relies on for its wealth aren't going to be able to sustain us into the future. We also know that South Australia can be the home of copper, it can be the home of green iron and green steel and it can be the home of hydrogen. So the rest of the country's challenge is South Australia's opportunity. We are up to meeting that task; it starts in the Upper Spencer Gulf. They are engaged. We look forward to engaging with the rest of South Australia as we make this transition for the benefit of their prosperity into the long term.

### NORTHERN WATER PROJECT

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:33):** On a supplementary to the Premier: where in the Upper Spencer Gulf is the Northern Water project proposal?

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS (Croydon—Premier) (14:33):** I thank the member for Flinders for his question, because his community will be closely linked to this exercise. We released the business case in regard to the Northern Water project obviously a bit less than a couple of weeks ago, and then the business case states that Cape Hardy is, as it currently stands, the preferred location for the desal plant, and then the 600-kilometre pipeline will obviously take water from there to the northern reaches of the state. I want to be clear about something on the record. The Cape Hardy site, while the preferred site, is not necessarily the final site where the desal plant will be. I would characterise it as the preferred site, which means it is the most likely site, but there are other sites that we have contemplated, including at Mullaquana.

The between \$200 million and \$230 million feasibility study is closely examining, in a far greater degree of detail than what the business case has done, what those site options are, the engineering associated with it, what the costs are in particular, the environmental considerations and so forth. We hope that feasibility piece of work will conclude with the view of, if it all stacks up, reaching a final investment decision in the first half of 2026.

It is a massive piece of work. It is important that it is done thoroughly. The Northern Water project, as outlined in the business case, will be not less than \$5 billion. I think it is safe to say it will not be surprising if it is north of that, although we have no interest, nor does BHP have an interest, in inflating that cost. The greater the cost of the infrastructure, the higher the price of the water, and that then starts to cause other challenges. It is in the member for Flinders' electorate, I think, Cape Hardy.

**Mr Telfer:** Only by 150 ks.

**The Hon. P.B. MALINAUSKAS:** Okay, but you have a big electorate, I would say to the member for Flinders. The Cape Hardy site is the preferred site, but we will continue that engagement into the future. What will inform the final decision for the site, if indeed the feasibility stacks up, will be the environment and the economics. Engagement with local community is important, as it will be with Indigenous communities as well. We are committed to doing all those things thoroughly, as are the partners we have engaged with, BHP being the principal one.

But we should not talk about BHP as if it is the exclusive funder of the feasibility study. What this government has been able to do on the back of the hydrogen project, which was not necessarily an initial consideration of the efforts undertaken by those opposite, is that Amp Energy, Fortescue Future Industries and Origin are partners with us in this endeavour. They are particularly interested in the hydrogen opportunity, which this government is utterly committed to, obviously. They are all as committed as the government is in terms of having genuine community engagement.

We do not suggest for a moment this project is not complex. There will be moments of controversy, but as the Minister for Infrastructure and myself made clear today, the north-south program caused heartache. Compulsory acquisition is tough; people losing their homes, losing their businesses. It is a big price to pay. But we are not going to shy away from making the tough decisions, whether it be the location of the women's and kids' hospital or where we build the desal plant, including the desal plant to keep water going in Port Lincoln, as we have already demonstrated. We are a government that is willing to make the tough decisions to set us up for the long term.



**KANGAROO ISLAND TOURISM**

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (14:37):** My question is to the Minister for Tourism. Is the minister taking any action to protect the tourism industry on Kangaroo Island following the negative publicity that the island has received this week and, if so, what has she done?

**The Hon. A. Koutsantonis:** Are you worried about Vickie's Airbnb?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (14:38):** What happened on Kangaroo Island and the footage that we all saw is clearly unacceptable and disturbing. That news has gone around the country and around the world. What we will be measured by is the immediacy and the effectiveness of our response, and I believe I can say without hesitation that across the chamber we shared a view that we needed to get on and deal with this and that this was completely unacceptable.

I delivered a ministerial statement earlier so that it can be quoted and used by people who choose to explain the steps of action that we are undertaking in order to be highly responsive very fast to this challenge. My view is that that is the best message we can tell the rest of the world: that while we have seen this footage, we have said it is unacceptable and we have acted and, as you will have seen, acted in a way that makes it legislatively much easier to address should any future similar situation occur not just on Kangaroo Island but anywhere in South Australia. That's the pathway for us to be able to reassure people who take an interest in South Australia, including from a tourism perspective, that this still remains a beautiful and safe and caring place to visit.

**THE KOALA STATE NUMBERPLATE**

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (14:39):** My question is to the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water. Has the government distributed any grant funding from the wildlife fund associated with The Koala State numberplate initiative to wildlife care organisations? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr BATTY:** When asked in the house yesterday whether any care organisations on Kangaroo Island had approached the government for grant funding, the minister highlighted the government's election commitment to establish The Koala State numberplate, which collected \$50 per numberplate sold to be collected in a fund and distributed to wildlife carers.

**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) (14:40):** I can advise that consultation with wildlife groups has just finished and so we will be shortly in a position to open up that grant fund.

**AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYMENT ALLIANCE**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (14:40):** My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Will the minister meet with the Australian Employment Alliance, and if so when? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** On radio this morning Gary Collis, the industrial advocate for the Australian Employment Alliance, said that a meeting had been secured with the minister but that at short notice this was cancelled. He said that the drivers 'feel betrayed and deserted by the minister'.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (14:40):** I haven't met any drivers who feel deserted and abandoned because they are coming into public ownership. I always endeavour to meet with all my stakeholders. I don't know why the meeting was cancelled. It could have been because I was holding a press conference or something else came up or some other meeting interfered. Ministers

are very busy and have a very busy schedule. I don't have the time to do the TikToks and the Instagram posts that my young friend does.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** He is getting very good at it, though, I have to say. It's like he is practising for something.

*Members interjecting:*

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

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** What my young friend will realise as his career goes on and on, and hopefully up and up—

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** He is my friend.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** You see that's the problem with members opposite; I don't consider them my enemy. I am their friend. I could tell you the times I had in the last parliament, how many times they came and spent hours in my office—hours in my office—telling me their troubles—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** —telling me all sorts of weird and wonderful stories, which one day will be going in a book, titled *A Shoulder to Cry On*. But I do consider the member for Hartley a good and decent person, and I do consider him a friend despite what members behind him might interject.

I am disappointed Mr Collis has said that. I don't know why the meeting was cancelled, but I also point out that it is the union that represents the workers, not any one individual.

#### **MURRAYLANDS COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**Ms WORTLEY (Torrens) (14:43):** My question is to the Minister for Human Services. Can the minister update the house on community supports to Murray Bridge and the Murraylands?

**The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services) (14:43):** Thanks to the member for the question, and also to her commitment for a better life for all South Australians, importantly those in the regions. In the past week, we saw yet another huge example of the government's commitment to the long-term future of South Australia and its regions. The trip to the Upper Spencer Gulf, including community meetings in Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie, show that we are listening and delivering for regional South Australia.

I have spoken in this place a number of times about our support to the South-East and the Upper Spencer Gulf, and I am really pleased to have the opportunity to talk about the work also in Murray Bridge. In the last few weeks, our recovery centre that had been operating for more than a year to help people after the 2022-23 floods closed its doors. I want to say a huge thankyou to everyone involved. I am advised that the fixed and pop-up recovery centres recorded 3,547 attendances; 2,142 grants, totalling \$6.7 million; 2,544 nights of accommodation; and 230 residents provided with ongoing case management.

While these centres were run by South Australian Housing Authority staff, they were supported by Green Industries SA, PIRSA, Wellbeing SA, the Department for Environment and Water, the Office for Small and Family Business, ac.care, Neami, BlazeAid, Rural Business Support, Good Shepherd, Red Cross, Disaster and Recovery Ministries and the Salvation Army.

The state government has committed more than \$194 million in partnership with the commonwealth to assess the ongoing road to recovery, offering tailored supports to residents, primary producers, small businesses and councils. The recent food security grants, also from the Department of Human Services, are helping specifically people in the Murray Bridge community.

The Murray Bridge Community Centre's How Does Your Garden Grow program secured \$42,097 to support the Murray Bridge Community Garden. This grant will help up to 100 households attend workshops who then will receive a fully functioning garden bed to construct, fill, plant and maintain at their home at the conclusion of the session.

The Living Waters Community Church received \$41,034 to expand its alfresco area at the hub, which gets around 140 visitors per week and is beyond capacity. The new capacity, which is expected to double at the site, will build a freestanding pergola and verandah to connect the function hall to the food pantry and existing pergola. These are extraordinarily valuable projects.

We are working also to improve housing in Murray Bridge. It's being boosted by the government's commitment for an extra \$232.7 million over four years in public housing. At the moment, it's supporting a dozen new homes in Murray Bridge as part of a wider program for 150 extra homes across regional South Australia.

Last week, also, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Studio Purpose youth apartments in Murray Bridge. It is the second project where Habitat for Humanity has led the construction phase of the project, overseen by ac.care. The project converted two public housing duplexes into four units that are suitable for young people. This addresses a critical need in the region. Donors, builders, material suppliers, tradespeople and businesses, along with volunteers, all combined their efforts to complete the construction phase of this second Studio Purpose housing project.

In closing, I really want to extend my gratitude to the local member, the member for Hammond, who, apart from attending a number of these events and supporting the grant applications, has also taken time out to accompany me on a visit to a difficult situation, where a local constituent and a public housing tenant were trying to negotiate some, shall we say, improvements around an issue.

**Mr Pederick:** I think we are nearly there. I think we are there.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK:** I think we are nearly there. This has been a piece of work where together we have been able to solve this issue in collaboration. I think the message from that is that the community does appreciate seeing their elected members work together to manage their concerns. I wanted to pass on my thanks on record.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:47):** My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Has the minister received a briefing from the Electoral Commission on any irregularity or perverse outcome during the local government election processes? With your leave, sir—

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

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

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Argument, sir.

**The SPEAKER:** Ninety-seven, very well. I will give the member for Flinders the opportunity to recast the question.

**Mr TELFER:** My question is to the Minister for Local Government. Has the minister received a briefing from the Electoral Commissioner on any irregularity during the local government election process, and with your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** On 7 December 2023, the Electoral Commissioner issued a statement admitting a mistake which affected 25 of the local government elections, including changing the outcome in the Adelaide Plains Council election.

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:48):** I thank the honourable member for his question. As we all understand, the Electoral Commission is very independent, away from this parliament here, and it is an independent authority. The issue that he is talking about at the moment is before the Court of Disputed Returns and I am not going to make any comments on that at this particular point. It's going through a process at this stage.

The member for Flinders is the shadow minister for local government and also a previous president of the Local Government Association, and also a past president. We have to make certain it goes through that. Certainly, I am waiting for the Court of Disputed Returns to actually come back through the process. As soon as I have some information on that, I am happy to liaise with the member for Flinders, as the shadow minister for local government, to ensure that we get on top of this. Again, it is before the Court of Disputed Returns, and at this stage I am not prepared to make any comments publicly at this particular point.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:50):** Supplementary: my question is to the Minister for Local Government. Can the minister guarantee there won't be any additional costs to the Adelaide Plains Council due to the mistake identified by the Electoral Commission?

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:50):** Thank you to the shadow minister. As I indicated a minute ago, we have had a briefing from the Electoral Commissioner, and what I will be doing is liaising with the Electoral Commissioner. As I said, the Electoral Commissioner is independent of this parliament and is independent of all ministerial duties—and also, from the shadow minister's point of view, he understands that. I will be communicating and working with the Electoral Commissioner. As I said, I will certainly liaise with the shadow minister regarding the process as we go along with that. At this particular point I have no further information, but certainly for the shadow minister I am prepared to ensure that he is completely updated on the process from hereon in.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:51):** Further supplementary: is the minister satisfied with the processes, procedures and control measures put in place by the South Australian Electoral Commission during the last period of local government elections?

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:51):** Thank you to the member for Flinders, the shadow minister. As he is aware, and the house is aware, I am having a review of the local government elections in November last year. We are working at that. We've got a questionnaire going out to the general public, and also to councils and elected members, to make certain that we get that information. The Electoral Commissioner is also finalising his report to the parliament and to the minister, who is me. As soon as we get that I am happy to liaise and communicate with the shadow minister to ensure that we get the best opportunities.

Can I say, in the last election for the council elections—and we are all very concerned about the low turnout and things like that, and the lack of nominations for councillors and also mayors. We need to ensure that we get on top of this for the benefit of not only the community but also councils, in particular, because there have been extra costs involved with that. The shadow minister is very well aware of that.

Again, I will liaise with the shadow minister and also the Electoral Commissioner. I am very happy to have full briefings. If the shadow minister wants a full briefing on anything at all, my office is always available and open for him to come in, as it is for anybody else in this chamber.

*Parliamentary Procedure*

#### VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for MacKillop, I recognise the presence in the chamber today of Mr Joe Scalzi, the former member for Hartley. Welcome to parliament; it's good to have you with us.

*Question Time***IPAVE**

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (14:52):** My question is to the Minister for Regional Roads. Can the minister inform the house about the results of the iPAVe system and how they will be acted upon? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr McBRIDE:** The iPAVe vehicle has arrived in the Limestone Coast and will be surveying more than 50 roads in my electorate over the next seven to 10 days. Our regional road network has a backlog of road maintenance.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:53):** I thank the member for MacKillop for his question.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** The member for Flinders has interjected and said, 'It's the iPAVe 3'—and it is. This vehicle—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** I have mentioned the iPAVe 3 in this chamber before. It is going around all the state's regional roads to get a full understanding of the state of those particular roads. The member for MacKillop regularly—and unfortunately sometimes I get a bit sick of this—talks about the roads in the South-East. As with the member for Mount Gambier, they are always very concerned about that.

As I said, it comes as no surprise that the member for MacKillop particularly strongly is advocating for regional roads. As I indicated, the iPAVe 3 is down in the South-East at the moment. It will be there for five, maybe 10 days. It will be doing all of the state roads down there and getting an indication of the condition of those roads. One of the things we are very aware of is that council have lots of sealed roads—and these are for the sealed roads—and we are making certain that the iPAVe 3, which is a truck with the computers at the back, can actually identify the real condition of those particular roads.

When we get out there we will make certain, as we have for the member for Mount Gambier and the member for MacKillop, to advise all the councils in that particular region. When it goes into other areas across all regional South Australia, we will ensure that the local councils are aware of this particular vehicle being there, so they can utilise it at the same time to get a real indication.

Overall, this will require, as the member for MacKillop has indicated, 50 state roads to be done. I am hoping that the councils will liaise with the iPAVe 3 people down there while they are there for these particular days. The iPAVe 3 vehicle has covered over 7,500 kilometres already of the 18,000 kilometres of all our roads in regional South Australia. That's nearly half the distance of the joint survey already being carried out by the National Transport Research Organisation and the Department for Infrastructure and Transport.

We remain on track for the iPAVe 3 analysis of South Australian roads to be completed by the middle of this year. When we get the information back, we will get a true indication of the condition of those roads so that this government, or future governments, can make a true and detailed analysis of the roads that need to be done, and that will also help, hopefully, the councils to identify and be able to prioritise their roads—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** —on a needs basis, not on a political basis. So, to the member for McKillop and the member for Mount Gambier and other members in this house, I encourage you—when the iPAVe 3 vehicle is out there, we will communicate with the local members and also communicate with the councils. Certainly, this is going to identify the particular roads out there on a needs basis. This is a game changer, and this will be able to make certain that the government of the day will have the right information to make the decisions about all our regional roads.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (14:56):** My question is to the Minister for Local Government. When does the minister expect the completion of the Electoral Commission's local government election report? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** It's now over 15 months since the local government elections and there still has been no ECSA report.

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (14:57):** I thank the shadow minister for his question. As I have indicated on many occasions, the Electoral Commissioner is independent, and I am very sure that if the member for Flinders was the minister for local government, he would not be dictating to the Electoral Commissioner and telling him to—

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** —hurry up his return. The Electoral Commissioner has had a few challenges. The first question from the shadow minister was about the Court of Disputed Returns. The Electoral Commissioner is identifying that; his attention is in that regard. He has other issues to do but, certainly, the Electoral Commissioner knows that he has to do that report to the minister, which is me, as soon as he can. As soon as I get that, I will liaise with the shadow minister to ensure that he is fully updated with the whole lot.

### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (14:58):** My question is to the Minister for Education, Training and Skills. Can the minister update the house on the future of skills in South Australia?

**The Hon. B.I. BOYER (Wright—Minister for Education, Training and Skills) (14:58):** I thank the member for Playford for his question and for his very genuine interest in skills and training, not just in his electorate but in South Australia more broadly. I was fortunate enough just recently to spend three days with the Premier, other cabinet ministers, the member for Stuart and the member for Giles in Upper Spencer Gulf, where we had the opportunity to speak to employers, industry and local communities about the incredible opportunities that we have at this time before us as a state.

Of course, we know that one of the biggest challenges that we face in terms of trying to capitalise on those opportunities and in terms of trying to make sure we can bring them to fruition is making sure that we have the skilled workforce that we are going to need.

This week South Australia has had some positive news, recording the biggest percentage increase in the nation in the number of new apprentices and trainees. From 1 January to 30 September, the number of government-funded apprentices and trainees increased by 19.2 per cent, which was the highest in the nation. For South Australian government-funded VET activity in the first nine months of last year, student numbers increased by 9.6 per cent, which was 7.9 per cent above the national average. Government-funded students at TAFE SA have increased by 15.4 per cent, while non-government provider numbers also increased by 3.8 per cent.

Of course, it is one thing to get an improvement in those in training, those commencing training; it is a very important thing. We need to grow the pipeline if we are to have the skilled workforce that we need in this state to deliver on all those projects that we have—the frigates, AUKUS, Women's and Children's, Torrens to Darlington, the delivery of a second year of preschool, three-year-old preschool—but of course what we know that we need, particularly in a state the size of ours, is to make sure that we are getting that growth in the areas that we really need it. On that topic, I am pleased to advise the house that the biggest growth in enrolments were in engineering and related technologies, which was up by 12 per cent; architecture and building, up 6.9 per cent; education, up 54.5 per cent; and IT, up 67 per cent, which is fantastic news.

Of course, we have forecast this week—it was just a couple of days ago that I was pleased to release a new skills plan or a skills policy for the state to make sure that we have a clear guiding document not just for the government but for all those different parts of the skills and training sector in South Australia about where we need to focus our efforts and where we are going to invest that record \$2.3 billion of investment over the next five years that we have signed up to with the federal Labor government.

In that vein, we are making sure that we are making some tough decisions. We are making sure that we focus our efforts, that we invest that \$2.3 billion in the areas that we are really going to need it, in those sections of the workforce that we need to grow to deliver on projects like AUKUS, building the frigates, hydrogen, three-year-old preschool, Women's and Children's, Torrens to Darlington—all these huge projects. We need to make sure that we are strong and that we have the support of the sector behind us when we make those decisions around where we invest taxpayers' dollars to make sure that the whole state can benefit from these incredible opportunities.

I think the data that has been released this week shows that we are on the way to making sure that we get sustainable growth in vocational training in South Australia in the areas that we are going to need to deliver on the unprecedented opportunities that are in front of us as a state at this time.

#### PORT LINCOLN ROADWORKS

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:02):** My question is to the Minister for Regional Roads. What is the status of roadwork proposed in Port Lincoln at key intersections along Liverpool Street? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**Mr TELFER:** Community concerns are widespread over the plans to remove slip lanes at key intersections and the impact that changes will have on freight and congestion.

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:03):** As the member would be aware, I had a tour of the West Coast a couple of weeks ago—

*Mr Telfer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** I am sorry about that; I apologise. If you are really upset, I will let you know next time. It was a very quick trip there, looking at some of the OCA (Outback Communities Authority) areas. One of the things that I did look at was the overtaking lanes just outside of Port Lincoln. They are all, hopefully, up and running now and back to 110 km/h.

With regard to the work that has been done in the City of Port Lincoln, that has been going on for some time. That has been consulted with the Port Lincoln City Council and the community. The idea about the whole thing was to be able to ensure the safety of pedestrians in Port Lincoln—the safety issues. The member for Flinders would have had the opportunity to talk to the council regarding all of this, and I am sure that he would have made some contact or communication with the consultation that the department would have had out there. They did an audit on one particular area. There were over 1,100 pedestrians crossing that particular section. The whole thing about the work on these roads in the city itself is to ensure that the traffic flow goes well and also to ensure the

safety of the community and pedestrians. The issue is that one of them is right next to a school and there are a lot of schoolchildren going across there.

From the department's consultation with the council and the community, I believe they have got the right idea there. If the shadow minister—well, it's not the shadow minister, it is the member for Flinders—had an opportunity, he should have brought that up at that particular point. I believe that the first priority is to ensure the safety of our pedestrians, particularly the children crossing at these particular locations. If the member for Flinders doesn't believe that, then I am very surprised. It's about safety and not having to travel across four, five or six roadways, as is the case at the moment. Going forward, with the way it is designed, those children will only cross one section because, at the end of the day, it's less traffic.

### PORT LINCOLN ROADWORKS

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:05):** Supplementary: what consultation was undertaken to glean public feedback prior to intersection works along Liverpool Street, Port Lincoln, and how was that consultation used in decision-making?

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK (Stuart—Minister for Local Government, Minister for Regional Roads, Minister for Veterans Affairs) (15:05):** The department has done plenty of consultation. Through the council—and I have had a meeting with the Mayor and the CEO of the council—there was lots of communication, and it was advertised through the local paper and on social media. At the end of the day, the department has had consultation. It has been over a long period of time. The council has been very—

*Mr Telfer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. G.G. BROCK:** —receptive to discussions with the department. I understand that there has been plenty of it.

*Mr Telfer interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Florey has been waiting patiently.

### MINERAL EXPLORATION

**Mr BROWN (Florey) (15:06):** Thank you, sir. My question is to the Minister for Energy and Mining. Can the minister update the house on exploration for minerals in South Australia?

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:06):** I thank the member for his question and his keen interest in the prosperity of the state. The ABS has released its December quarter 2023 mineral exploration figures. In a seasonally adjusted term, \$78.5 million was spent in our state exploring for minerals, particularly for copper—which was 63 per cent of the total—iron ore and uranium. This quarterly expenditure has brought the total for the 2023 calendar year to \$294 million, compared to \$165 million in the 2022 calendar year and \$106 million in the 2021 calendar year.

Making available pre-competitive data, facilitating release areas and practising best practice regulation is core business for this government and is not something to be overlooked or undervalued. Between April 2022 and December 2023, exploration expenditure under the Malinauskas Labor government was \$426 million. That exceeded the expenditure for the entire time of the Marshall government—the entire time that they were in office.

*Members interjecting:*

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** I hear the rebuttals already—COVID, it's not fair, it's not right. In Australia, mining was able to continue operating—

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

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Are you here again? I thought you left.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!



**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** You're back; welcome back.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Morialta is called to order.

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

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Oh dear.

**The Hon. J.A.W. Gardner:** Oh dear.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS:** Yes, oh dear. In Australia, mining was able to continue operating as it had been marked as an essential industry by the Australian government. Despite COVID, Australian mining remained open for business with comparatively few disruptions. Our expenditure in 2023 is the highest in 11 years and the highest since 2012, a time when OZ Minerals was spending tens of millions of dollars discovering the extent of the Carrapateena and Prominent Hill copper mines of our north. We are seeing a similar trend.

Last week, the Premier, ministers and media visited the nation's largest and significant copper discovery, Oak Dam. This copper discovery is likely the most significant global discovery in the past decade. We witnessed how serious BHP are about developing it. The Treasurer and I counted 12 rigs up and running at the Oak Dam facility, the fourth major copper deposit next to Olympic Dam, Carrapateena, Prominent Hill, and a copper refinery. The area has the markings of a world-class tier 1 copper province, which, if realised, would have a profound effect on the South Australian economy.

The resources sector is already now a new pillar of our economy. Of our \$17.9 billion worth of export, a record in 2023 reported by the ABS, the resources sector contributed nearly \$7 billion of that, including \$2½ billion in refined copper exports and \$2 billion in energy and mineral goods, mainly copper, ores and uranium. With the purchase of Carrapateena and Prominent Hill, through their acquisition of OZ Minerals last year, we are seeing BHP send more copper into their smelter, which is excellent for the complexity of our economy and, of course, assists in creating more jobs here in South Australia.

#### **EYRE PENINSULA DESALINATION PLANT**

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:10):** My question is to the Minister for Water. Is SA Water using or planning to use seismic testing as part of their process for a desalination plant at Billy Lights Point, Port Lincoln and, if so, does the minister have concerns about any potential impacts on the local environment and aquaculture activities?

**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) (15:11):** I have seen some concern raised about some seismic testing that is being proposed, but rather than speak not having sufficient expertise to respond, I will take that question on notice.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA (Hartley) (15:11):** My question is to the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport. Will the intersection of Atlantis Drive and The Grove Way be upgraded and, if so, when? With your leave, sir, and that of the house, I will explain.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. V.A. TARZIA:** This upgrade was an election commitment. We are approaching two years since the last election and the intersection is yet to be upgraded. On 28 February we learned the news of a tragic fatal crash at this dangerous intersection.

**The Hon. A. KOUTSANTONIS (West Torrens—Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Minister for Energy and Mining) (15:11):** It is a dangerous intersection and yes, it will be upgraded, and it will be upgraded relatively soon. We made this an election commitment, which

saw the former local member defeated and a new member elected. This was in no small part due to her advocacy about local roads and the lack of care and concern in relation to that previously.

I thank the member for raising this important question because it is important that we do acknowledge that there are some very dangerous intersections that need to be upgraded. We are doing our bit. The state government is spending a record amount of money on infrastructure over the next four years. It is unprecedented in its size and scope. Whether it is the north-south corridor, the Women's and Children's Hospital or upgrades to local intersections, the state government is doing what it can to make sure that we get it right. Detailed planning is underway, and I look forward to the beginning and completion of this very important project.

#### *Grievance Debate*

### **EUROVISION SONG CONTEST 2024**

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (15:12):** Today, we say congratulations to Zaachariaha Fielding and congratulations to Michael Ross, Electric Fields, who have been announced today as Australia's representatives at Eurovision for this year, 2024. In the words of Molly Meldrum, I say to everybody: do yourself a favour and get it in the diary for 11 May, because Malmo in Sweden will be hosting Eurovision this year.

Can we just pause for a moment and recognise the extraordinary significance of this moment. Zaachariaha Fielding is a celebrated South Australian artist from Mimili in the APY lands, and at the same time a celebrated musician alongside his collaborator, Michael Ross, Electric Fields, an artist and musician of extraordinary achievement. As a leading participant in the APY Art Centre Collective, Zaachariaha Fielding is the winner of the 2023 Wynne Prize, among many other significant decorations. He, along with so many others, have been core to the spirit, the vibrancy, capacity and success of APY Art Centre Collective. And what a tremendous round of collective achievements.

Zaachariaha is the son of Robert Fielding, who is another hero of the arts community of Mimili in the APY, and Kaye Lowah. To see that the band Electric Fields will grace the stage at Eurovision in front of more than 160 million viewers throughout the world, if last year is any guide, is just an extraordinary achievement. It is the first time since the first Australian participant, Guy Sebastian—whom we like to claim as our own—performed at Eurovision in 2015. But here we have a South Australian, and not only that but a South Australian Mimili local who will now take the stage at Eurovision 2024.

Electric Fields will follow in what is not quite 10 years of participation by Australians since Guy Sebastian first graced the stage in 2015. Dami Im nearly won it the following year—and we have since been invited back every year—and who can forget Kate Miller-Heidke's extraordinary, literally towering performance in 2019? Apart from following that moment by moment, I was just extraordinarily impressed to see that Kate Miller-Heidke kept her commitment at Ukaria, a matter of days after having performed on that grand stage, and performed *Zero Gravity* at Ukaria—one of those unforgettable moments.

I am proud, also, to stand here as a member of this place in circumstances where Sweden, as last year's winner—Loreen winning with *Tattoo*; the only person to have pulled off that feat, and a truly extraordinary song it was too—will host in 2024 on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the winning performance in 1974 of ABBA's *Waterloo*, and what a breakthrough moment that was. *Waterloo* was a song written for the Eurovision Song Contest, and I might say we might keep an eye out as to my presence in the chamber around 11 May. I know that the balance of my family will be doing all they can to be there in person.

Eurovision really is a truly extraordinary event. It continues to grow. It started first in 1956 as a project, really, towards peace and unification postwar and it has only grown and continued to develop, and captured the hearts and minds of people now far beyond Europe—indeed, all the way to Australia. It is a wonderful thing that Australians are invited to participate in the contest. I know that Zaachariaha and Michael will do us proud. Electric Fields will be fantastic. *One Milkali* is the song (*One Blood*). It is about unification. Let's play that over and over again from now until May.

**The SPEAKER:** We will play it and think of you, member for Heysen.

### DAVENPORT ELECTORATE SPORTING FACILITIES

**Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (15:18):** Since becoming the member for Davenport, I have enjoyed a good relationship with the City of Onkaparinga. We have partnered on some great projects. We have delivered new change rooms for the Happy Valley Sports Park; we have delivered some incredible upgrades at the Serpentine Reserve, including a half-court basketball court, new practice goalposts, lights, shade over the playground; and we are currently working together on building the Minkarra Link trail, which is a beautiful path which ultimately opens up sections of our community that the community has never had access to before—but today I have a bone to pick with council.

We have some fantastic tennis and netball clubs in my electorate: the O'Halloran Hill Tennis Club, Happy Valley Tennis Club, Valley Vikings Netball Club, Flagstaff Hill Falcons Netball Club and Flagstaff Hill Tennis Club. They pay a lease to council, like most sporting clubs do, for the use of their facilities—their clubhouse and their courts. Tennis and netball also pay annual maintenance fees, and they go towards court maintenance and court resurfacing every three to five years, if they are lucky. These maintenance fees are intended to be a fifty-fifty responsibility arrangement with the asset owner, who is council.

Most of the clubs would pay a \$724 per court per annum fee on top of their normal lease fees. For the O'Halloran Hill Tennis Club, who have six courts, that works out to be \$4,344 that they pay each year on top of their lease fees for the upkeep of their courts. That is hard to stomach for them at the moment while three of their six courts have been left pretty much unusable and unmaintained.

So when they received a notice from the council, like many other tennis and netball clubs in the City of Onkaparinga did recently, that their court maintenance fees would be going up by an eye-watering 79 per cent, you can only imagine how they felt. They were pretty dumbfounded. It seemed completely unreasonable and, in my opinion, downright outrageous. How can our clubs, who run on volunteers and ultimately on the smell of an oily rag, take on these fees without passing them on to their members?

Have the council considered the impact on families in our community? Have they considered the impact on our young tennis and netball players? I support council going out and seeking alternative income streams to bail themselves out of what ESCOSA recently referred to as financially unsustainable. I support them 100 per cent in seeking new income streams, but bleeding our local sporting clubs is absolutely not the answer.

I have written to council seeking an explanation and also seeking a meeting with those sporting clubs and with a council representative so that we can talk through how this might be ultimately unwound, how council can find other ways of delivering new income streams, how council can get behind supporting their local sporting clubs and their local sporting heroes and how we can get behind supporting tennis and netball for our communities into the future.

### WINE INDUSTRY

**Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (15:21):** I rise to talk about the state of the wine industry in South Australia and no more so than the industry up in the Riverland, which is in crisis at the moment. To give you a bit of an overview of what the Riverland wine industry represents nationally, it is an industry that is currently exporting to 70 countries. The vintages have been in decline since 2021, when we had record vintages of almost 560,000 tonnes, going down to 500,000 tonnes in 2022 and 400,000 tonnes in 2023. The vintage this year is expected to be one of the all-time lows. That is down \$134 million or the equivalent of 32 per cent of the industry.

The area planted is about 20,500 hectares. That is a significant investment by family farms and some corporates, but the crisis that the industry is now facing has been borne by the Riverland at front and centre. Just recently, I attended a town meeting at Barmera, at the Barmera Club. It was set up by Riverland Wine. There were about 175 growers that are on the cusp of collapse. Many were not there; they were not able to come out and face exactly what they are about to encounter over the next couple of years.

The industry in the Riverland represents about 62 per cent of all of South Australia's wine and 34 per cent of the total Australian crush. That represents about 930 enterprises. Currently, some

of the headwinds that we are facing have been very well documented. The issue with China, the tariffs put on wine products, has been only a part of it. Obviously, we have been through COVID, and that has seen a disconnect of consumers with mainstream markets. It has seen a disconnect with logistics companies, sea freight and air freight.

What that has meant is a continuing impact on the wine industry. They are a tough breed in the Riverland industry, a tough bunch, but it is an industry that is back on its knees. As a wine grapegrower through the late nineties into the 2000s and beyond, I have been through the good and I have been through the bad. I understand the complexities of the downturn and the opportunities that the wine industry presents.

But at the moment the growers are returning something which is a pittance of the cost of production, somewhere in the vicinity of between \$120 and \$150 per tonne. The majority of those stressed assets are red wine grapes. What we saw at that Barmera meeting were, I guess, ideas put to industry, put to some government representatives, and it was very disappointing not to see any or very few government representatives who were actually there to help make decisions for an industry that is facing such a crisis.

If I look around South Australia, in some way, shape or form anyone who is a grapegrower, a processor or a marketer is under severe stress at the moment, no more so than those in the Riverland. What we have done as a collective group, and myself as the representative, is we have put ideas to government, to industry, and there are short-term ideas, there are long-term ideas.

I would like to see local government step up with rate relief as a short-term measure. The state government must make sure that they fund Rural Business Support, they must fund the FaB Scout program. They are organisations that are looking after the mental health of our growers. They are organisations that are able to give advice on financial planning, and their funding is under question by this current state government at the moment, so I urge the Premier and his ministers to support them.

The state government have more to do on that. We need more trade missions, inbound and outbound, so that we can bolster our traditional markets but also create new markets. The federal government also have a role to play. Structural adjustment for the long term is an issue that needs to be addressed. We need to either sell more wine or we need to reduce the number of plantings. They need to represent the industry as one and we need to see a code of conduct. We know that the duopoly supermarkets are reaping the benefits, reaping the rewards, of the very vulnerable wine industry at the moment.

### **TASTE THE LIMESTONE COAST FESTIVAL**

**Mr McBRIDE (MacKillop) (15:26):** What a valuable griever that was by the member for Chaffey. I rise today with great pleasure to celebrate the resounding success of the Taste the Limestone Coast Festival, a cherished event that returned with a bang after a three-year hiatus. This festival, which has been a beacon of celebration since its inception in 2001, once again brought the Town Square of Naracoorte to life on Saturday 10 February.

The journey to resurrect this beloved festival was not without its challenges, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, through concerted efforts and tireless advocacy, including my own discussions with the state government, the committee overseeing the festival secured a Regional Event Fund sum of \$20,000. These funds were instrumental in ensuring the festival's return as they helped offset the higher costs associated with organising such an event in regional South Australia.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the Lions Club of Naracoorte whose dedicated members volunteered their time and expertise to orchestrate this remarkable event. Their commitment to serving the community is truly commendable and without their unwavering support the festival would not have been possible.

One of the hallmarks of the festival is its commitment to supporting local Limestone Coast suppliers. From food to beverages, every aspect of the event showcased the rich bounty in our region. Furthermore, the festival served as a vital fundraiser for local community and sporting groups, underscoring its importance in nurturing community spirit and fostering collaboration.

I had the pleasure of attending the festival myself and it was indeed a day to remember. The sun shone brightly, the atmosphere was electric and the music performed by talented local artists provided the perfect soundtrack to the festivities. I was allowed to attend this meeting with my schedule and I was very pleased to turn up in the early afternoon. The event was well underway. The numbers within the confines of the security fencing were quite outstanding. It was difficult to find a table and chair.

As I walked around to the local wineries and food outlets, there was one thing that came upon them very quickly. Not many hours into that afternoon when I turned up, they were running out of supplies. The wine was running out, they were having to restock supplies, the local brewer from Beachport was having to go back down to Beachport to seek further supplies, and they were all caught off guard, perhaps firstly by the numbers and secondly by the young age of all the attendees, and the wine that was being consumed was of the sweeter palate which caught the wine providers off guard. It was obviously that younger 20 to 30-year-old cohort, which I left 20 years ago, who were in to more of a fruitier, sweet and colder wine than what they anticipated.

With the whole event and the numbers there, there was music and three or four bands. There was one band that got together with the upper house's Ben Hood MLC singing away. One of the bands had not got together for over 20 years. I know that the locals all pulled together. It was well supported. There were a number of acts that you would have to say were really just local singers and local bands as well. All did a fantastic job.

We know that the people who were there were dancing to the tunes, singing away, mostly seeking shelter in the shade because it was warm and there was not a cloud to be seen. It was a big weekend for Naracoorte, with the Naracoorte Cup on the next day. That was also well attended. Of all things, the member for Hammond turned up in this very, very dapper, flash jacket and took out the fashions on the field for the men on the day. Well done to him for, firstly, having a go and, secondly, for winning that prize.

With 17 local producers offering a wonderful array of food, wine, beer, gin and spirits, attendees were treated to a delicious feast showcasing the diverse flavours and culinary delights of the Limestone Coast. But perhaps most heartening was the sense of friendship and unity that permeated the festival grounds. Over a thousand people hailing from across the state and even beyond our borders came together to celebrate everything wonderful about the Limestone Coast and Naracoorte. It was a testament to the enduring appeal of this festival and the strong sense of community that defines our region.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to everyone involved in making the Taste the Limestone Coast Festival a resounding success. Your hard work, dedication and passion have not only revitalised this cherished tradition but have also reaffirmed the Limestone Coast's reputation as a vibrant hub of culture, creativity and culinary excellence. I look forward to attending next year's festival.

#### **SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY**

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (15:31):** I rise to speak on an issue of great concern to my local constituents, which is road safety near our schools and what we can do to improve our school crossings. Unfortunately, just in the last couple of weeks, we have had highlighted again the need to focus on this important issue, with two more accidents at schools in my electorate. There was one at Rose Park Primary School, where a schoolchild on his way to school was unfortunately knocked off his bike, and, secondly, another unfortunate incident at Marryatville High School, with another accident involving a student. Thankfully, both of those students involved are okay and only sustained minor injuries, but it is an important reminder for us to be ever vigilant and take whatever action we need to on this issue.

This is an issue that was really brought to the fore for my constituents last year when there was a shocking accident at Marryatville High School involving two children who were trying to do no more than get to school, and they were tragically struck when a truck failed to stop at the red light at that school crossing. Since that time, thankfully, the children are doing very well, but we have also seen some improvements at that school crossing, including a new red-light camera being installed

there. I thank the minister for his engagement on that school crossing because they are very important improvements.

But there is more work to be done. Following that accident last year, I conducted a period of consultation with all local schools in my electorate about what action we should be taking to improve road safety at our schools. I met with many school communities who had many ideas relating to their own particular schools. I have written to many ministers about many of these issues, including as recently as a couple of weeks ago, calling for certain action to be taken at a number of schools in my electorate, including Linden Park Primary School, which is home to the most unsafe school crossing in the state; Burnside Primary School; Rose Park Primary School; Glenunga International High School; Seymour College; Loretto College; St Peter's Girls School; St Patrick's Special School; and Pembroke College.

I have raised many of their particular ideas and suggestions for additional infrastructure or changes that are needed at their particular school crossings. Just as we worked with the minister on the Marryatville High School crossing, I hope we can work constructively to improve road safety at these schools as well.

This is particularly in light of the government's own announcement, on 20 December 2023, about additional investment in road safety programs. I note that that announcement did not include any detail about what projects and what locations would be funded under those new road safety programs. In light of that, I would love to see some of these important projects at schools in the eastern suburbs funded, because we are constantly seeing the need to act. I do not think we can put a price on the life of a child, so I do hope the minister considers the various suggestions made by various schools in the local community.

One particular matter that arose as a common theme in some of my consultations with local schools is the need to consider school zones around schools right across the state, and perhaps to reduce speed limits for those school zones. If you are driving along a main road in the Eastern States and you are approaching a school, you will be met with flashing orange lights and your speed will be reduced to 40 km/h. If you are driving down Portrush Road in my electorate, past Seymour College or Loreto College, or if you are driving down Kensington Road in my electorate, past Marryatville High School, you keep hurtling along at 60 km/h, and it is not immediately apparent that you are entering a school zone.

I think the time has come for us to consider slowing down traffic near school zones and perhaps considering a 40 km/h school zone, accompanied by orange flashing lights, to do everything we can to make sure local schoolchildren can get to school safely.

### RAMADAN

**The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (15:37):** At the moment, Christians in our community are celebrating the period of Lent, which is a time of reflection, and often fasting is used to give us an opportunity to reflect on our society and on ourselves. In our Muslim community, we are coming up to the period of Ramadan. I understand Ramadan starts at sundown on this Sunday 10 March. It is the holy month of fasting and a period of introspection, communal prayer and reading of the Koran. It is my further understanding that, during this period, God forgives the past sins of those who observe the holy month with fasting, prayer and faithful intention. This is not too dissimilar to what we do in Lent. It is an important period for the lives of Muslim people across the world, including Muslim people in our home state of South Australia.

Sadly, this year Ramadan will be celebrated against the backdrop of the violence and destruction currently taking place in Palestine. If that is not bad enough, we have been told that the Israeli government is planning to invade, for lack of a better word, Rafah, one of the cities in Palestine, just before the start of Ramadan. So we have a whole nation celebrating their holiest month, and we have their neighbour who seeks to then invade that nation at that time.

Regarding the violence and destruction inflicted by the state of Israel, through the IDF, on the Palestinian people, I now know, for example, that over 30,000 people—men, women and children—have been killed in Palestine. That is more than the men, women and children in my

hometown of Gawler. The equivalent of the whole town has been destroyed, and that's the state's second-biggest country town, to put that into context.

If the world does not take action, we will be witnesses to the destruction of a whole civilisation. This conflict did not start on 7 October 2023, as some people opposite have tried to suggest. This conflict started back in 1948. It was created when the UN unilaterally decided to partition Palestine into two states. Since 7 October 2023, over 650,000 homes in the urban areas of Palestine have been destroyed by Israeli bombardment; 1.8 million people have been displaced. The destruction has also had a long-lasting impact on the history and culture of Palestinian people. For example, on 19 October, the oldest church in Gaza, Saint Porphyrius, was destroyed. This Greek Orthodox Church is testament to the multicultural and multifaith history of Palestine. The Great Omari Mosque also lies in ruins. These and over 200 other religious and cultural sites have been reduced to dust by the Israeli invasion of Palestine.

When Islamic State waged its war on history, identity and material heritage, an international outcry rightly ensued. Europe and the United States quite rightly spoke out against that destruction. While this happens, Western leaders are essentially silent. It goes without saying that we acknowledge the right of both Israelis and Palestinian people to live in equality, peace, prosperity and security within Israel and Palestine. So, what needs to happen?

There needs to be an immediate ceasefire of all military action between all the parties involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Australia needs to also acknowledge the Palestinian right to immediate statehood. The Australian government needs to find ways to reinstate its funding commitment to UNRWA as a matter of urgency. We need to also give effect as to the decisions of the International Court of Justice and continue to build a coalition for peace in the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Our Muslim community deserve the opportunity to celebrate Ramadan in peace. As always, blessed are the peacemakers.

#### *Private Members' Statements*

### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

**The Hon. D.J. SPEIRS (Black—Leader of the Opposition) (15:42):** I rise this afternoon to make a statement on a Kangaroo Island legend who passed away on 2 March 2024. I first met George Lonzar in 2021, when visiting Kangaroo Island during my time as South Australia's environment minister. I was able to have a cup of tea with George at his house, and he told me so many fantastic stories about his decades-long career as a park ranger on Kangaroo Island, starting that job on 17 April 1950 and working through until 1984, looking after Flinders Chase National Park, Kelly Hill Caves, Seal Bay conservation area and Cape Torrens.

At the start of his career, George was a ranger for the flora and fauna board before it became the National Parks and Wildlife Service. With little money to support improvements of the parks in those days, George played a critical role in putting in boundary fences, extensive firebreaks, a number of roads and camps and improved visitor facilities. In 1958, George's handyman skills were put to the test when he personally made 27,000 concrete bricks to build the third ranger's house, where he lived with his wife Joyce and their two children.

George played an integral part in making the Kangaroo Island national parks network what it is today. When he first began his career as a ranger in 1950 visitation was about 2,000, and when he retired it had reached 25,000 people per year.

Mayor Michael Pengilly, who knew George so well, has said that his insight into how national parks and wildlife are managed was second to none and his knowledge of how bushfires occur and how they can be managed was exceptional. George Lonzar will be missed. His knowledge and understanding of the natural world was phenomenal. It was a pleasure to be able to meet him, and I pass my sympathies on to his family. Vale, George Lonzar.

**Mr FULBROOK (Playford) (15:45):** When cycling in the north is discussed, it is often said that advocacy within Port Adelaide Enfield is strong and the social ride scene within the City of Salisbury is the envy of many. Over the last 18 months, I have worked with many cyclists in my

community to find out how we can emulate the success of our western neighbours. This has taken me and many co-conspirators on a journey of discovery, which is now starting to bear fruit.

Under the guidance of Sam Powrie from the Port Adelaide Bicycle User Group, we have seen firsthand how they have worked with governments to improve facilities in the north-west. We are keen to adapt this model locally by setting up our very own Salisbury Bicycle User Group. While we have interest from many, we welcome anyone wanting to join us to advocate on how to improve facilities across the City of Salisbury.

To get things started, a meeting will be held on 24 March between 2pm to 4pm at the Jack Young Centre in Salisbury. No matter your ability, this is the first step in hopefully developing a blueprint by local cyclists for local cyclists. For further information or to RSVP, please give my office a call on 8250 7234. Getting to this point has been quite the journey, and I want to thank some great cycling advocates, including Jim Binder, David Elliott, Rob Carter, Jodi White, Ash Baxter and Ray Melbourne. I hope you can be there on the 24<sup>th</sup> to join them for this very important meeting.

**Mr TELFER (Flinders) (15:46):** The saga of Eyre Peninsula roadworks continue. The latest episode has seen the fourth fix-up of the intersection between the Tod and Flinders highways and the western approach road coming into Port Lincoln. It is now more than two years since the original work started on these roads—years of speed limits, years of road restrictions, years of impact on businesses and individual access into properties, years of failed works. This should not simply be accepted by the department, as it is not good enough. Sadly, it looks as though there are already indications of further failing on the edge of these works again. Our community is feeling helpless.

As well as this, the department is seemingly bulldozing on with works to change key intersections along Liverpool Street in Port Lincoln, the main thoroughfare through town. The department have proposed removing the left-turn slipways on these intersections despite continued opposition from the community, including during the formal consultation process. Their concerns are about the impact this will have on daily movements of freight, school drop-offs, business access and peak hour traffic. These concerns have seemingly been ignored by the minister and department. The Minister for Regional Roads visited recently but did not seem to have much idea during question time. He needs to listen to my community and put a pause on these works. There is a chance to make it better for our road users. Let's not make it worse.

**Ms HUTCHESSON (Waite) (15:48):** I wish a very big happy birthday to the Rotary Club of Coromandel Valley, which turned 32 this week. I joined them on Monday night for a very lovely dinner. Everyone brought a plate, and we all sat around with hats on and celebrated not only their activity around the local community but also their support of local sporting groups and students and their work on the Drakes barbecue. Every second week they host a barbecue outside Drakes, and they let community groups come and raise money. They can be sports groups, our local Blackwood Players club, which is there at the moment, or Blackwood Action Group. They also helped us when we were getting our parkrun up and running. They are a wonderful group of volunteers, and their members are incredibly warm and generous with their time. I would like to wish them a very, very happy birthday.

Also on the weekend was Clean Up Australia Day up in my electorate. It was the 15<sup>th</sup> year that Blackwood Action Group hosted volunteers to clean up Blackwood. There were 29 of us, and we filled 14 full bags. We went all the way down to Hungry Jack's—thankfully, that was not my section—down Shepherds Hill Road and also along Coromandel Parade. It was a lovely day. We had a beautiful morning tea afterwards and the work that the community did to try to make our area clean and tidy was incredible. I thank everybody for all of the work that they did.

#### *Bills*

### **HERITAGE PLACES (PROTECTION OF STATE HERITAGE PLACES) AMENDMENT BILL**

#### *Second Reading*

**The Hon. S.E. CLOSE (Port Adelaide—Deputy Premier, Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, Minister for Defence and Space Industries, Minister for Climate, Environment and Water) (15:49):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.



I thank the Hon. Robert Simms MLC for his commitment to the protection of heritage and his initiative in introducing legislation to further the protection of State Heritage Places. The government has made a commitment to legislate to better protect State Heritage Places, and takes this opportunity to augment the bill introduced in the other place to advance a graduated system of enforcement, to increase penalties for noncompliance and to otherwise improve processes under the Heritage Places Act 1993.

The increased financial penalties for violations of the Heritage Places Act bring South Australia's penalty amounts in line with those of other jurisdictions. Protection orders under the Heritage Places Act currently stipulate a penalty for noncompliance within the order, but no subsidiary enforcement measures exist to support positive conservation outcomes for state heritage properties.

Registering enforcement orders on the title of land belonging to the person who is subject to such an order ensures that if the property is sold, the purchaser is aware of the encumbrance. This measure, as well as providing daily penalties forcing the person to undertake works contemplated by the order in a timely manner, offers these subsidiary measures. This may avoid a repetition of the circumstances that have led to the continued demise of, for example, Bell's Plumbers Shop.

Further specific enforcement provisions offer a graduated scale of responses to noncompliance. A repair notice advises the owner of the need to repair a State Heritage Place if the place suffers from neglect or disrepair. This preliminary step has the advantage of allowing owners the opportunity to undertake repairs and to discuss the repairs with a heritage architect without exacting a penalty. Only if the owner fails to comply with a repair notice will the secondary enforcement of a repair order be issued.

Restoration orders have been introduced to address the situation of a person who carries out works in relation to a State Heritage Place without prior authorisation. The order may require the person to rectify any work or activity undertaken or otherwise restore the place to its previous condition. The amendments also extend the ability for the minister, in relation to repair, restoration or protection orders, to cause any works or action contemplated by the order to be carried out by a recognised heritage professional and to recover the cost of doing so as a debt. In order to facilitate prosecution for noncompliance, the amendments provide a clear presumption that the owner is responsible for any damage or destruction which is the subject of any potential prosecution.

I am advised that the Department for Environment and Water spends in excess of \$10,000 a year on newspaper advertisements to comply with notifications required under the act. Providing alternate means for public notifications will provide broader circulation, reduce costs and contemporise this provision. Finally, aligning the practice of designation for sites of geological, archaeological, paleontological and speleological significance with the listing processes for State Heritage Places allows for better public engagement in the designation process.

I would like to commend this bill to the house, primarily on the basis that it will help protect State Heritage Places and provide a much more subtle and graded way to manage State Heritage Places and their owners, in a supportive way for those owners who wish to be supportive of their state heritage, but, at times, in a punitive way where owners have clearly decided that demolition through neglect is an appropriate course of action.

A secondary reason I would like to support it is to point out how good it is to see in parliament, occasionally, a bill start with a different political party and be continued with another one. The cross-party work that can occasionally occur and is seen in this place is, I think, a sign of politicians doing the right thing for the right reasons, rather than always sticking solely to party lines. With those words, I commend the bill, and note that I will be happy for this bill to be adjourned at this point in order to allow some substantial amendments that we are proposing to be properly briefed to the opposition.

**Mr BATTY (Bragg) (15:54):** I rise to speak on the Heritage Places (Protection of State Heritage Places) Amendment Bill 2023. This is a bill that has come to us from the other place, and I thank and acknowledge the Hon. Robert Simms for bringing this bill to the Legislative Council and for having it pass the Legislative Council and come to us now.

This was a bill that the Liberal Party supported in the Legislative Council, the latest in a string of legislation related to heritage that the Liberal Party has supported in this place. Whether it be the Ayers House legislation this year or whether it be the many bills before this house related to the Adelaide Parklands and heritage listing them, I note time and time again the government has opted not to support those bills.

We have been consistent on this issue. The Liberal Party is the party of heritage in this place. It is also the latest in a raft of legislation that we have seen come to us from the opposition or from a minor party and then supported by the government, by the parliament. It really is starting to look like this is a government bereft of any legislative agenda, so much so that they have to take Liberal Party ideas and Greens' ideas to give us anything to do in this place. This is just another example of that.

What it is perhaps the biggest example of is Labor once again pretending to care about heritage before an election. I think I have seen this film before and I did not like the ending. We only have to go back to 2022 and the last election. Ironically, it was three weeks before the last election that the now minister for heritage made a promise. In February 2022, a few weeks before the last election, she told a community forum and I quote, 'Labor has absolutely no intention of knocking over any State Heritage Place.'

The worst thing about that promise is that people believed her. People in the community who care about heritage believed the now minister for heritage when she stood up three weeks or so before the last election and said that Labor had no intention of knocking over any State Heritage Place. What did they believe that to mean? They thought that it meant Labor would not go and knock over state heritage-listed buildings.

What did this now minister for heritage do merely months after forming government, merely months after making that promise a few weeks before an election? She went and bowled over a state heritage-listed building. Merely months into this new parliament, we saw the bulldozer going through the Thebarton barracks, which was enormously sad. But it was also the bulldozer going through our entire system that protects heritage in this state. It was treated with total contempt by the government and it was treated with total contempt by the very minister who agreed, before the last election, that they had no intention of knocking over any state heritage-listed place. It was also, of course, the bulldozer going through her very own promises when it comes to protecting heritage, protecting state heritage in South Australia. That was a promise made by the now minister for heritage about three weeks before the last election.

I find it extraordinary that here we are today, three weeks before another election, and again we see this minister talking about heritage. Three weeks before another election, we see Labor fronting up with a piece of Greens legislation, clinging to a piece of Greens legislation, trying to pretend before an election that they care about heritage. They might have fooled South Australians at the last election, they might have fooled the people of Dunstan at the last election, but I do not think they are going to fool the people of Dunstan again because this is clearly not a government that cares about heritage.

If the minister for heritage really wanted to protect state heritage-listed buildings in South Australia, she would not come in here clinging to a piece of Greens' legislation two years into her government: what she would do is stop bulldozing state heritage-listed places. That is what she did a few months into her government and a few months after making a commitment that that was the very thing she was not going to do.

If the minister cared about protecting heritage, and particularly this legislation which concerns state heritage-listed buildings of which there are only a couple of thousand, she should simply stop putting the bulldozer through them as she did with about 10 associated with the Thebarton barracks sites in this term of parliament. I just find it extraordinary that we see the exact same stunt again a few weeks before a by-election.

If the minister really cared about protecting heritage in this state, we would not have new promises in a press conference in Norwood with the Greens a few weeks before a by-election. What we might have seen is some action over the past couple of years, what we might have seen is the minister actually meeting some of her own policy commitments when it comes to protecting heritage in South Australia. One of them I have spoken about already, which was, 'We will not put the bulldozer

through any state heritage-listed buildings.' But there were more, and they related to state heritage buildings—exactly what this bill now purports to cover.

Again, if we have a look at Labor's very own policy document before the last election, we saw a commitment, and I quote:

A Malinauskas Labor government will:

- Legislate to require proposed demolition of state heritage sites are subject to full public consultation and a public report from the SA Heritage Council.

We are two years nearly into the Malinauskas Labor government and we have not seen any attempt to legislate this commitment to require that the proposed demolition of state heritage sites be the subject of full public consultation and a public report from the SA Heritage Council. In fact, we have seen the exact opposite. We have seen the demolition of State Heritage Places by this very minister without any public consultation or report at the time from the State Heritage Council.

We then have the minister front up, clutching a piece of Greens' legislation, pretending to care about heritage. I note that the minister is apparently going to move a series of amendments to the legislation that has come to us from the Legislative Council, and I note that quite substantial amendments were filed last night in this place, and we will consider them in due course. Indeed, I think there are 18 pages of amendments to what was a two-page-or-so bill from the other place, and we will have a look at those.

What we do not see at first blush anywhere in those 18 pages of amendments, which we presume is South Australian Labor's heritage policy being enacted at the behest of the Greens three weeks before a by-election, is a legislated requirement that requires that the proposed demolition of state heritage sites be subject to full public consultation and a public report from the SA Heritage Council.

If we are suddenly caring about heritage a few weeks out from the by-election, so much so that you are going to rush through the Greens' legislation as a priority in Government Business today and so much so that you are going to spring 18 pages of amendments on this parliament, why is it that we are not legislating Labor's very own election commitment on a single page in that amendment? It is another broken promise from this minister for heritage who likes to say one thing before a by-election, likes to put out the flashy policy document in 2022, but we see no action now two years into the Malinauskas Labor government on doing that. We certainly do not see it in the bill before the house and I cannot see it anywhere, having a first glance at these 18 pages of amendments.

Once again, we are three weeks out from another election. It is extraordinary. We have the exact same stunt being pulled: pretending to care about one thing before the by-election—in this case it is heritage—and doing the complete opposite after. If she really cared, she would stop putting the bulldozer through heritage buildings and she would actually advance her own election commitments that have been sitting there for two years now. It is quite simple legislative change on the face of the election commitment.

This stands in stark contrast to how the South Australian Liberal Party have approached heritage over the past couple of years. We have been very consistent on this issue because we are the party of heritage. We know that heritage buildings tell the story of our past, and if they are appropriately preserved and protected, used and celebrated, they can tell the story of our future as well.

That is why the South Australian Liberals have been out in the community for the past year, talking to them about these very issues, talking to them about our plans to better protect heritage in South Australia. We have been presenting to them a plan to Save Our Suburbs, which was a series of policy proposals that would see the character of our streets and suburbs better preserved, that would see our historic heritage buildings across my own electorate, the electorate of Dunstan and the electorate of Adelaide preserved and would grow our important tree canopy.

If you want to talk about protecting heritage, some of the ideas that the South Australian Liberal Party have been talking about over the past couple of years the minister might do well to pay some attention to. We have spoken about things like introducing a simple process for listing local

and State Heritage Places under a single heritage act and one heritage minister. We have spoken about implementing a strategic approach to identifying heritage buildings, supporting councils to undertake urgent heritage surveys and also to establish a high-quality South Australian heritage register.

We have spoken about expanding heritage conservation grants. This government tried to scrap them in their first budget, realised what a mistake it was and quickly brought them back, but we have suggested perhaps they could apply to local heritage places as well as State Heritage Places. We have spoken about introducing a power to require the remediation of derelict local heritage buildings. This bill before our house deals entirely with state heritage-listed buildings. It deals mainly with section 36 of the Heritage Places Act, which is the section that covers intentional damage or neglect.

Unfortunately we do see, time and time again, often owners of state heritage-listed buildings letting them go to rack and ruin in the hope that one day we might just give up the fight. We want to push back against this sort of damage and neglect, and that is why we supported this bill in the other place. But it is not just state heritage-listed buildings that are subject to such neglect. Time and time again in my own electorate I see a similar story, unfortunately, with local heritage buildings. They are often purchased by people seeking to develop the site who either knew or did not know they were locally heritage listed.

They apply to develop the site and they cannot, of course, because the site is locally heritage listed, so what do they do? They open the windows, they open the doors, they let the place go to rack and ruin on the hope that we would simply give up the fight and the heritage value is so diminished that they get their way and can develop the site. This happens in Toorak Gardens to Glenunga in my own electorate.

What we have discovered, looking at the legislation, is we have an act that does go some way in protecting state heritage-listed places in these circumstances through section 36, which the Hon. Mr Simms's bill is seeking to bolster, but really an act and legislation that does not cover local heritage in the same way. A question we pose to the government is: why not have a similar protection for local heritage-listed buildings that we do for state heritage-listed buildings? That is often what gets raised with me when I am out doorknocking. It is not the 2,000 or so state heritage-listed buildings, which we know are enormously important, and we beg the minister to stop putting the bulldozer through them.

But often people are more concerned with the lovely locally listed heritage home a few doors up and what its future might be and what that might mean for the character of their own streets, and that is something that is totally overlooked by this bill from the Greens and totally overlooked by these 18 pages of amendments from the government, which we assume is the totality of their heritage policy being announced in this bizarre fashion two years after the last election and three weeks before the next election.

So these are all ideas about protecting heritage that the Liberal Party has been talking about for the past couple of years, so if you are in the market of stealing ideas from the Greens, well why not the Liberals? We have been talking about it for quite a while and we have been consistent on the issue, and not just about protecting heritage homes but also preserving the character of our streets and suburbs more generally.

I think we all live where we do for a reason, but there is a lot of concern in local communities that every subdivision or rebuild might slowly be eroding the character of some of these established neighbourhoods, and that is why we have been again out in the community speaking about these issues, talking about Labor's 85 per cent urban infill target that was introduced quite some time ago, which really has to go. This was a policy that saw the deliberate urban infill of our established neighbourhoods. It said 85 per cent of any new development in South Australia, or in Greater Adelaide, should be in the existing urban footprint.

What we saw as a result of that is the slow erosion of the character of our neighbourhoods and our suburbs, so we should scrap this urban infill target and encourage the right development in the right places. We have spoken about tightening demolition controls and ensuring they apply to more heritage homes, so this would look something like reassessing what character and historic

areas are looking like and whether they are serving the purpose they are intended to do. We have also spoken about putting community at the heart of decision-making when it comes to our suburbs, our streets, our neighbourhoods—empowering local communities, empowering local councils, and importantly requiring earlier and more frequent consultation on proposed developments.

I am seeing repeated examples in my own electorate of a development application being put up that has triggered a public notification period. We have seen that public notification complied with. Neighbours have had the opportunity to have their say, a decision is made, neighbours are either satisfied or dissatisfied, and the decision has been made. Neighbours assume that is the end of it, but they would be very wrong. What we are seeing time and time again is fast-forward a week, a month, a year, and we see what is sometimes described as a minor variation to these development applications, or perhaps a new development application which does not trigger the same public notification requirements. Sometimes these minor variations might be as minor as a couple more storeys or a few less car parks, and they have a real impact on what the development means for the surrounding neighbours, and we do not see a requirement for any notification or consultation when that is occurring.

I think sometimes, unfortunately, we are seeing the early notification deliberately used to circumvent notifying what the actual plan is. My community certainly is sick of it, so we would like to see more frequent notification on such developments. But again, this mainly concerns local heritage buildings, which is what is often raised with me when I am out doorknocking, when I am out in the electorate of Dunstan doorknocking around Beulah Park. There is a serious concern about their very own streets and what this government is doing to protect them, and unfortunately it is not a very pretty picture that they painted.

Again, you do not just have to steal the Greens' ideas. Come and have a look at our ideas on this as well, because consistently over the past couple of years we have been standing up for heritage, standing up for character, standing up for tree canopy to try to preserve and protect the character of our neighbourhoods, whether they be Beaumont or Norwood.

Some of these ideas that we have been talking about may very well be in the government's own planning review, the expert panel's Planning System Implementation Review, that I understand now is done. I think it was done about a year ago. It has been sitting on the minister's desk I think since around Easter last year. We have not seen it. We have not heard anything about its contents. We certainly have not heard the government's response to it.

Every day that is sitting on the Minister for Planning's desk is a day that there are heritage homes at risk in my electorate and surrounding areas because ideas that are in that very report, which we have not seen, cannot be implemented. I hope that the planning review has considered many of those ideas. I certainly made my own submission to that review. I know the shadow minister made a submission to that review as well. I hope they have been taken into account, but what I would really like is just to simply see it.

So I once again use this as an opportunity to call on the planning minister to release the Planning System Implementation Review and, indeed, to release the government's response to the Planning System Implementation Review. It has been sitting on his desk for a year, they have been in government for two years, and the best we have seen, the most substantive heritage announcement we have heard has been today, three weeks before an election, with the government clinging on to some Greens legislation and moving these 18 pages of amendments that do nothing of the kind. So let's see the planning review.

That brings us to this crowning moment in heritage policy from the Malinauskas Labor government, which is the bill before the house. The bill, certainly as it came to this house, does three things. The first is an amendment to section 33 of the Heritage Places Act to allow the creation of a heritage agreement which is entered into between the owner of a State Heritage Place and the minister to provide for the 'management, occupation, use or future use of the land'.

I note that the act already allows heritage agreements to be entered into for the management of the land or any place, specimens or artefacts in accordance with management plans. The change here is that management plans can relate to the occupation and use of the land. That is a worthy amendment to make and one that we supported in the other place. Of course, it does require the

cooperation of the landholder and that is not always forthcoming. Certainly, in the example that the minister has used just now of the Bell's Plumbers Shop, I do not think there was a management plan in place there and, as far as I can tell, there has been a total lack of cooperation from the owner of that state heritage-listed place.

So it requires the cooperation of the landowner, which might not always be forthcoming, and it also requires a minister that is willing to go out and try to strike such agreements. There is no point in having these provisions there if we do not actually have a minister who cares about this and who will go to the trouble of going and striking such heritage agreements and setting up management plans and working with owners of state heritage-listed places to help them better protect and preserve their great asset that they are custodians of.

The second thing that the bill that came to us from the other place does is provide quite significant increases in penalties applicable in circumstances where there is intentional or reckless damage to a State Heritage Place. For example, we see the increase of a penalty from \$120,000 to \$250,000 for an individual, and \$500,000 for a body corporate. I understand that several of these pages in the government's amendment are just saying, 'We should make it even more. Let's double it.' I will be interested to hear how we have arrived at that, but the consensus is we need to increase penalties for breaching such provisions. I think that is a good idea and, again, that is the reason we supported it in the other place.

If we again turn to the example that the minister is very fond of, Bell's Plumbers Shop, I think the penalty that applied there, after a minister really tried to enforce a penalty, was about \$26,000. I think we can all agree that that simply was not going to have a sufficient deterrent effect on future owners of state heritage-listed places, such as Bell's Plumbers Shop, to take such action.

Again, this is going to require a minister who wants to act. You can have the biggest penalty in the world, but unless we have a minister who is prepared to go and seek orders under section 36 of the act there is really no point in having a penalty at all. It also requires a heritage branch in the department to be appropriately resourced to go and enforce such offences and such penalties. Again, we can have great big penalties, but if they are never actually enforced and we do not have a heritage branch within the department that is equipped and resourced to go and investigate and enforce such penalties, and everyone knows it, they are not going to serve the deterrent effect that everyone hopes they will. So I would be very interested to hear from the minister on just what she has done over the last two years, as the minister for heritage, on the enforcement front, using the tools and powers that she already has under the act.

The third and final broad matter that the bill that has come to us from the other place deals with is amending provisions relating to protection orders. This is under section 39A of the act. The act already allows for the creation of protection orders if the minister believes that the order is reasonably necessary to ensure or secure compliance with any requirement imposed by or under the act. However, this bill proposes to introduce penalties for failing to comply with protection orders. It is a relatively high penalty and one that keeps accumulating day by day.

Once again, I appreciate the intention. I think it is a good thing because we do want to have significant deterrents against intentionally neglecting a heritage property, and we do want to have an incentive to take some action when we see a protection order not being acted on. Again, it relies on a minister actually issuing a protection order. It will be interesting to explore, throughout her two years as minister for heritage, just how many protection orders have been issued by this government and what their status is.

We can have all the tools in the world, but if we do not have a minister willing to use the tools it is going to be entirely ineffectual, just as I think it is unfortunately going to be rather ineffective and ineffectual with respect to Bell's Plumbers Shop. This is a building that has been used as an example in the other place, and it is a building that has been used as an example by the minister just now.

It once was a wonderful building. It is located on Payneham Road in College Park and was constructed by a former premier, John Colton, in 1883. The shop was entered onto the South Australian Heritage Register in 1985 in recognition of it being a significant example of a Victorian-era shop and dwelling.

In 2018, unfortunately the owner of the property, Mr Philip March, was found guilty of ignoring an order to repair the state heritage-listed place. Although he was fined by the Environment, Resources and Development Court, we unfortunately saw, during the course of those legal proceedings, the ownership of the property transferred by Mr March to a company registered overseas. That very much complicated those proceedings and very much complicated recovering any of the fine that was issued against Mr March. The sad reality is that even if we could enforce such a fine, it was, as I said earlier, a relatively modest fine that was able to be issued. It was \$26,800, which we think is clearly not sufficient in terms of a deterrent effect and something that I hope the bill from the Hon. Mr Simms might address.

During that previous term of government, though, the Minister for Environment attempted to engage with the owner of that shop with the intention of trying to promote its preservation, its restoration and its activation. The best way to protect a heritage building is to use a heritage building. Although contact was achieved, what we saw, unfortunately, was a lack of cooperation from the owner, which I suppose is typical in situations like this.

It is unclear whether the government over the past two years has continued to attempt to engage with that owner, whether the minister is interested in pursuing protection of that State Heritage Place and, indeed, whether any of these 18 pages of much trumped amendments might go some way in saving Bell's Plumbers Shop and preventing it from being the eyesore that it has turned into on Payneham Road. Whether it is Bell's Plumbers Shop in College Park, Romilly House, Edmund Wright House or Gawler Chambers, on this side of the house we absolutely want to protect, we want to use, we want to celebrate, heritage buildings. That is why we supported this bill in the other place.

I know it was supported by the government in the other place, and I know they are going to support it here, with a whole raft of amendments, because they stood up before the cameras today, three weeks before an election, and told everyone that they will; but the same thing happened three weeks before the last election. We had a minister stand up and pretend to care about heritage and then do the complete opposite after the last election. We are seeing it once again here, three weeks before the next election, a minister stand up and pretend to care about heritage, and I do not think she does at all. You might have fooled the people of Dunstan once, but you will not fool them twice.

Debate adjourned on motion of Mr Hughes.

## **CHILD SEX OFFENDERS REGISTRATION (CHILD-RELATED WORK) AMENDMENT BILL**

### *Second Reading*

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 5 March 2024.)

**Mr TEAGUE (Heysen) (16:28):** I rise to indicate that the opposition supports the bill, and I will be the lead speaker for the opposition and make some observations about the nature of the bill and some of the feedback that has been received, and it might just be the subject of the committee process in due course.

The purpose of the bill is to extend the existing definition of 'child-related work', and really quite fundamentally from a definition that has been of some long standing in section 64 of the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006 that has proscribed work that is recognisably child-centred. To work through that existing definition:

- (a) pre-schools or kindergartens;
- (b) child care centres;
- (c) educational institutions for children;
- (d) child protection services;
- (e) juvenile detention centres;
- (f) refuges or other residential facilities used by children;
- (g) foster care for children;

- (h) hospital wards or out-patient services (whether public or private) in which children are ordinarily patients;
- (i) overnight camps regardless of the type of accommodation or of how many children are involved;
- (j) clubs, associations or movements (including of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) with significant child membership or involvement;
- (k) programs or events for children provided by any institution, agency or organisation;
- (l) religious or spiritual organisations;
- (m) counselling or other support services for children;
- (n) commercial baby sitting or child minding services;
- (o) commercial tuition services for children;
- (p) services for the transport of children;

and includes work in connection with taxi services and hire car services (whether or not the work involves contact with a child).

With the exception of that final inclusion, we see that the definition of 'child-related work', which in turn informs the prohibition, has been for a long period of time directed towards that very clearly child-focused work. The extension of the definition of 'child-related work' that is the subject of the bill will now insert as new paragraph (ka) to the definition of 'child-related work' in section 64(1) 'businesses or undertakings in which children are employed'. It is a really very significant change and extension of the definition, from areas of work that are child-directed, child-focused or child-oriented in terms of the nature of the work to now take in any workplace environment in which children are employed.

We might appreciate at the outset that the change, the extension of the definition in this way, will render the kind of operational aspect of how this works somewhat more dynamic and uncertain and prone to a need for assessment on a case-by-case basis in a way that previously could be determined from workplace to workplace, really, before extending to an inquiry as to whether or not children are employed.

We all understand the purpose of the extension. There have been contributions to the debate that have highlighted the importance that children are safe when they are in a workplace, just as children ought to be safe when they are in circumstances such as schools and childcare centres and other places of work for others in which those children are present.

It is an important extension of how this exclusion will work going forward. It affects what is the general prohibition that then applies, the subject of section 65 of the act, which prohibits a registrable offender from applying for or engaging in work that is child-related work. There is a substantial penalty that applies, should a registrable offender apply or engage in such work.

There is an existing defence that is unchanged that goes to proof of the offender not knowing that the work was child-related work. That defence will now have some more work to do, in that not only now will there be the possibility for bona fide lack of knowledge of the categorisation of the kind of work but, as one reads the operation of the section as amended, there will be a defence in terms of knowledge of whether or not, in fact, children are employed in the workplace. One can readily see that there will be circumstances in which that question may need to be determined from time to time, but it is not beyond possibilities for that to be determined readily, and once that is determined then it will be clearly determinable whether or not the relevant business or undertaking is, in fact, caught by the new paragraph (ka).

The other way in which the extension of the definition will do its work is that, by direct reference to the Bail Act, we know that section 11 of the Bail Act sets out those conditions of bail that apply with respect to bail agreements generally and in respect of certain bail agreements more specifically. Subsection (2ab) provides that if the applicant for bail is a class 1 or class 2 offence suspect, any grant of bail to the applicant must be made subject to the other provisions of the section, subject to 'a condition that the applicant agrees not to engage in child-related work'. So we see the definition applied there again in the context of bail. A class 1 or class 2 offence suspect is a person



who has been charged with those categories of offence respectively, within the meaning of the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act.

It is, therefore, the uniform application of the new extended definition to both the prohibition in section 65 of the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act and also as it extends to apply in terms of those bail agreements that might be entered into by persons who are class 1 or class 2 offence suspects. The important point of principle, I suggest, is that we are then seeing the definition work in those two different ways: one by categorisation of the nature of the work and one by inquiry into the actual circumstances of the business or undertaking, that is, where it actually employs children.

There are then important and, I suggest to the house, necessary provisions for the navigation of particular circumstances that an individual might find themselves in, and the capacity for the commissioner to be satisfied of sufficient reasons to provide an exemption in certain circumstances, and we see that the subject of clause 4 of the bill. That is an exercisable discretion that has been welcomed by the Law Society, in particular. I might reflect on the Law Society's contribution to feedback on the bill momentarily.

The provision will extend the existing discretion and make it extend now to the new extended definition specifically, the circumstances at (ka), where the business or undertaking is one in which children are employed and where that is the only reason why the definition is brought into play. The new subsection (5a) will provide:

If a registrable offender applies for a declaration exempting them from the operation of Part 5—  
and that is with reference to the primary act—  
or specified provisions of Part 5 in respect of work that is only child-related work by virtue of paragraph (ka)—  
that is the new one that extends and changes the scope, as I have described—  
of the definition of that term in section 64, subsections (4) and (5) of this section do not apply and the Commissioner may only make the declaration if—  
and here are the provisos. First:

- (a) the relevant offences were not committed in connection with any child-related work; and
- (b) the Commissioner is satisfied that the offender does not pose a risk to the safety and well-being of children employed in the business or undertaking that constitutes the child-related work.

There is that capacity for the commissioner to assess those particular circumstances and to make a declaration that limits the application of it in those circumstances.

The bill then further provides for the transitional provisions for circumstances in which a registrable offender is already employed in circumstances that will now be caught by the new definition. If a person is becoming a person engaged in child-related work only by virtue of the new subsection (ka), then that person will be able to give a written notice about their intent to apply for the relevant declaration from the commissioner and they will be given an opportunity to make that application.

Sensibly, in my view, the person who finds themselves newly caught by the definition will need to indicate that to their employer, and also to the commissioner, and then to go ahead and make that application. In those circumstances, that person will be exempt from the operation of the prohibition, but only in respect of that particular child-related work and until the prescribed time for making that application. So there is that transitional arrangement for those who might be caught by the extended definition.

There is a further transitional provision in terms of those persons who are arrested or reported before commencement, and the provisions of the principal act will apply to the person as if disclosure required under that subsection was required to be made within seven days after the commencement of this act. So there is provision for the regularisation of circumstances for those who are arrested or reported prior to the commencement of the act.

I have addressed the flow-on effect for section 11 of the Bail Act for bail agreements. The final part of the schedule, therefore, dealing with transitional provisions, makes provision for the effect of the amendment on bail applications so as to make it clear that the amended definition, the

extended definition, will apply only in relation to a person who applies for bail on or after the commencement of section 3 of the act, regardless of when any offence was committed.

There is machinery here that recognises that there will be individuals who are already in work that is now caught by the extended definition of what child-related work means, and therefore the operation of the principal act. There will be those who are already the subject of a bail agreement and there is capacity for those who either are already in work, or prospectively the subject of the prohibition, who may elect to make an application to the commissioner for exemption in those particular circumstances.

This is a bill that at its heart contains what is a principal shift in terms of what we will henceforth regard as child-related work. Apart from that principal shift, which I think we all ought to appreciate is something that will really change the nature of what we have previously defined to be child-related work, the balance of the bill provides for the machinery through which this will begin to be implemented and otherwise substantively provides the possibility for the commissioner to play an ameliorating role where those preconditions are met.

In following the debate so far, we have heard a number of contributions that have highlighted what ought to be an obvious expectation: in every way we can, beyond the legislative task in the day-to-day world, whether as parents or carers of children all the way through to co-workers and employers of children, we all ought to expect and, as far as we can, guarantee that children are safe. We would like to extend that to be a general proposition.

We have a government department whose sole purpose is the protection of children. So just as we expect that children should be safe in all things that they do, the extension of this definition is really focusing the attention on the child in the workplace and, where a child is in a workplace, ensuring that child is not confronted by a registrable offender or offence suspect, as the case may be; to put it simply, that a child who is at work is at no greater risk than a child who is otherwise engaged in the range of different workplace environments that were previously set out and remain as part of that definition.

The bill in that way does important work. I am glad that it has made its way here. I know that, like so many pieces of legislation that have come through the parliament in this particular term, it has already been the subject of debate in another place. Indeed, it has come about through the active initiative and involvement across parties, as has been highlighted in the course of the debate in the other place and might have already had some reference here. As has been noted in the other place, I would also recognise in particular the Hon. Connie Bonaros's contribution to this debate and we are here debating legislation that has ultimately had the support of the government but it is certainly something that has been thought through by members across parties in both this place and the other place.

I mentioned earlier in my contribution that the stakeholder feedback had included thoughtful contributions, including from the Law Society, and I had mentioned that the Law Society had made particular mention of the welcome provision for the commissioner to assess circumstances and make a direction. I indicate that the Law Society's letter to the Attorney back in August of last year made reference to that aspect in the following terms:

The Society highlights and strongly supports the important objective the Bill seeks to achieve, being to ensure children are not exposed to dangerous sexual predators in a work environment.'

As one might expect, the Law Society encourages the thoroughgoing scrutiny of the drafting of the legislation to ensure that there are not either unanticipated consequences or, as the Law Society highlights, arbitrary outcomes. To that end, that is the risk that there is an arbitrary outcome, the Law Society in that context welcomes the application of the commissioner's power. So, further on in its submission, the President's letter to the Attorney indicates that:

...[the] Criminal Law Committee highlighted (and supported) the ability for the arbitrary operation of these provisions to be ameliorated by a person being able to apply to the Commissioner for an exemption. This is appropriate and should remain. The Bill contemplates further amendments to the Commissioner's discretionary power set out in existing section 66B of the Act in the context of a person seeking exemption when wishing to work in the circumstances contemplated by proposed section 64(1)(ka) implemented by this Bill, which appears to be at the lower threshold than in the cases of other offending.

The letter goes on to say that the Criminal Law Committee also indicated support for the existing capacity to appeal against the commissioner's decision to the Administrative and Disciplinary Division of the District Court of South Australia. I just highlight those particular passages of the Law Society's feedback by its letter to the Attorney in August last year.

The other particular feedback and engagement that I would highlight and would foreshadow addressing in the course of the committee is feedback from Business SA, and that is also by a letter dated 18 August of last year to the Attorney around the same time. The Chief Executive Officer of Business SA, Andrew Kay, addressed concerns that were really going to ensuring awareness, Business SA joining with others and, indeed, the view of the government and the opposition in this house that the bill is welcomed and important. So I do highlight that Business SA has set out that it agrees with the principle that safety of children in the workplace is paramount and supports the amendments that are the subject of the bill.

It highlights as well what Business SA regards as significant industrial implications that will flow from the change and a concern that the various different categories of individual who might now be the subject of the bill will be aware of the new laws and their commencement and time frames for compliance and so on. I just highlight that because I think there will be an opportunity for the minister to address those matters in committee. Business SA goes on to observe, and I quote:

Presumably with the child-related work specifically meaning 'working involving contact with a child', there may be instances where child sex offenders can continue to work with an employer or children so long as they have no contact with any child in the course of their work. In these circumstances, how should an employer approach the situation if a child sex offender requests a change to their work arrangements? Presumably the child sex offender will need to advise their employer of the circumstances so that appropriate decisions can be made.

Business SA, as has been the case in a whole range of different areas that have an impact on the industrial side, is indicating its willingness to continue to work to assist in terms of the provision of information to employers so that that process of advising of these changes can be made so that what are serious enough circumstances are not unnecessarily compounded by any lack of awareness and therefore lack of necessary action. I think that is valuable and practical feedback from Business SA in terms of the application of these changes.

Having highlighted those two particular matters, I hope that might provide some indication of the nature of inquiry that I expect to undertake in the course of the committee. I otherwise commend the bill to the house.

**Mr HUGHES (Giles) (17:04):** I also rise in support of the Child Sex Offenders Registration (Child-Related Work) Amendment Bill 2023. In some respects, in fact in many respects, this bill is a reflection on what good stuff happens when there is an overall commitment—across parties and across crossbenchers, both in the lower house and in the upper house—to try to do the right thing by enhancing protection for children who can be, and often are, very vulnerable when it comes to those people who choose to offend in a way that can cause enormous damage, damage that can live with the victim for the rest of their life. We have heard, time and time again, the heart-rending stories about what young people who were not believed had to put up with, often in earlier circumstances.

The member for Heysen and others have given a very comprehensive run-down of the bill. Indeed, the member for Heysen gave the definition that exists in the original bill on child-related work. I think it is worthwhile to go through the whole list of those areas in which the bill, as it now stands, protects children. But there has been a loophole, and it is good to see, at last, that this loophole is now going to be addressed, and I think effectively addressed.

Once again, it is the work of people in both houses that has brought this to the fore, but I would also like to acknowledge people in the broader community—especially the shoppies union, for its advocacy and its lobbying on this matter. Of course, they have coverage of a lot of young people in a number of industries, especially the fast-food industry, where a lot of our underage children are employed and come into contact with adults in one way or another. In fact, this occurs in the retail sector as a whole, but it might especially be the case when it comes to the fast-food industry. Indeed, in their lobbying effort, they pointed to an example at a McDonald's store that triggered serious concern. Of course, there was also an incident at a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet as well, which I believe did lead to a conviction.

This amendment bill, by its very nature, creates what is referred to as a 'default rule' that registered child sex offenders and those accused of registerable child sex offences may not work in businesses that employ children if their employment would involve contact with child employees. That is essentially the core of the bill: extending the definition when it comes to offenders and alleged offenders with regard to where they can work.

As has been outlined, there are provisions in the bill where, depending on the individual circumstances, either the bail authority or the police commissioner can vary or revoke, if you like, the default approach that is contained within the bill. But they will only do so on the basis that they are fully convinced, if you like, that there is no risk posed to the children that might come across the particular adult.

The bill is a real step forward. You do not have to be a parent; any reasonable person would say this is a good move. It does cause me to reflect as a parent because two of my kids did, while at school, work in a takeaway place, and it never occurred to me. I guess it does not until something is brought to the fore by other people saying, 'This is an area of vulnerability that needs to be addressed,' and this is what this bill does. It addresses that area of vulnerability.

There are some transitional arrangements contained within the amendment bill. I do not intend to go through that. We have already had a lawyer going through the transitional arrangements, and there is no way I can compete with that. There are a number of aspects that are picked up in the bill to ensure the smooth implementation of the bill. There might well be some stuff that has been highlighted that will come up in committee stage. At the end of the day, there is a strong commitment across the party to see this bill go through and do the right thing by children that might be exposed, or potentially exposed, to child sex offenders. This is a positive step forward, and I commend the bill to the house.

**Ms THOMPSON (Davenport) (17:11):** I, too, rise to speak on the Child Sex Offenders Registration (Child-Related Work) Amendment Bill 2023. It is a bill that seeks to enact one simple but important change: where a registered child sex offender or a person accused of registrable child sex crimes is currently prohibited from participating in child-related work, like schools and sporting clubs, we want to broaden the existing legislation's scope.

High-risk individuals should not be working around our children, which is why we are moving to implement a blanket ban. We are saying no to known and accused child sex offenders working in direct contact with South Australian minors, whether that work is child-related or not. It means a child sex offender cannot stand beside our kids at the front counter of the local bakery. It means a child sex offender cannot stack shelves next to a person under the age of 18 at the local Foodland or alongside young people at the local McDonald's or any other retail or hospitality establishment. It means parents and caregivers have one less thing to worry about when they drop their kids off at work on the weekend or after school.

My own daughter is 12 years old, and she has just started high school. While she is too young at the moment, she is looking forward to entering the workforce herself and has already inquired at some local businesses. I live in a tight-knit community, and so many of our small and local businesses have helped children and young adults in securing their first jobs. None of these businesses—and, it is fair to say, no business across the state—would knowingly place a child in harm's way, but the passage of this legislation puts the matter beyond doubt. It simply will not be allowed to happen. As a mum of an ambitious soon-to-be teenager, this gives me immense relief.

It is a change that I know my electorate will welcome with open arms, but it is also a change the SDA and its members have called for, and I would like to take the opportunity now to thank them for their advocacy. The Malinauskas Labor government is cracking down on crime to ensure our communities and our children are kept safe. Already, we have strengthened laws that are relevant to child exploitation materials and the possession of childlike sex dolls. We have amended legislation to ensure language better reflects the serious nature of child-related sex crimes. We are moving to see that serious repeat child sex offenders are subject to penalties, including indefinite imprisonment and lifetime electronic monitoring.

Child sex offenders can expect to be met with the full force of the law, and the actions of this government make that abundantly clear. I have mentioned the SDA and its members, but another

person worthy of recognition for their tireless campaigning is former Australian of the Year and abuse survivor Grace Tame. Last year, we had the privilege of Ms Tame's presence in the house, as we removed the term 'unlawful relationship' from the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 and replaced it with 'sexual abuse of a child'.

There is no room for ambiguity when we are dealing with offences of such gravity. To paraphrase Ms Tame, 'words hold immense weight'. Words certainly do hold immense weight, but it is the way we use them in our laws that counts the most when we are looking to remove predators from our streets and place them behind bars. The rule book needs to reflect the expectations of our community, and we are drawing a clear line in the sand.

Child sex offenders do not belong next to our kids in the workplace, whatever that workplace may be. Everyone has a right to feel safe on the job, and parents and caregivers have a right to know their children are contributing to our community without having to worry about their wellbeing. Let this bill come as a fair and direct warning. Again, let me express my sincere thanks to all who have advocated for such important change. I commend this bill to the house.

**The Hon. N.F. COOK (Hurtle Vale—Minister for Human Services) (17:15):** I rise to speak in support of this bill that seeks to add further measures to our systems for protecting children and young people. The safety of children and young people is a responsibility for the whole community, from government and schools through to employers, community groups, sporting clubs and families. Government responses alone cover many agencies and programs, including statutory child protection work, early intervention services, worker and volunteer screenings, the Child Safe Environments program, SafeWork SA, our police and, of course, our courts.

Our screening system, run by the Department of Human Services, provides a critical service, with around 700,000 screenings in place at any time. The vast majority of these, around 550,000, are actually the working with children checks that cover staff and volunteers in education and children's services, health, transport, sport and recreation along with other areas where people or organisations deliver a range of services and supports to young people.

Working with children checks involve a detailed assessment every five years of a person's suitability that includes checks against information sources from around Australia. In the intervening period, a continuous monitoring system provides updates when certain things occur that could affect a person's suitability. While working with children checks are legally required in a range of prescribed circumstances, many employers outside of these areas also contribute to the safety of their young or more vulnerable workers by requiring a national police check for new staff and then making their own decision about whether someone is the right fit for their workplace.

The new legislation before us today adds another layer of safety by creating a default rule that registered child sex offenders and those accused of registrable child sex offences may not work in businesses that employ children. This requirement will be triggered if their employment would involve contact with child employees. Accused and registered child sex offenders are already generally prohibited from engaging in child-related work. However, the current definition of this does not extend to working with child employees. The bill broadens the definition.

The ban on child-related work can be varied or revoked in individual cases if the person would not pose a risk to child employees. This is at the discretion of the bail authority for accused offenders or the Commissioner of Police for convicted and registered offenders. The issue of exemptions is both important and difficult. Bail authorities and the Commissioner of Police will need to exercise careful judgement, with the safety of young people as the primary focus. Where they determine there is no risk to the safety of young co-workers, it means a person can continue to work and support themselves without placing additional demands on other support services.

I note there are a number of views in the community about the best way to support young workers, and I welcome suggestions from unions, advocates and various commissioners. Our working with children checks are a critical part of our system. They use historical data to assess whether a person is suitable to work in prescribed areas. A system like this cannot perfectly predict future behaviour and relies on both good information from multiple sources along with sound judgement by people with special skill sets. It is also a system that is targeted at people providing services and supports to children and young people, as distinct from working alongside teenage

employees, who are the focus of this bill. For this reason, the bill adds a new and very important protection and has my full support.

**Ms HOOD (Adelaide) (17:19):** I, too, rise today to speak on this incredibly important bill for South Australian workplaces and the broader community. The Malinauskas Labor government has always been committed to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community. Since coming to government in 2022, we have already introduced and delivered a strong suite of justice reforms to reflect our community's expectations. This includes increasing penalties for a range of child sex offences, boosting funding for victim support services and closing loopholes so offenders who possess child porn or childlike sex dolls find it harder to receive a sentence discount or bail.

Many South Australians might not be aware that there was a clear flaw in our current child protection laws, and it is one the Malinauskas government is 100 per cent determined to fix. At present, people accused or convicted of child sex offences are only prevented from working in settings that provide services directly relating to children, such as child care, education, foster care, health or coaching work. This means offenders are still able to work in businesses that hire underage employees, such as hospitality and retail, leaving those children and young people at risk.

Many people in my community—including parents of working teenagers who have jobs in cafes, supermarkets and fast food restaurants—would be horrified to learn that this loophole even exists, and that is why we are determined to close this loophole for good, because in every other setting there are protections in our law. Protections exist for children and young people in kindergartens and schools, in volunteer settings, in sporting clubs and in juvenile justice settings, as our community rightly expects. Children and young people are safeguarded in every setting except for when they put on a work uniform at a local McDonald's, Woolies or cafe.

These proposed laws will ensure that registered child sex offenders and persons accused of registrable offences will be prevented from working in a business that hires underage workers, where the offender would be in contact with those young workers. Importantly, where someone working in such a position is accused of child sex offences, they would need to notify their employer. Under this bill, convicted or accused child sex offenders will have no place working in positions where they could exploit or abuse more children. The bill will achieve this by broadening the definition of child-related work, as it does not currently encompass child employees. The current legislation outlines that accused or registered sex offenders are generally prohibited from engaging in child-related work: for instance, being a childcare worker or a schoolteacher.

By broadening the definition of child-related work, teens, for example, who start their first job at a local cafe or Coles or Hungry Jack's will no longer be in the vulnerable position of being managed by an alleged or convicted child sex offender. I know this will be incredibly welcome news for families in my community. I want to congratulate the SDA union for fiercely advocating for this change and for bringing its concerns to the Attorney-General in the other place, who listened, acted and ensured this legislation came to parliament. It is hard to believe that the SDA first raised this issue with the Marshall Liberal government in 2021 and nothing was done. That is why elections matter. I am proud to be part of the Malinauskas Labor government, protecting families and young workers. With those comments, I commend this bill to the house.

**The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD (Reynell—Minister for Child Protection, Minister for Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Recreation, Sport and Racing) (17:23):** I am pleased to now lead debate in this house on the Child Sex Offenders Registration (Child-Related Work) Amendment Bill 2023. Although in terms of the number of pages this seems a short and relatively straightforward bill, it is a bill that will be profoundly significant in its effect.

As other speakers have articulated, this bill creates a default rule that registered child sex offenders and those accused of registrable child sex offences may not work in businesses that employ children, if their employment would involve contact with child employees. Accused and registered child sex offenders are already, as they absolutely should be, prohibited from engaging in child-related work: for instance, in education, in care settings, in social work and in sporting settings.

However, the current legislative definition of child-related work does not extend to working with or alongside child employees. The bill rightly broadens the definition so that it will now

contemplate the many circumstances in which young people work alongside adults and so that it will help safeguard those young people. This bill continues our government's really important and extensive work to help to protect and to help to improve the lives of South Australia's children and young people and particularly those in contact with the child protection and family support system and to give them the best opportunity to thrive.

This is another really important measure in our comprehensive suite of reforms that we have begun to progress since forming government. It sits alongside our work to transform the child protection and family support system for the future and it sits amongst our stringent focus on dealing with vile child sex offenders.

For so many young people and so many of us in this place and beyond, our first few jobs are or were such an important foray into the workforce, into our first taste of independence and our first ever chance of having a little bit of money to spend. My very first three jobs at a very young age were helping at the bingo at Morphettville Racecourse, cleaning our local butcher shop, a job which I detested, and working—

*An honourable member interjecting:*

**The Hon. K.A. HILDYARD:** Yes, and babysitting a fellow minister, and working the deli counter at Coles, Plympton. There were a few difficult things I experienced in those roles, particularly from one manager, but my experiences were all so wonderful. For the very first time ever, I had that little bit of money to spend. I learned a lot about smallgoods and how to slice them. I learned more about work itself, the responsibilities you had to fulfil, that sometimes it was really hard and you had to show up anyway, and I made some really lovely friends.

My kids went on to engage in their first jobs, with Macca's and EB Games being the pathway for one, and basketball refereeing and Boost Juice the pathway for the other. They both have a really good work ethic and learned a lot from those experiences. The younger one seems to have met the love of his life whilst blending smoothies in the thoroughfare of Marion shopping centre.

All of us in this place, and every single parent and caregiver, want our children and also every single young person, every person's child, to be safe at work and to have those good experiences that can set them up for a lifetime of success in employment. We know that so many businesses here in our state give amazing opportunities to young South Australians through employment. To ensure those good experiences and opportunities are afforded to all young people, young people need to be safe at work.

It is utterly abhorrent to think of a child sex offender working alongside any young people. This bill helps to make sure that those who are convicted of these heinous crimes cannot do so. Children and young people in our state absolutely deserve to work in a safe and supportive working environment, whilst they are learning those new skills, forming new friendships and learning about the world of work.

At this moment in time, there is nothing preventing a registered child sex offender from taking a job working with those under 18 years of age. They are rightly not allowed to apply for or engage in child-related work, for example, in an education setting, in sport and in a range of other environments. However, working in a business that employs children and young people is not considered child-related work. Again, this bill changes that.

This bill amends the definition of child-related work in the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006 to include work in a business or undertaking that employs children and where the work will involve contact with a child or young person. The bill defines contact with a child as physical contact, as well as written or oral communications. This bill will stop child sex offenders, or help to stop child sex offenders, from working with or alongside underage employees unless it could be shown that the work involved no contact with someone underage: a child or a young person.

Additional power given to the police commissioner through this bill will allow the ban on child-related work to be varied or to be revoked in individual cases if the commissioner deems that the person would not pose a risk to child employees. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

**SPENT CONVICTIONS (PART 8A FINDINGS) AMENDMENT BILL**

*Introduction and First Reading*

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

At 17:32 the house adjourned until Thursday 7 March 2024 at 11:00.



*Answers to Questions*

**GENERAL PRACTITIONER PAYROLL TAX**

In reply to **Mr COWDREY (Colton)** (30 November 2023).

**The Hon. S.C. MULLIGHAN (Lee—Treasurer):** The registration period for the payroll tax amnesty for medical practices with contracted general practitioners closed on 30 November 2023. I am advised that 282 medical practices applied for the amnesty.